

PSALM XXVI.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David. *The sweet singer of Israel appears before us in this Psalm as one enduring reproach ; in this he was the type of the great Son of David, and is an encouraging example to us to carry the burden of slander to the throne of grace. It is an ingenious surmise that this appeal to heaven was written by David at the time of the assassination of Ish-bosheth, by Baanah and Rechab, to protest his innocence of all participation in that treacherous murder ; the tenor of the Psalm certainly agrees with the supposed occasion, but it is not possible with such a slender clue to go beyond conjecture.*

DIVISION.—Unity of subject is so distinctly maintained, that there are no sharp divisions. David Dickson has given an admirable summary in these words :—“ He appealeth to God, the supreme Judge, in the testimony of a good conscience, bearing him witness ; first, of his endeavour to walk uprightly as a believer, verses 1, 2, 3 ; secondly, of his keeping himself from the contagion of the evil counsel, sinful courses, and example of the wicked, verses 4, 5 ; thirdly, of his purpose still to behave himself holily and righteously, out of love to the partaker of the public privileges of the Lord’s people in the congregation, verses 6, 7, 8. Whereupon he prayeth to be free of the judgment coming upon the wicked, verses 9, 10, according as he had purposed to eschew their sins, verse 11 ; and he closeth his prayer with comfort and assurance of being heard, verse 12.

EXPOSITION.

JUDGE me, O LORD ; for I have walked in mine integrity : I have trusted also in the LORD ; therefore I shall not slide.

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me ; try my reins and my heart.

3 For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes : and I have walked in thy truth.

1. “ *Judge me, O Jehovah.*”—A solemn appeal to the just tribunal of the heart-searching God, warranted by the circumstances of the writer, so far as regarded the particular offences with which he was wrongly charged. Worried and worn out by the injustice of men, the innocent spirit flies from its false accusers to the throne of Eternal Right. He had need have a clear case who dares to carry his suit into the King’s Bench of heaven. Such an appeal as this is not to be rashly made on any occasion ; and as to the whole of our walk and conversation, it should never be made at all, except as we are justified in Christ Jesus : a far more fitting prayer for a sinful mortal is the petition, “ Enter not into judgment with thy servant.” “ *For I have walked in mine integrity.*” He held integrity as his principle, and walked in it as his practice. David had not used any traitorous or unrighteous means to gain the crown, or to keep it ; he was conscious of having been guided by the noblest principles of honour in all his actions with regard to Saul and his family. What a comfort it is to have the approbation of one’s own conscience ! If there be peace within the soul, the blustering storms of slander which howl around us are of little consideration. When the little bird in my bosom sings a merry song, it is no matter to me if a thousand owls hoot at me from without. “ *I have trusted also in the Lord.*” Faith is the root and sap of integrity. He who leans upon the Lord is sure to walk in righteousness. David knew that God’s covenant had given him the crown, and therefore he took no indirect or unlawful means to secure it ; he would not slay his enemy in the cave, nor suffer his men-at-arms to smite him when he slept unguarded on the plain. Faith will work hard for the Lord, and in the Lord’s way, but she refuses so much as to lift a finger to fulfil the devices of unrighteous cunning. Rebecca acted out a great falsehood in order to fulfil the Lord’s decree in favour of Jacob—this was unbelief ; but Abraham left the Lord to fulfil his own purposes, and took the knife to slay his son—this was faith. Faith trusts God to accomplish his own decrees. Why should I steal when God has promised to supply my need ? Why should I avenge myself when I know that the Lord has espoused my cause ? Confidence in God

is a most effectual security against sin. "*Therefore I shall not slide.*" Slippery as the way is, so that I walk like a man upon ice, yet faith keeps my heels from tripping, and will continue to do so. The doubtful ways of policy are sure sooner or later to give a fall to those who run therein, but the ways of honesty, though often rough, are always safe. We cannot trust in God if we walk crookedly; but straight paths and simple faith bring the pilgrim happily to his journey's end.

2. There are three modes of trial here challenged, which are said in the original to refer to trial by touch, trial by smell, and trial by fire. The Psalmist was so clear from the charge laid against him, that he submitted himself unconditionally to any form of examination which the Lord might see fit to employ. "*Examine me, O Lord.*" Look me through and through; make a minute survey; put me to the question, cross-examine my evidence. "*And prove me.*" Put me again to trial; and see if I would follow such wicked designs as my enemies impute to me. "*Try my reins and my heart.*" Assay me as metals are assayed in the furnace, and do this to my most secret parts, where my affections hold their court; see, O God, whether or no I love murder, and treason, and deceit. All this is a very bold appeal, and made by a man like David, who feared the Lord exceedingly, it manifests a most solemn and complete conviction of innocence. The expressions here used should teach us the thoroughness of the divine judgment, and the necessity of being in all things profoundly sincere, lest we be found wanting at the last. Our enemies are severe with us with the severity of spite, and this a brave man endures without a fear; but God's severity is that of unswerving right, who shall stand against such a trial? The sweet singer asks "Who can stand before his cold?" and we may well enquire, "Who can stand before the heat of his justice?"

3. "*For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes.*"—An object of memory and a ground of hope. A sense of mercy received sets a fair prospect before the faithful mind in its gloomiest condition, for it yields visions of mercies yet to come, visions not visionary but real. Dwell, dear reader, upon that celestial word *loving-kindness*. It has a heavenly savour. Is it not an unmatchable word, unexcelled, unrivalled? The goodness of the Lord to us should be before our eyes as a motive actuating our conduct; we are not under the bondage of the law, but we are under the sweet constraints of grace, which are far more mighty, although far more gentle. Men sin with the law before their eyes, but divine love when clearly seen, sanctifies the conversation. If we were not so forgetful of the way of mercy in which God walks towards us, we should be more careful to walk in the ways of obedience towards him. "*And I have walked in thy truth.*" The Psalmist was preserved from sin by his assurance of the truthfulness of God's promise, which truth he endeavoured to imitate as well as to believe. Observe from this verse, that an experience of divine love will show itself in a practical following of divine truth; those who neglect either the doctrinal or practical parts of truth must not wonder if they lose the experimental enjoyment of it. Some *talk* of truth, it is better to *walk* in it. Some vow to do well in future, but their resolutions come to nothing; only the regenerate man can say "*I have walked in thy truth.*"

4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

5 I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.

So far from being himself an open offender against the laws of God, the Psalmist had not even associated with the lovers of evil. He had kept aloof from the men of Belial. A man is known by his company, and if we have kept ourselves apart from the wicked, it will always be evidence in our favour should our character be impugned. He who was never in the parish is not likely to have stolen the corn. He who never went to sea is clearly not the man who scuttled the ship.

4. "*I have not sat with vain persons.*"—True citizens have no dealings with traitors. David had no seat in the parliament of triflers. They were not his boon companions at feasts, nor his advisers in council, nor his associates in conversation. We must needs see, and speak, and trade, with men of the world, but we must on no account take our rest and solace in their empty society. Not only the profane, but the vain are to be shunned by us. All those who live for this life only are vain, chaffy, frothy men, quite unworthy of a Christian's friendship. Moreover, as this vanity is often allied with falsehood, it is well to save ourselves altogether from this untoward generation, lest we should be led from bad

to worse, and from tolerating the vain, should come to admire the wicked. "*Neither will I go in with dissemblers.*" Since I know that hypocritical piety is double iniquity, I will cease all acquaintance with pretenders. If I must needs walk the same street, I will not enter the same door and spend my time in their society. The congregation of the hypocrites is not one with which we should cultivate communion; their ultimate rendezvous will be the lowest pit of hell, let us drop their acquaintance now! for we shall not desire it soon. They hang their beads around their necks, and carry the devil in their hearts. This clause is in the future tense, to indicate that the writer felt no desire to begin an acquaintance with characters whom up till then he had shunned. We must maintain the separated path with more and more circumspection as we see the great redemption day approaching. Those who would be transfigured with Jesus, must not be disfigured by conformity to the world. The resolution of the Psalmist suggests, that even among professed followers of truth we must make distinctions, for as there are vain persons out of the church, so there are dissemblers in it, and both are to be shunned with scrupulous decision.

5. "*I have hated the congregation of evil doers.*"—A severe sentence, but not too severe. A man who does not hate evil terribly, does not love good heartily. Men, as men, we must always love, for they are our neighbours, and therefore to be loved as ourselves; but evil doers, as such, are traitors to the Great King, and no loyal subject can love traitors. What God hates we must hate. The congregation or assembly of evil doers, signifies violent men in alliance and conclave for the overthrow of the innocent; such synagogues of Satan are to be held in abhorrence. What a sad reflection it is that there should be a congregation of evil doers as well as a congregation of the upright, a church of Satan as well as a church of God; a seed of the serpent as well as a seed of the woman; an old Babylon as well as a new Jerusalem; a great whore sitting upon many waters, to be judged in wrath, as well as a chaste bride of the Lamb to be crowned at his coming. "*And will not sit with the wicked.*" Saints have a seat at another table, and will never leave the King's dainties for the husks of the swine-trough. Better to sit with the blind, and the halt, and the lame, at the table of mercy, than with the wicked in their feasts of ungodliness, yea, better to sit on Job's dunghill than on Pharaoh's throne. Let each reader see well to his company, for such as we keep in this world, we are likely to keep in the next.

6 I will wash mine hands in innocency so will I compass thine altar,
O LORD :

7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

6. "*I will wash mine hands in innocency.*"—He would publicly avow himself to be altogether clear of the accusations laid against him, and if any fault in other matters could be truthfully alleged against him, he would for the future abstain from it. The washing of the hands is a significant action to set forth our having no connection with a deed, as we still say, "*I wash my hands of the whole business.*" As to perfect innocence, David does not here claim it, but he avows his innocence of the crimes whereof he was slanderously accused; there is, however, a sense in which we may be washed in absolute innocence, for the atoning blood makes us clean every whit. We ought never to rest satisfied short of a full persuasion of our complete cleansing by Jesus' precious blood. "*So will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*" Priests unto God must take great care to be personally cleansed; the brazen laver was as needful as the golden altar; God's worship requires us to be holy in life. He who is unjust to man cannot be acceptably religious towards God. We must not bring our thankofferings with hands defiled with guilt. To love justice and purity is far more acceptable to God than ten thousands of the fat of fed beasts. We see from this verse that holy minds delight in the worship of the Lord, and find their sweetest solace at his altar; and that it is their deepest concern never to enter upon any course of action which would unfit them for the most sacred communion with God. Our eye must be upon the altar which sanctifieth both the giver and the gift, yet we must never draw from the atoning sacrifice an excuse for sin, but rather find in it a most convincing argument for holiness.

7. "That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving." David was so far instructed that he does not mention the typical offering, but discerns the spiritual offering which was intended thereby, not the groans of bullocks, but songs of gratitude the spiritual worshipper presents. To sound abroad the worthy praises of the God of all grace should be the every-day business of a pardoned sinner. Let men slander us as they will, let us not defraud the Lord of his praises; let dogs bark, but let us like the moon shine on. "And tell of all thy wondrous works." God's people should not be tongue-tied. The wonders of divine grace are enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing. God's works of love are wondrous if we consider the unworthiness of their objects, the costliness of their method, and the glory of their result. And as men find great pleasure in discoursing upon things remarkable and astonishing, so the saints rejoice to tell of the great things which the Lord hath done for them.

8. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house." Into the abodes of sin he would not enter, but the house of God he had long loved, and loved it still. We were sad children if we did not love our Father's dwelling-place. Though we own no sacred buildings, yet the church of the living God is the house of God, and true Christians delight in her ordinances, services, and assemblies. O that all our days were Sabbaths! "And the place where thine honour dwelleth." In his church where God is had in honour at all times, where he reveals himself in the glory of his grace, and is proclaimed by his people as the Lord of all. We come not together as the Lord's people to honour the preacher, but to give glory to God; such an occupation is most pleasant to the saints of the Most High. What are those gatherings where God is not honoured, are they not an offence to his pure and holy eyes, and are they not a sad stumbling-block to the people of God? It brings the scalding-tear upon our cheek to hear sermons in which the honour of God is so far from being the preacher's object, that one might almost imagine that the preacher worshipped the dignity of manhood, and thought more of it than of the Infinite Majesty of God.

9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men :

10 In whose hand is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

9. "Gather not my soul with sinners."—Lord, when, like fruit, I must be gathered, put me not in the same basket with the best of sinners, much less with the worst of them. The company of sinners is so distasteful to us here, that we cannot endure the thought of being bound up in the same bundle with them to all eternity. Our comfort is, that the Great Husbandman discerns the tares from the wheat, and will find a separate place for distinct characters. In the former verses we see that the Psalmist kept himself clear of profane persons, and this is to be understood as a reason why he should not be thrust into their company at the last. Let us think of the doom of the wicked, and the prayer of the text will forcibly rise to our lips; meanwhile, as we see the rule of judgment by which like is gathered to its like, we who have passed from death unto life have nothing to fear. "Nor my life with bloody men." Our soul sickens to hear them speak; their cruel dispatches, in which they treat the shooting of their fellow-men as rare sport, are horrifying to us; Lord, let us not be shut up in the same prison with them; nay, the same paradise with such men would be a hell, if they remained as they now are.

10. "In whose hands is mischief."—They have both hands full of it, plotting it and carrying it out. "And their right hand," with which they are most dexterous, "is full of bribes;" like thieves who would steal with impunity, they carry a sop for the dogs of justice. He who gives bribes is every way as guilty as the man who takes them, and in the matter of our parliamentary elections the rich villain who gives the bribe is by far the worse. Bribery, in any form or shape, should be as detestable to a Christian as carrion to a dove, or garbage to a lamb. Let those whose dirty hands are fond of bribes remember that neither death nor the devil can be bribed to let them escape their well-earned doom.

11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

Here is the lover of godliness entering his personal protest against unrighteous gain. He is a Nonconformist, and is ready to stand alone in his Nonconformity.

Like a live fish, he swims against the stream. Trusting in God, the Psalmist resolves that the plain way of righteousness shall be his choice, and those who will, may prefer the tortuous paths of violence and deceit. Yet he is by no means a boaster, or a self-righteous vaunter of his own strength, for he cries for redemption and pleads for mercy. Our integrity is not absolute nor inherent, it is a work of grace in us, and is marred by human infirmity; we must, therefore, resort to the redeeming blood and the throne of mercy, confessing that though we are saints among men, we must still bow as sinners before God.

12 My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

The song began in the minor, but it has now reached the major key. Saints often sing themselves into happiness. The *even place* upon which our foot stands is the sure, covenant faithfulness, eternal promise and immutable oath of the Lord of Hosts; there is no fear of falling from this solid basis, or of its being removed from under us. Established in Christ Jesus, by being vitally united to him, we have nothing left to occupy our thoughts but the praises of our God. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and when assembled, let us not be slow to contribute our portion of thanksgiving. Each saint is a witness to divine faithfulness, and should be ready with his testimony. As for the slanderers, let them howl outside the door while the children sing within.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is coupled on to the foregoing by thoughts and words. At the close of the foregoing the Psalmist had prayed for *integrity* (verse 1). Unless this Psalm is regarded as a sequel to the preceding one, it will seem vainglorious; but being combined with the penitential acknowledgments of sin, and with the earnest supplications for pardon and grace, and with the earnest profession of faith that God has heard his prayer, which breathe forth in the foregoing Psalm, it will be seen that the declarations which the Psalmist now makes of integrity, are not assertions of human merit, but acknowledgments of divine mercy. As Augustine says, "*Non merita mea, sed misericordia tua, ante oculos meos est.*"—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 1.—"Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity."—A good cause, a good conscience, and a good deportment, are good grounds of appeal to God.—*Ingram Cobbin.*

Verse 1.—"Judge me, O Lord." Nothing is so pleasing to him that is upright as to know that God knoweth he is so. As it is a small matter with those who are sincere to be condemned by men, so it is not much with them to be commended or approved by them; for indeed neither "he that commendeth himself," as the apostle speaks (2 Cor. x. 18), nor he that is commended by others, "is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." The testimony, or letters commendatory of all the men in the world will do us no good, unless God give us his also.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 1.—"Judge me, O Lord." As an instance of appeal to heaven, we quote that mighty preacher of the Word, George Whitfield. "However some may account me a mountebank and an enthusiast, one that is only going to make you methodically mad; they may breathe out their invectives against me, yet Christ knows all; he takes notice of it, and I shall leave it to him to plead my cause, for he is a gracious Master. I have already found him so, and am sure he will continue so. Vengeance is his, and he will repay it."—*George Whitfield, 1714-1770.*

Verse 1.—"Integrity." *שָׁמַיִם*, or *שְׁמַיִם* is used of whatever is uninjured, or is free from any spot or blemish; and hence we find the term applied to an unblemished animal offered in sacrifice. Lev. i. 3; iii. 9.—*George Phillips.*

Verse 1.—"Mine integrity." There is a force in the possessive pronoun "my,"

which must be attended to. The Psalmist intimates that he had proceeded in one uniform course, notwithstanding all the devices of his enemies.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 1.—“*I have trusted in the Lord.*” Trust in God is the fountain of “*integrity.*” Whoever places his hope in God need not seek to advance his worldly interests by violating his duty towards his neighbour: he waits for everything *from above*, and is, at the same time, always determined that he will not be deprived of the favour of his heavenly Father through violating his commandments.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 1.—“*I shall not slide.*” It is a striking word, as fully expressive of the completeness of God’s protection and the security of his upholding hand as the Psalmist’s language of the integrity of his walk and trust in God. It is not, as in our Prayer-book version, “*I shall not fall,*” but it is, “*I shall not even slide;*” not even make a false step or stumble.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 2.—The Psalmist uses three words, “*examine,*” “*prove,*” “*try.*” These words are designed to include all the modes in which the reality of anything is tested; and they imply together that he wished the most *thorough* investigation to be made; he did not shrink from any test.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2.—“*Examine*”—“*prove*”—“*try.*” As gold, by fire, is severed and parted from dross, so singleness of heart and true Christian simplicity is best seen and made most evident in troubles and afflictions. In prosperity every man will seem godly, but afflictions do draw out of the heart whatsoever is there, whether it be good or bad.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verse 2.—“*Prove me.*” The work of conscience within us doth *prove* us. God hath set up a light within us, and when this is enlightened by the Word, then it makes a man’s breast full of light. Now a faithful godly man loveth that this should be tender, active, speaking out of God’s Word for every duty, and against every sin. You see the quickness of it in David, when it is said, “*His heart smote him;*” and 1 John iii., “*If thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart.*” Alas! if thou within thy own self judgest thyself to sin thus and thus, God doth much more. Try thy integrity; art thou willing to have a tender conscience, and an informed conscience? Dost thou love to hear what that speaks out of God’s Word? whether peace or duty? this is comfortable. But on the other side, if thou art a man that rebellest against the light of it, wouldst fain put out the sting of it, wouldst be glad to feel no such living thing in thy breast, then thou hast cause to suspect thyself. Oh, it is to be feared that there are many that give themselves to lusts, and carnal pleasures, that so they may put a foggy mist between their conscience and themselves. Others dig into the world, labouring to become senseless, that so there may be an eclipse of this light by the interposition of the earth. Others run to damnable heresies, denying Scriptures, God, heaven, hell; pleading for an universal salvation of all. What are these but refuges of guilty consciences? We must distinguish between our carnal concupiscence, and conscience; between deluded imaginations, and conscience; between an erroneous and scrupulous conscience, and a well-grounded and truly informed conscience; and when we have done so, we must follow conscience as far as that follows the Word.—*Anthony Burgess.*

Verse 2.—“*Reins heart.*”—The “*reins,*” as the seat of the lower animal passions; the “*heart,*” as comprising not only the higher affections, but also the will and the conscience. He thus desires to keep nothing back; he will submit himself to the searching flame of the Great Refiner, that all dross of self-deception may be purged away.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 3.—The practical effect of divine goodness is seen in this text. As the chief thing communicated from God is the divine nature, whereby we are made to resemble him, so the promises of God set home upon the soul are the means of communication; they are the milk and honey of the Scripture, which do not cherish the old man, but support the new; they are not pillows for sinful sloth, but spurs to holy diligence. The promises of grace animate the soul to duty; and when we thus see the goodness of the Lord, it encourages our subjection to his government.—*Timothy Cruso.*

Verses 3, 4.—“*I have walked in thy truth, I have not sat with vain persons.*” Be as careful as thou canst, that the persons thou choosest for thy companions be such as fear God. The man in the gospel was possessed with the devil, who dwelt

amongst the tombs, and conversed with graves and carcases. Thou art far from walking after the good Spirit, if thou chooseth to converse with open sepulchres, and such as are dead in sins and trespasses. God will not shake the wicked by the hand, as the Vulgate reads (Job viii. 20), neither must the godly man. David proves the sincerity of his course, by his care to avoid such society: "*I have walked in thy truth; I have not sat with vain persons.*" There is a twofold "*truth.*"

1. Truth of doctrine. Thy law is the truth, free from all dross of corruption and falsehood of error. 2. Truth of affection, or of the inward parts. This may be called "*thy truth,*" or God's truth, though man be the subject of it, partly because it proceedeth from him, partly because it is so pleasant to him; in which respect a broken heart is called the "*sacrifice of God.*" Psalm li. 6. As if he had said, I could not have walked in the power of religion, and in integrity, if I had associated with vile and vain company; I could never have walked in thy precepts if I had "*sat with vain persons.*" Observe the phrase, "*I have not sat with vain persons.*"

1. Sitting is a posture of choice. It is at a man's liberty, whether he will sit or stand. 2. Sitting is a posture of pleasure. Men sit for their ease, and with delight; therefore, the glorified are said to "*sit in heavenly places.*" Eph. ii. 6. 3. Sitting is a posture of staying or abiding. 2 Kings v. 3. Standing is a posture of going, but sitting of staying. The blessed, who shall for ever be with the Lord and his chosen, are mentioned "*to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*" Matt. viii. 11. David in neither of these senses durst *sit with vain persons.* He might, as his occasions required, use their company, but durst not knowingly choose such company. They could not be the object of his election who were not the object of his affection. "*I hate the congregation of evil doers,*" saith he. As sitting is a posture of pleasure, he did not sit with vain persons. He was sometimes amongst them to his sorrow, but not to his solace. They were to him, as the Canaanites to the Israelites, pricks in his eyes, and thorns in his sides. "*Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*" Psalm cxx. 5. It caused grief, not gladness, that he was forced to be amongst the profane.—George Swinnoek.

Verse 4.—"*I have not sat with vain persons.*" There is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling, or as the apostle says, "*We must needs go out of the world,*" but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked. 1 Cor. v. 10. "*I have written unto you not to keep company,*" etc. 1 Cor. v. 11. Do not be too familiar with them. What do Christ's doves among birds of prey? What do virgins among harlots? The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague. "*They were mingled among the heathen and learned their works.*" If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Pharaoh taught Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not teach Pharaoh to pray.—Thomas Watson.

Verse 4.—"*Neither will I go in with dissemblers.*" Chaldee: "I will not go in with those that hide themselves to do evil." Wickedness is uncandid, and loves concealment, while truth and righteousness are open, and seek scrutiny. Job xxiv. 13-17; John iii. 20, 21. None will deny that the candid man has far fewer troubles with his own conduct than the tortuous and deceitful. The righteous shun the wicked both for the *sin* and for the misery that are in their ways.—William S. Plumer.

Verse 4.—"*Dissemblers.*" The hypocrite has much angel without, more devil within. He fries in words, freezes in works; speaks by ells, doth good by inches. He is a stinking dunghill, covered over with snow; a loose-hung mill that keeps great clacking, but grinds no grist; a lying hen that cackles when she hath not laid.—Thomas Adams.

Verse 4.—"*Dissemblers.*" Perhaps when the bright sunbeams of an early spring have robbed all nature in a smiling garb, you have taken your little baskets, and gone in quest of a bank of sweet-smelling modest violets, and you may have found flowers so like them, in form and colour, that you have been deceived, and eagerly grasped your prize; but alas! the sweet odour which should have scented the gale, was found wanting, and betrayed the dog violet. An apt emblem this of those, who, "*having the form of godliness, deny the power thereof.*" 2 Tim. iii. 5.—Mrs. Rogers, in "*The Shepherd King.*"

Verses 4, 5.—As rotten apples corrupt those sound ones that do touch them

and lie close to them, even so the evil manners and bad conditions of the ungodly do infect those that keep them company.—*Robert Cawdray.*

Verses 4, 5.—“It is difficult (saith a late ingenious writer) even to a miracle to keep God’s commandments and evil company too.” How suddenly after your soul-refreshments in your closet communion have you lost all your heats and spiritual fervencies, which you had in secret, and have instantly cooled by going forth into cold and corrupt air! When a saint hath been in private ravished with the love of God and the joys of heaven, and afterwards meets with company, which neither doth nor can speak one word of such matters, what a damp is it to him! What a quenching, as it were, of the Spirit of God in him! Nay, is not that true which one saith, that “the people of God do generally lose more by worldly men, that are of a blameless conversation before men, than they lose by wicked and profane men”?—*Lewis Stuckley.*

Verses 4, 5, 9.—He that would not be found amongst sinners in the other world, must take heed that he do not frequent their company in this. Those whom the constable finds wandering with vagrants, may be sent with them to the house of correction. “Lord,” said a good woman, on her death bed, when in some doubt of her salvation, “send me not to hell amongst wicked men, for thou knowest I never loved their company all my life long.” David deprecates their future doom upon the like ground, and argueth it as a sign of his sincerity: “*I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked. . . . O gather not my soul with sinners.*” Lord, I have not loved the wicked so well as to sit with them for a little time, and shall I live with them for ever? I have not lain amongst them rotting on the earth; and wilt thou gather my soul with those sticks for the unquenchable fire of hell? Lord, I have been so far from liking, that thou knowest I have loathed the congregation of evil doers. Do not I hate them that hate thee? Yea, I hate them with perfect hatred; and shall thy friends fare as thy foes? I appeal to thy Majesty, that my great comfort is in thy chosen. I rejoice only to be amongst thy children here, and shall I be excluded their company hereafter? “*O do not gather my soul with sinners,*” for the wine-press of thine eternal anger! Marcion, the heretic, seeing Polycarp, wondered that he would not own him. Do you not know me, Polycarp? Yea, saith Polycarp, “*Scio te esse primogenitum diaboli;*” “I know thee to be the firstborn of the devil,” and so despised him.—*George Swincock.*

Verse 5.—“*I have hated the congregation of evil doers,*” etc. The hatred of God’s enemies, *quà* his enemies—“yea, I hate them right sore” so entirely opposed to the indifferentism of the present day, has always been one distinguishing mark of his ancient servants. Witness Phinehas (Psalm cvi. 31); “And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore;” Samuel with Agag; Elias with the priests of Baal. And notice the commendation of the angel of Ephesus, “Thou canst not bear them that are evil.” Rev. ii. 2.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 5.—“*I have hated the congregation of evil doers.*” We consider them as God’s enemies, so we hate them; not their persons, but their vices; for that, as Augustine defineth, it is *odium perfectum*, a perfect hatred. And indeed it is the hatred that God beareth to his enemies; for “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom. i. 18); not against their persons—they are his workmanship, and carry his image in some sort, though much disfigured; but against the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, by which their persons do stand obnoxious to his displeasure. And thus I find the saints of God have triumphed over the wicked, as Israel over Pharaoh, and the Gileadites over the children of Ammon; not rejoicing in the destruction of God’s creatures, but of God’s enemies; and wishing with Deborah and Barak, “So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.” This is no more but an applauding of the judgment of God, and a celebration of his justice.—*Edward Marbury.*

Verse 5.—“*I have hated,*” etc. Consider that there can be no true friendship betwixt a godly and a wicked person; therefore it concerneth thee to be the more wary in thy choice. He that in factions hath an eye to power, in friendship will have an eye to virtue. Friendship, according to the philosopher, is one soul in two bodies. But how can they ever be of one soul that are as different as air and earth, and as contrary as fire and water? All true love is, *motus animi ad fruentum Deo propter ipsum; se et proximo propter Deum*—a motion of the soul towards

the enjoyment of God for himself, and his neighbours for God's sake ; so that he can never truly love man who doth not love his Maker. God is the only foundation upon which we can build friendship ; therefore such as live without him, cannot love us in him. That building which is loose, without this foundation can never stand long. A wicked man may call that profession he maketh to his brother by the name of love, but heathens can tell us that virtue alone is the hand which can twist the cords of love ; that other combinations are but a confederacy, and all other but conjunctions in hypocrisy.—*George Swinnoek.*

Verse 5.—Wheresoever we perceive any people to worship God truly after his word, there we may be certain the church of Christ to be, unto the which we ought to associate ourselves, and to desire, with the prophet David, to praise God in the midst of this church. But if we behold, through the iniquity of time, congregations to be made with counterfeit religion, otherwise than the word of God doth teach, we ought then, if we be required to be companions thereof, to say again with David, "*I have hated the synagogue of the malignant, and will not sit with the wicked.*" In the Apocalypse, the church of Ephesus is highly commended, because she tried such as said they were apostles and were not in deed, and therefore would not abide the company of them. Further, God commanded his people that they should not seek Bethel, neither enter into Galgala, where idolatry was used, by the mouth of his prophet Amos.—*John Philpot (Martyr). Burnt at Smithfield, 1555.*

Verse 5.—How few consider how they harden wicked men by an intimacy with them, whereas withdrawal from them might be a means to make them ashamed ! Whilst we are merry and jovial with them, we make them believe their condition is not deplorable, their danger is not great ; whereas if we shunned them, as we would a bowed wall, whilst they remain enemies to the Lord, this might do them good, for the startling of them, and rousing of them out of their unhappy security and strong delusions wherein they are held.—*Lewis Stuckley.*

Verse 6.—"*I will wash mine hands in innocency.*" There are two eminent lavers in the gospel ; the first, Christ's bath, a hot bath, *lavacrum sanguinis*, the laver of Christ's blood ; the second, our bath, a cold bath, *lavacrum lachrimarum*, the laver of repentance. These two mixed together will prove a sovereign composition, wrought first by Christ himself when he sweat water and blood. The first is as that pool of Bethesda into which whosoever enters with *faith*, is healed ; the blood of Christ is the true laver of regeneration, a fountain set open for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in. "The blood of Christ purgeth us from all sins." 1 John i. 7. We account it charity in mothers to feed their children with their own milk : how dear is the love of Christ, that both washeth and feeds us with his own blood ! No sooner are we born in Christ, but just as our mother's, so Christ's blood is turned into milk, nourishing us to everlasting salvation. What is *calamus benjaminii*, or storax, or a thousand rivers of oil, to make us clean, except the Lord purge and cleanse us ? No ; 'tis his blood "that speaks better things than the blood of Abel." "Unto him, therefore, that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father : to him be glory and dominion for ever." Rev. i. 5, 6. But yet 'tis the second bath, the laver of repentance, that must apply and make the first operative. This bath of Mary Magdalene's repentance, it is a kind of rebaptisation, giving strength and effect to the first washing. And it implies a threefold act : first, to bruise our hearts by *contrition* : secondly, to lay our wounds open by *confession* to God ; thirdly, to *wash our hands in innocency*, by *satisfaction* to men. . . . Wash now and wash all ; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is nothing in us but wounds and sores ; yet above all there is something here in it that David washeth his "*hands.*" Indeed it is not enough to come with wet eyes, if we come with foul hands, to offer with unwashed hands ; the Gentiles would not do it. Contrition and confession to God make not up complete repentance without satisfaction to men. *Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituatur ablatum* :* it is as true as old, and in old father Latimer's English it is, "Either there must be restitution, open or secret, or else hell." Whoever repairs not the wrong, rejoiceth in the sin. Prov. ii. 14. Where there is no satisfaction, *Non agitur sed fingitur pœnitentia*," saith St. Augustine ; and those who restore not all, wash not their whole hands, they dip only the tips of their fingers. Extortion,

* Augustine.

rapine, bribery, these are the sins of the hands (sins so proper to the Jews, that they may well conceive as they do that the devil lies all night on their hands, and that is it makes them so diligent in washing); but as for us Christians, unless these vipers be shaken off our hands, though ye cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, yet if you continue in your pollutions, God regards not your offering any more, nor will he receive it with good will at your hands. Matt. ii. 13.—*Isaac Bargrave's Sermon before the House of Commons, 1623.*

Verse 6.—“*I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*” If greatness might have privileged this person from impurity, David was a king; if the grace of his soul might have freed him from the soil of sin, he was “a man after God’s own heart.” But let not great men put too much trust in their greatness; the longer the robe is, the more soil it contracts: great power may prove the mother of great damnation. And as for purity, there is a generation that say there’s no sin in them, but they deceive themselves; there is no truth in them. Whatever Rome’s *φωσιδόροισι* pretend for the power of nature, and of free will, we wretched sinners are taught to conceive more truly of our own infirmity. Christ’s own apostle, stout Thomas, failed in the faith of his resurrection; Peter (whose chair is now the pretended seat of infallibility) denied his Master; David, “a man after God’s own heart,” hath need of washing; and who can say, I am pure in the sight of the Lord? Certainly, O Lord, no flesh is righteous in thy sight. No; this is the best ground of Christian felicity, if with David we fall to a sight of our own sins; if with the Publican we strike our own breasts, and not with the Pharisee, cast our eye so much upon other men’s faults. Why should we, like tailors, measure all men but ourselves? as if the best of us had not sin enough of his own to think on. See how David calls himself to account for his own sins; “O Lord, I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.” Oh, the powerful effect of Christian devotion, when by the reflective act of the understanding, science is turned into conscience, and our knowledge is but the glass of our own imperfection, the glass wherein the sight of our sins sends us presently to God, as it did David here, who makes this account only betwixt God and his own soul, “*I, O Lord.*” First, he takes his rise from humility and the sight of his own sins, and he soars up by the wings of faith to the throne of God’s mercy: “*I, O Lord.*” He sees with his own eyes, and not only with the church, or the priest’s spectacles; he is his own penitentiary and confessor; here’s no intercession by saints, no masses, merits, indulgencies, trentals, dirges: all’s done betwixt God and him: “*I, O Lord.*” With the eye of humility he looks to himself and his own misery; then with the eye of faith to God and his mercy, and from both these results a third virtue of repentance in the act of preparation, washing the soil of sin in the bath of sorrow: “*I will wash mine hands,*” etc.—*Isaac Bargrave.*

Verse 6.—“*I will wash my hands in purity.*” Referring in these words, to the ordinary use of the sacrifices, he makes a distinction between himself and those who professed to offer the same divine worship, and thrust themselves forward in the services of the sanctuary, as if they alone had the sole right to perform them. As David, therefore, and these hypocrites were one in this respect, that they entered the sanctuary, and surrounded the sacred altar together, he proceeds to show that he was a true worshipper, declaring that he not only diligently attended to the external rites, but came to worship God with unfeigned devotion. It is obvious that he alludes to the solemn rite of washing which was practised under the law. He, accordingly, reproves the gross superstition of hypocrites, who, in seeking only the purification of water, neglected true purification; whereas it was God’s design, in the appointment of the outward sign, to put men in mind of their inward pollution, and thus to encourage them to repentance. The outward washing alone, instead of profiting hypocrites, kept them at a greater distance from God. When the Psalmist, therefore, says, “*I will wash my hands in innocency,*” he intimates that they only gather more pollution and filth by their washings. The Hebrew word, נִקְיָוֹן *nikkayon*, signifies the cleanness of anything, and is figuratively used for innocency. We thus see, that as hypocrites derive no moral purity whatever from their washings, David mocks at the labour with which they vainly toil and torment themselves in such rites.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 6.—“*I will wash mine hands,*” etc. David willing to express his coming with a pure heart to pray to God, doth it by this similitude of a priest; that as a priest washes his hands, and then offers oblation, so had he constantly joined purity and devotion together.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 6.—"In *innocency*." The very ἀκμῆ and crown of all our preparation, the purest water we can wash in, is *innocency*; and *innocency* is a virtue of the heart as well as of the hand. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." James iv. 8. I could wish our washing might be like Cyprian's baptising, *ad tincturam*, even till we were dyed in repentance and the blood of Christ. Let the quantity of thy sins be the measure of thy repentance. First offer thine *innocency*, then thy sacrifice. It is not enough that you come this day by order, you must come with *innocency*. God requires the duty of the second table, as well as of the first; he abhors the outward act of piety where he finds no conscience and practice of *innocency*.—*Isaac Bargrave*.

Verse 6 (first clause).—One morning, as Gotthold was pouring water into a basin, he recollected the words of Scripture: "*I will wash my hands in innocency*," a text which shows how diligently the royal prophet had endeavoured to lead a blameless life, and walk habitually in the fear of God. Upon this he mused, and said, Henceforth, my God, every time I pour out water to wash with, I will call to mind that it is my duty to cleanse my hands from wicked actions, my mouth from wicked words, and my heart from wicked lusts and desires, that so I may be enabled to lift holy hands unto thee, and with unspotted lips and heart worship thee, to the best of my ability. What will it profit me to strive after outward purity, if my heart is filthy and abominable in thy sight? Can the food nourish me which I have earned with polluted hands, or seized with violence and injustice, or eaten with insensibility and ingratitude? Ah! no, my God; far from me be food like this. My first care shall be to maintain a blameless walk; my next, when I have thoughtlessly defiled myself, to cleanse and wash away the stain, and remove mine iniquity from thine eyes. "*Purge me, O my God, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" Psalm li. 7.—*Christian Scriber* (1629-1693), in "*Gotthold's Emblems*."

Verse 6.—"I will compass thine altar, O Lord." On the next day after this feast [the Feast of Tabernacles], the people compassed the altar seven times, with palm boughs in their hands, in the remembrance of the overthrow of Jericho. . . . Not only the boughs, but the days of this whole Feast of Tabernacles, were termed *Hosannoth*, from the usual acclamation of the people whilst they carried the boughs up and down.—*Thomas Godwyn, B.D.* (1587-1643), in "*Moses and Aaron*."

Verse 6.—By the phrase *compassing the altar*, either he alludes to some Levitical custom of going about the altar, as the priests did in the oblation of their sacrifices; and the people, especially those of them who were more devout and zealous, who possibly moved from place to place, but still within their own court, that they might discern what was done on the several sides of the altar, and so be the more affected with it; or rather he implies that he would offer many sacrifices together, which would employ the priests round about the altar.—*Mathew Pool*.

Verse 8.—"Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house," etc. "I have in my congregation," said a venerable minister of the gospel, "a worthy, aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound, and yet she is always one of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of her constant attendance (as it was impossible for her to hear my voice), she answered, 'Though I cannot hear you, I come to God's house because I love it, and would be found in his ways; and he gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me: another reason is, because there I am in the best company, in the more immediate presence of God, and among his saints, the honourable of the earth. I am not satisfied with serving God in private; it is my duty and privilege to honour him regularly in public.'" What a reproof this is to those who have their hearing, and yet always come to a place of worship late, or not at all!—*K. Arvine*.

Verse 9.—"Gather not my soul with sinners." Now is the time that people should be in care and concern, that their souls be not gathered with sinners in the other world. In discoursing from this doctrine we shall—1. Consider some things implied in it. 2. Show who are the sinners, that we are to have a horror of our souls being gathered with in the other world. 3. What it is for one's soul to be gathered with sinners in the other world. 4. Consider this care and concern, or show what is implied in this earnest request, "Gather not my soul with sinners."

5. Give the reasons why we should be in such care and concern. 6. Make application.

Death is the gathering time, which the Psalmist has in view in the text. Ye have a time here that ye call the gathering time, about the term when the servants are going away, wherein ye gather your strayed sheep, that every one may get their own again. Death is God's gathering time wherein he gets the souls belonging to him, and the devil those belonging to him. They did go long together, but then they are parted; and saints are taken home to the congregation of saints, and sinners to the congregation of sinners. And it concerns us to say, "Gather not my soul with sinners." Whoever be our people here, God's people or the devil's, death will gather our souls to them.

It is a horrible thing to be gathered with sinners in the other world. To think of our souls being gathered with them there, may make the hair of one's head stand up. Many now like no gathering like the gathering with sinners; it is the very delight of their hearts, it makes a brave jovial life in their eyes. And it is a pain to them to be gathered with saints, to be detained before the Lord on a Sabbath-day. But to be gathered with them in the other world, is a horror to all sorts. 1. The saints have a horror of it, as in the text. To think to be staked down in their company in the other world would be a hell of itself to the godly. David never had such a horror of the society of the diseased, the persecuted, etc., as of sinners. He is content to be gathered with saints of whatever condition; but, "Lord," says he, "Gather not my soul with sinners." 2. The wicked themselves have a horror of it. Numb. xxiii. 10. "Let me die the death of the righteous," said the wicked Balaam, "and let my last end be like his." Though they would be content to live with them, or be with them in life, their consciences bear witness that they have a horror of being with them in death. They would live with sinners, but they would die with saints. A poor, unreasonable, self-condemning thought.—*Thomas Boston.*

Verse 9.—"Gather not my soul with sinners." Bind me not up in the same bundle with them, like the tares for the fire. Matt. xiii. 30. The contrast to this is seen in the following Psalm (verse 10), "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;" literally, will *gather me* to his fold.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 9.—"Gather not my soul with sinners." The Lord hath a harvest and a gleaning time also, set for cutting down and binding together, in the fellowship of judgments, God's enemies, who have followed the same course of sinning: for here we are given to understand that God will "*gather their souls,*" and so will let none escape.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 9.—"Gather not my soul with sinners." After all, it may be objected that this concern seems to be common to saints and sinners. Even a wicked Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Numb. xxiii. 10. Take a few differences between them in this matter. 1. It is separation from Christ that makes the saints to have a horror at being gathered with sinners hereafter. Separation from Christ is the main ground of the believer's horror: but if other things were to be right with the sinner in the other world, he would be easy under separation from Christ. 2. The believer has a horror at being gathered with sinners on account of their filthiness; but the thing that makes the sinner concerned is the prospect of punishment. No doubt, a principle of self-preservation must make punishment frightful to all; but abstracted from that, the saints have a concern not to be gathered with sinners in the other world, upon account of their unholiness and filthiness. "He who is filthy, let him be filthy still," is enough to make a saint abhor the lot of sinners in the life to come. 3. The concern of the saints has a mighty influence upon them, to make them study holiness here; but sinners live unholily for all their concern. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 3. What hope? The hope of seeing Christ as he is, and of being perfectly like him, of being separated from sinners. 4. Lastly, the concern of the saints is such, that they do with purpose of heart come out from among sinners more and more in this world; but sinners are not concerned to be separated from sinners here. Balaam wished to die the death of the righteous; but he had no concern to live the life of the righteous, and to be separated from sinners here.—*James Scot, 1773.*

Verses 9—12.—David prays that God would not "gather his soul with sinners,

whose right hand is full of bribes ;" such as, for advantage, would be bribed to sin, to which wicked gang he opposeth himself, verse 11 : "*But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity ;*" where he tells us what kept him from being corrupted and enticed, as they were, from God—it was his *integrity*. A soul walking in its integrity will take bribes neither from men, nor sin itself ; and therefore he saith (verse 12), "*His foot stood in an even place ;*" or, as some read it, "*My foot standeth in righteousness.*"—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 10.—" *Their right hand is full of bribes.*" If the great men in Turkey should use their religion of Mahomet to sell, as our patrons commonly sell benefices here (the office of preaching, the office of salvation), it should be taken as an intolerable thing ; the Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Patrons be charged to see the office done, and not to seek a lucre and a gain by their patronship. There was a patron in England that had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him, and brought him thirty apples in a dish, and gave them to his man to carry them to his master. It is like he gave one to his man for his labour, to make up the gain, and so there was thirty-one. This man cometh to his master, and presented him with the dish of apples, saying, " Sir, such a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good unto him for such a benefice." " Tush, tush," quoth he, " this is no apple matter, I will none of his apples, I have as good as these (or any he hath) in mine own orchard." The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. " Then," quoth the priest, " desire him yet to prove one of them for my sake, he shall find them much better than they look for." He cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it. " Marry," quoth he, " this is a good apple." The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out and answered, " they are all one apples, I warrant you, sir ; they grew all on one tree, and have all one taste." " Well, he is a good fellow, let him have it," quoth the patron, etc. Get you a graft of this same tree, and I warrant you it shall stand you in better stead than all St. Paul's learning.—*Hugh Latimer*.

Verse 10.—" *Bribes.*" They that see furthest into the law, and most clearly discern the cause of justice, if they suffer the dust of bribes to be thrown into their sight, their eyes will water and twinkle, and fall at last to blind connivance. It is a wretched thing when justice is made a hackney that may be backed for money, and put on with golden spurs, even to the desired journey's end of injury and iniquity. Far be from our souls this wickedness, that the ear which should be open to complaints should be stopped with the earwax of partiality. Alas ! poor truth, that she must now be put to the charges of a golden earpick, or she cannot be heard !—*Thomas Adams*.

Verse 10.—

What makes all doctrines plain and clear ?
About two hundred pounds a-year,
And that which was proved true before
Proved false again ? Two hundred more.

Samuel Butler (1600—1680), in " Hudibras." Part III. Canto I.

Verse 12 (first clause).—The upright man's "*foot*," is said to "*stand in an even place ;*" he walks not haltingly and uncomely, as those who go in unequal ways, which are hobbling, and up and down, or those whose feet and legs are not even (as Solomon saith), " The legs of the lame are not equal," and so cannot *stand in an even place*, because one is long and the other short ; the sincere man's feet are *even*, and legs of a length, as I may say ; his care alike conscientious to the whole will of God. The hypocrite, like the badger, hath one foot shorter than another ; or, like a foundered horse, he doth not stand, as we say, right of all four ; one foot at least you shall perceive he favours, loth to put it down.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 12.—" *On an even place.*" As a man whose feet are firmly fixed upon even ground is apprehensive of no fall, so the pious worshippers of Jehovah feel no dread lest their adversaries should finally triumph over them.—*William Walford*.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. *Two inseparable companions*—faith and holiness. II. *The blessedness of the man who possesses them.* He needs not fear the judgment, nor the danger of the way. III. *The only means of procuring them.*

Verse 1 (last sentence).—The upholding power of trust in God.

Verse 2.—*Divine examinations.* Their variety, severity, searching nature, accuracy, certainty: when to be desired, and when to be dreaded.

Verse 3.—Delight for the eyes and safety for the feet; or the good man's sweet contemplation and holy practice; or the heavenly compound of godliness—motive, and motion, enjoying and acting, love and truth, free grace and good works.

Verse 3.—“*Thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes.*” It might be well to follow David and to keep the lovingkindness of God before our eyes. This should be done in four ways:—I. As a subject of contemplation. II. As the source of encouragement. III. As an incitement to praise. IV. As an example for imitation.—*William Jay.*

Verse 4.—“*Vain persons.*” Who they are. Why they are to be avoided. What will become of them. “*Dissemblers.*” Describe this numerous family. Show what their objects are. The mischief done to believers by their craftiness. The need of shunning them, and their fearful end.

Verse 5.—*Bad company.* Cases of its evil results, excuses for it answered. warnings given, motives urged for relinquishing.

Verse 6.—The necessity of personal holiness in order to acceptable worship.

Verse 7.—I. The believer's calling—a publisher. II. The author selected, and the quality of his works. “*Thy wondrous works.*” III. The mode of advertising—“*voice of thanksgiving,*” “*tell,*” etc.

Verse 8.—God's house. Why we love it. What we love in it. How we show our love. How our love will be rewarded.

Verse 9.—See “*Spurgeon's Sermons,*” No. 524. “*The Saints' Horror at the Sinners' Hell.*”

Verse 11.—The best men needing redemption and mercy; or the outward walk before men, and the secret walk with God.

Verse 12.—Secure standing, honoured position, grateful praise.

Verse 12 (last clause).—Congregational Psalmody, and our personal share in it.

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