

PSALM XXXII.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David, Maschil. *That David wrote this gloriously evangelic Psalm is proved not only by this heading, but by the words of the apostle Paul, in Romans iv. 6, 7, 8. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," etc. Probably his deep repentance over his great sin was followed by such blissful peace, that he was led to pour out his spirit in the soft music of this choice song. In the order of history it seems to follow the fifty-first. Maschil is a new title to us, and indicates that this is an instructive or didactic Psalm. The experience of one believer affords rich instruction to others, it reveals the footsteps of the flock, and so comforts and directs the weak. Perhaps it was important in this case to prefix the word, that doubting saints might not imagine the Psalm to be the peculiar utterance of a singular individual, but might appropriate it to themselves as a lesson from the Spirit of God. David promised in the fifty-first Psalm to teach transgressors the Lord's ways, and here he does it most effectually. Grotius thinks that this Psalm was meant to be sung on the annual day of the Jewish expiation, when a general confession of their sins was made.*

DIVISION.—*In our reading we have found it convenient to note the benediction of the pardoned, verses 1, 2; David's personal confession, 3, 4, 5; and the application of the case to others, 6, 7. The voice of God is heard by the forgiven one in 8, 9; and the Psalm then concludes with a portion for each of the two great classes of men, 10, 11.*

EXPOSITION.

BLESSED is *he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*
2 Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.

1. "*Blessed.*" Like the sermon on the mount, this Psalm begins with beatitudes. This is the second Psalm of benediction. The first Psalm describes the result of holy blessedness, the thirty-second details the cause of it. The first pictures the tree in full growth, this depicts it in its first planting and watering. He who in the first Psalm is a reader of God's book, is here a suppliant at God's throne accepted and heard. "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.*" He is now blessed, and ever shall be. Be he ever so poor, or sick, or sorrowful, he is blessed in very deed. Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness. To hear from God's own Spirit the words, "*absolvo te*" is joy unspeakable. Blessedness is not in this case ascribed to the man who has been a diligent lawkeeper, for then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self-righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. Over the returning prodigal, the word of welcome is here pronounced, and the music and dancing begin. A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word rendered forgiven is in the original *taken off, or taken away*, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift is here! It cost our Saviour a sweat of blood to bear our load, yea, it cost him his life to bear it quite away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza, but what was that to the weight which Jesus bore on our behalf? "*Whose sin is covered.*" Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercy-seat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away for ever from the sight of the all-seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity, will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more for ever. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, the covering, the making an end of sin; where this is seen and trusted in, the soul knows itself to be now accepted in the Beloved, and therefore enjoys a conscious blessedness which is the antepast of heaven. It is clear from the text that a man may *know* that he is pardoned: where would be the blessedness of an unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

2. "*Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*" The word blessed is in the plural, *oh, the blessednesses!* the double joys, the bundles of happiness, the mountains of delight! Note the three words so often used to denote our disobedience: transgression, sin, and iniquity, are the three-headed dog at the gates of hell, but our glorious Lord has silenced its barkings for ever against his own believing ones. The trinity of sin is overcome by the Trinity of heaven. Non-imputation is of the very essence of pardon: the believer sins, but his sin is not reckoned, not accounted to him. Certain divines froth at the mouth with rage against imputed righteousness, be it ours to see our sin not imputed, and to us may there be as Paul words it, "Righteousness imputed without works." He is blessed indeed who has a substitute to stand for him to whose account all his debts may be set down. "*And in whose spirit there is no guile.*" He who is pardoned, has in every case been taught to deal honestly with himself, his sin, and his God. Forgiveness is no sham, and the peace which it brings is not caused by playing tricks with conscience. Self-deception and hypocrisy bring no blessedness, they may drug the soul into hell with pleasant dreams, but into the heaven of true peace they cannot conduct their victim. Free from guilt, free from guile. Those who are justified from fault are sanctified from falsehood. A liar is not a forgiven soul. Treachery, double-dealing, chicanery, dissimulation, are lineaments of the devil's children, but he who is washed from sin is truthful, honest, simple, and childlike. There can be no blessedness to tricksters with their plans, and tricks, and shuffling, and pretending: they are too much afraid of discovery to be at ease; their house is built on the volcano's brink, and eternal destruction must be their portion. Observe the three words to describe sin, and the three words to represent pardon, weigh them well, and note their meanings. (See note at the end.)

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

David now gives us his own experience: no instructor is so efficient as one who testifies to what he has personally known and felt. He writes well who like the spider spins his matter out of his own bowels.

3. "*When I kept silence.*" When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not to do so, "*my bones,*" those solid pillars of my frame, the strongest portions of my bodily constitution, "*waxed old,*" began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy. What a killing thing is sin! It is a pestilent disease! A fire in the bones! While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly. "*Through my roaring all the day long.*" He was silent as to confession, but not as to sorrow. Horror at his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled the hoarse roaring of a wounded beast. None know the pangs of conviction but those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the Tophet which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.

4. "*For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me.*" God's finger can crush us—what must his hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David. "*My moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*" The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and

the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's strength, and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun. Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed. "*Selah.*" It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.

5. "*I acknowledged my sin unto thee.*" After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we doubly deserve punishment. "*And mine iniquity have I not hid.*" We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan, and by weight and measure bring out our sins. "*I said.*" This was his fixed resolution. "*I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.*" Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah; even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read, "*And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*" Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made. God's pardons are deep and thorough: the knife of mercy cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin. "*Selah.*" Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.

"Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,
Ask, O why such love to me?
Grace has put me in the number
Of the Saviour's family.
Hallelujah!
Thanks, eternal thanks, to thee."

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. *Selah.*

6. "*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.*" If the Psalmist means that on account of God's mercy others would become hopeful, his witness is true. Remarkable answers to prayer very much quicken the prayerfulness of other godly persons. Where one man finds a golden nugget others feel inclined to dig. The benefit of our experience to others should reconcile us to it. No doubt the case of David has led thousands to seek the Lord with hopeful courage who, without such an instance to cheer them, might have died in despair. Perhaps the Psalmist meant for this favour or the like all godly souls would seek, and here, again, we can confirm his testimony, for all will draw near to God in the same manner as he did when godliness rules their heart. The mercy seat is the way to heaven for all who shall ever come there. There is, however, a set time for prayer, beyond which it will be unavailing; between the time of sin and the day of punishment mercy rules the hour, and God may be found, but when once the sentence has gone forth pleading will be useless, for the Lord will not be found by the condemned soul. O dear reader, slight not the accepted time, waste not the day of salvation. The godly pray while the Lord has promised to answer, the ungodly postpone their petitions till the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, and then their knocking is too late. What a blessing to be led to seek the Lord before the great devouring floods leap forth from their lairs, for then when they do appear we shall be safe. "*Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" The floods shall come, and the waves shall rage, and toss themselves like Atlantic billows; whirlpools and waterspouts

shall be on every hand, but the praying man shall be at a safe distance, most surely secured from every ill. David was probably most familiar with those great land-floods which fill up, with rushing torrents, the beds of rivers which at other times are almost dry : these overflowing waters often did great damage, and, as in the case of the Kishon, were sufficient to sweep away whole armies. From sudden and overwhelming disasters thus set forth in metaphor the true suppliant will certainly be held secure. He who is saved from sin has no need to fear anything else.

7. "*Thou art my hiding place.*" Terse, short sentences make up this verse, but they contain a world of meaning. Personal claims upon our God are the joy of spiritual life. To lay our hand upon the Lord with the clasp of a personal "my" is delight at its full. Observe that the same man who in the fourth verse was oppressed by the presence of God, here finds a shelter in him. See what honest confession and full forgiveness will do ! The gospel of substitution makes him to be our refuge who otherwise would have been our judge. "*Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.*" Trouble shall do me no real harm when the Lord is with me, rather it shall bring me much benefit, like the file which clears away the rust, but does not destroy the metal. Observe the three tenses, we have noticed the sorrowful past, the last sentence was a joyful present, this is a cheerful future. "*Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*" What a golden sentence ! The man is encircled in song, surrounded by dancing mercies, all of them proclaiming the triumphs of grace. There is no breach in the circle, it completely rings him round ; on all sides he hears music. Before him hope sounds the cymbals, and behind him gratitude beats the timbrel. Right and left, above and beneath, the air resounds with joy, and all this for the very man who, a few weeks ago, was roaring all the day long. How great a change ! What wonders grace has done and still can do ! "*Selah.*" There was need of a pause, for love so amazing needs to be pondered, and joy so great demands quiet contemplation, since language fails to express it.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go ; I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding : whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

8. "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.*" Here the Lord is the speaker, and gives the Psalmist an answer to his prayer. Our Saviour is our instructor. The Lord himself deigns to teach his children to walk in the way of integrity, his holy word and the monitions of the Holy Spirit are the directors of the believer's daily conversation. We are not pardoned that we may henceforth live after our own lusts, but that we may be educated in holiness and trained for perfection. A heavenly training is one of the covenant blessings which adoption seals to us : "*All thy children shall be taught by the Lord.*" Practical teaching is the very best of instruction, and they are thrice happy who, although they never sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and are ignorant of Aristotle, and the ethics of the schools, have nevertheless learned to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. "*I will guide thee with mine eye.*" As servants take their cue from the master's eye, and a nod or a wink is all that they require, so should we obey the slightest hints of our Master, not needing thunderbolts to startle our incorrigible sluggishness, but being controlled by whispers and love-touches. The Lord is the great overseer, whose eye in providence overlooks everything. It is well for us to be the sheep of his pasture, following the guidance of his wisdom.

9. "*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding.*" Understanding separates man from a brute—let us not act as if we were devoid of it. Men should take counsel and advice, and be ready to run where wisdom points them the way. Alas ! we need to be cautioned against stupidity of heart, for we are very apt to fall into it. We who ought to be as the angels, readily become as the beasts. "*Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*" It is much to be deplored that we so often need to be severely chastened before we will obey. We ought to be as a feather in the wind, wafted readily in the breath of the Holy Spirit, but alas ! we lie like motionless logs, and stir not with heaven itself in view. Those cutting bits of affliction show how hard-mouthed we are, those bridles of infirmity manifest our headstrong and wilful manners.

We should not be treated like mules if there were not so much of the ass about us. If we will be fractious, we must expect to be kept in with tight rein. Oh for grace to obey the Lord willingly, lest like the wilful servant, we are beaten with many stripes. Calvin renders the last words, "Lest they kick against thee," a version more probable and more natural, but the passage is confessedly obscure—not, however, in its general sense.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked : but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous : and shout for joy, all ye *that are* upright in heart.

10. "*Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.*" Like refractory horses and mules, they have many cuts and bruises. Here and hereafter the portion of the wicked is undesirable. Their joys are evanescent, their sorrows are multiplying and ripening. He who sows sin will reap sorrow in heavy sheaves. Sorrows of conscience, of disappointment, of terror, are the sinner's sure heritage in time, and then for ever sorrows of remorse and despair. Let those who boast of present sinful joys, remember the *shall be* of the future, and take warning. "*But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.*" Faith is here placed as the opposite of wickedness, since it is the source of virtue. Faith in God is the great charmer of life's cares, and he who possesses it, dwells in an atmosphere of grace, surrounded with a body-guard of mercies. May it be given to us of the Lord at all times to believe in the mercy of God, even when we cannot see traces of its working, for to the believer, mercy is as all-surrounding as omniscience, and every thought and act of God is perfumed with it. The wicked have a hive of wasps around them, *many sorrows*; but we have a swarm of bees storing honey for us.

11. "*Be glad.*" Happiness is not only our privilege, but our duty. Truly we serve a generous God, since he makes it a part of our obedience to be joyful. How sinful are our rebellious murmurings! How natural does it seem that a man blest with forgiveness should be glad! We read of one who died at the foot of the scaffold of overjoy at the receipt of his monarch's pardon; and shall we receive the free pardon of the King of kings and yet pine in inexcusable sorrow? "*In the Lord.*" Here is the directory by which gladness is preserved from levity. We are not to be glad in sin, or to find comfort in corn, and wine, and oil, but in our God is to be the garden of our soul's delight. That there is a God and such a God, and that he is ours, ours for ever, our Father and our reconciled Lord, is matter enough for a never-ending Psalm of rapturous joy. "*And rejoice, ye righteous,*" redouble your rejoicing, peal upon peal. Since God has clothed his choristers in the white garments of holiness, let them not restrain their joyful voices, but sing aloud and shout as those who find great spoil. "*And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*" Our happiness should be demonstrative; chill penury of love often represses the noble flame of joy, and men whisper their praises decorously where a hearty outburst of song would be far more natural. It is to be feared that the church of the present day, through a craving for excessive propriety, is growing too artificial; so that enquirers' cries and believers' shouts would be silenced if they were heard in our assemblies. This may be better than boisterous fanaticism, but there is as much danger in the one direction as the other. For our part, we are touched to the heart by a little sacred excess, and when godly men in their joy overleap the narrow bounds of decorum, we do not, like Michal, Saul's daughter, eye them with a sneering heart. Note how the pardoned are represented as upright, righteous, and without guile; a man may have many faults and yet be saved, but a false heart is everywhere the damning mark. A man of twisting, shifty ways, of a crooked, crafty nature, is not saved, and in all probability never will be; for the ground which brings forth a harvest when grace is sown in it, may be weedy and waste, but our Lord tells us it is *honest* and good ground. Our observation has been that men of double tongues and tricky ways are the least likely of all men to be saved: certainly where grace comes it restores man's mind to its perpendicular, and delivers him from being doubled up with vice, twisted with craft, or bent with dishonesty.

Reader, what a delightful Psalm! Have you, in perusing it, been able to claim a lot in the goodly land? If so, publish to others the way of salvation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Title.—The term *Maschil* is prefixed to thirteen Psalms. Our translators have not ventured to do more, in the *text*, than simply print the word in English characters; in the *margin* however they render it, as the Geneva version had done before them, “to give instruction.” It would be going too far to affirm that this interpretation is subject to no doubt. Some good Hebraists take exception to it; so that, perhaps, our venerable translators did well to leave it untranslated. Still, the interpretation they have set down in the margin, as it is the most ancient, so it is sustained by the great preponderance of authority. It agrees remarkably with the contents of the thirty-second Psalm, which affords the earliest instance of its use, for that Psalm is pre-eminently didactic. Its scope is to instruct the convicted soul how to obtain peace with God, and be compassed about with songs of deliverance.—*William Binnie, D.D., in “The Psalms: their History, Teachings, and Use,”* 1870.

Whole Psalm.—This is a Didascalical Psalm, wherein David teacheth sinners to repent by his doctrine, who taught them to sin by his example. This science is universal and pertaineth to all men, and which necessarily we must all learn; princes, priests, people, men, women, children, tradesmen; all, I say, must be put to this school, without which lesson all others are unprofitable. But to the point. This is a mark of a true penitent, when he hath been a stumbling block to others, to be as careful to raise them up by his repentance as he was hurtful to them by his sin; and I never think that man truly penitent who is ashamed to teach sinners repentance, by his own particular proof. The Samaritan woman, when she was converted, left her bucket at the well, entered the city, and said, “Come forth, yonder is a man who hath told me all that I have done.” And our Saviour saith to St. Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” John iv. 29; Luke xxii. 32. St. Paul also, after his conversion is not ashamed to call himself chiefest of all sinners, and to teach others to repent of their sins by repenting for his own. Happy, and thrice happy, is the man who can build so much as he hath cast down.—*Archibald Symson.*

Whole Psalm.—It is told of Luther that one day being asked which of all the Psalms were the best, he made answer, “*Psalmi Paulini,*” and when his friends pressed to know which these might be, he said, “The 32nd, the 51st, the 130th, and 143rd. For they all teach that the forgiveness of our sins comes, without the law and without works, to the man who believes, and therefore I call them Pauline Psalms; and David sings, ‘There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared,’ this is just what Paul says, ‘God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.’ Rom. xi. 32. Thus no man may boast of his own righteousness. That word, ‘That thou mayest be feared,’ dusts away all merit, and teaches us to uncover our heads before God, and confess *gratia est, non meritum: remissio, non satisfactio*; it is mere forgiveness, not merit at all.”—*Luther’s Table Talk.*

Whole Psalm.—Some assert that this Psalm used to be sung on the day of expiation.—*Robert Leighton.*

THE PENITENTIAL PSALMS.—When Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome, for asserting the Copernican System, he was enjoined, as a penance, to repeat the Seven Penitential Psalms every week for three years. This must have been intended as extorting a sort of confession from him of his guilt, and acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence; and in which there certainly was some cleverness and, indeed, humour, however adding to the iniquity (or foolishness) of the proceeding. Otherwise it is not easy to understand what idea of painfulness or punishment the good fathers could attach to a devotional exercise such as this, which, in whatever way, could only have been agreeable and consoling to their prisoner.—*M. Montague, in The Seven Penitential Psalms in Verse . . . with an Appendix and Notes,* 1844.

Verse 1.—“*Blessed.*” Or, O blessed man; or, Oh, the felicities of that man! to denote the most supreme and perfect blessedness. As the elephant, to denote its vast bulk, is spoken of in the plural number, *Behemoth.*—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 1.—Notice, this is the first Psalm, except the first of all, which begins with Blessedness. In the first Psalm we have the blessing of innocence, or rather, of him who only was innocent: here we have the blessing of repentance, as the next happiest state to that of sinlessness.—*Lorinus, in Neale's Commentary.*

Verse 1.—“*Blessed is the man,*” saith David, “*whose sins are pardoned,*” where he maketh remission of sins to be true felicity. Now there is no true felicity but that which is enjoyed, and felicity cannot be enjoyed unless it be felt; and it cannot be felt unless a man know himself to be in possession of it; and a man cannot know himself to be in possession of it, if he doubt whether he hath it or not; and therefore this doubting of the remission of sins is contrary to true felicity, and is nothing else but a torment of the conscience. For a man cannot doubt whether his sins be pardoned or not, but straightway, if his conscience be not seared with a hot iron, the very thought of his sin will strike a great fear into him; for the fear of eternal death, and the horror of God’s judgment will come to his remembrance, the consideration of which is most terrible.—*William Perkins.*

Verse 1.—“*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*” Get your sins hid. There is a covering of sin which proves a curse. Prov. xxviii. 13. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper;” there is a covering it, by not confessing it, or which is worse, by denying it—Gehazi’s covering—a covering of sin by a lie; and there is also a covering of sin by justifying ourselves in it. I have not done this thing; or, I did no evil in it. All these are evil coverings: he that thus covereth his sin shall not prosper. But there is a blessed covering of sin: forgiveness of sin is the hiding it out of sight, and that is the blessedness.—*Richard Alleine.*

Verse 1.—“*Whose transgression is forgiven.*” We may lull the soul asleep with carnal delights, but the virtue of that opium will be soon spent. All those joys are but stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret—a poor sorry peace that dares not come to the light and endure the trial; a sorry peace that is soon disturbed by a few serious and sober thoughts of God and the world to come; but when once sin is pardoned, then you have true joy indeed. “Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” Matt. ix. 2.—*Thomas Manion.*

Verse 1.—“*Forgiven.*” Holy David, in the front of this Psalm shows us wherein true happiness consists; not in beauty, honour, riches (the world’s trinity), but in the forgiveness of sin. The Hebrew word to *forgive*, signifies to carry out of sight; which well agrees with that Jer. 1. 20, “In those days, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” This is an incomprehensible blessing, and such as lays a foundation for all other mercies. I shall but glance at it, and lay down these five assertions about it. 1. Forgiveness is an act of God’s free grace. The Greek word to *forgive*, deciphers the original of pardon; it ariseth not from anything inherent in us, but is the pure result of free grace. Isa. xliii. 25: “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake.” When a creditor forgives a debtor, he doeth it freely. Paul cries out, “I obtained mercy.” 1 Tim. i. 13. The Greek signifies, “I was be-mercied;” he who is pardoned, is all bestrewed with mercy. When the Lord pardons a sinner, he doth not pay a debt, but give a legacy. 2. God in forgiving sin, remits the guilt and penalty. Guilt cries for justice: no sooner had Adam eaten the apple, but he saw the flaming sword, and heard the curse; but in remission God doth indulge the sinner; he seems to say thus to him: Though thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deservest to die, yet I will absolve thee, and whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged. 3. Forgiveness of sin is through the blood of Christ. Free grace is the impulsive cause; Christ’s blood is the meritorious. “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Heb. ix. 22. Justice would be revenged either on the sinner or the surety. Every pardon is the price of blood. 4. Before sin is forgiven it must be repented of. Therefore repentance and remission are linked together. “That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.” Luke xxiv. 47. Not that repentance doth in a Popish sense merit forgiveness; Christ’s blood must wash our tears; but repentance is a qualification, though not a cause. He who is humbled for sin will the more value pardoning mercy. 5. God having forgiven sin, he will call it no more into remembrance. Jer. xxxi. 34. The Lord will make an act of indemnity, he will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses, or sue us with a cancelled bond. “He will cast all our sins into the depths of the

sea." Mic. vii. 19. Sin shall not be cast in as a cork which riseth up again, but as lead which sinks to the bottom. How should we all labour for this covenant blessing!—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 1.—"Sin is covered." Every man that must be happy, must have something to hide and cover his sins from God's eyes; and nothing in the world can do it, but Christ and his righteousness, typified in the ark of the covenant, whose cover was of gold, and called a propitiatory, that as it covered the tables that were within the ark, so God covers our sins against those tables. So the cloud covering the Israelites in the wilderness, signified God's covering us from the danger of our sins.—*Thomas Taylor's "David's Learning: or the Way to True Happiness,"* 1617.

Verse 1.—"Sin covered." This covering hath relation to some nakedness and filthiness which should be covered, even sin, which defileth us and maketh us naked. Why, saith Moses to Aaron, hast thou made the people naked? Ex. xxxii. 25. The garments of our merits are too short and cannot cover us, we have need therefore to borrow of Christ Jesus his merits and the mantle of his righteousness, that it may be unto us as a garment, and as those breeches of leather which God made unto Adam and Eve after their fall. Garments are ordained to cover our nakedness, defend us from the injury of the weather, and to adorn us. So the mediation of our Saviour serveth to cover our nakedness, that the wrath of God seize not upon us—he is that "white raiment" wherewith we should be clothed, that our filthy nakedness may not appear—to defend us against Satan—he is "wedding garment:" "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Rev. iii. 18; Isa. lxiii. 1; Matt. xxii. 11; Rom. xiii. 14.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 1.—The object of pardon—about which it is conversant, is set forth under divers expressions—*iniquity, transgression, and sin.* As in law, many words of like import and signification are heaped up and put together, to make the deed and legal instrument more comprehensive and effectual. I observe it the rather, because when God proclaims his name the same words are used, Exod. xxxiv. 7, "Taking away iniquity, transgression, and sin." Well, we have seen the meaning of the expression. Why doth the holy man of God use such vigour and vehemency of inculcation, "*Blessed is the man!*" and again, "*Blessed is the man!*" Partly with respect to his own case. David knew how sweet it was to have sin pardoned; he had felt the bitterness of sin in his own soul, to the drying up of his blood, and therefore he doth express his sense of pardon in the most lively terms. And then, partly, too, with respect to those for whose use this instruction was written, that they might not look upon it as a light and trivial thing, but be thoroughly apprehensive of the worth of so great a privilege. Blessed, happy, thrice happy they who have obtained pardon of their sins, and justification by Jesus Christ.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verses 1, 2.—In these verses four evils are mentioned: 1. *Transgression*, פְּשָׁעַ peshah. 2. *Sin*, חַטָּאת chataah. 3. *Iniquity*, אָוֹן avon. 4. *Guile*, רִמְיָה remiyah. The first signifies the passing over a boundary, doing what is prohibited. The second signifies the missing of a mark, not doing what was commanded; but it is often taken to express sinfulness, or sin in the nature, producing transgression in the life. The third signifies what is turned out of its proper course or situation; anything morally distorted or perverted. *Iniquity*, what is contrary to equity or justice. The fourth signifies fraud, deceit, guile, etc. To remove these evils, three acts are mentioned: forgiving, covering, and not imputing. 1. *TRANSGRESSION*, פְּשָׁעַ peshah, must be forgiven, נָשַׁו nesui, borne away, i.e., by a vicarious sacrifice; for bearing sin, or bearing away sin, always implies this. 2. *SIN*, חַטָּאת chataah, must be covered, כִּסֵּי kesui, hidden from the sight. It is odious and abominable, and must be put out of sight. 3. *INIQUITY*, אָוֹן avon, what is perverse or distorted, must not be imputed, לֹא יִחַשְׁבוּ lo yachshobh, must not be reckoned to his account. 4. *GUILE*, רִמְיָה remiyah, must be annihilated from the soul. In whose spirit there is no *GUILE*. The man whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is hidden, God having cast it as a millstone into the depths of the sea; whose iniquity and perversion is not reckoned to his account; and whose guile, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart, is annihilated, being emptied of sin, and filled with righteousness, is necessarily a happy man.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verses 1, 2.—*Transgression.* Prevarication. Some understand by it sins of omission and commission.

Sin. Some understand those inward inclinations, lusts, and motions, whereby

the soul swerves from the law of God, and which are the immediate cause of external sins.

Iniquity. Notes original sin, the root of all.

Levatus, forgiven, eased, signifies to take away, to bear, to carry away. Two words in Scripture are chiefly used to denote remission, to expiate, to bear or carry away: the one signifies the manner whereby it is done, namely, atonement, the other the effect of this expiation, carrying away; one notes the meritorious cause, the other the consequent.

Covered. Alluding to the covering of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. Menochius thinks it alludes to the manner of writing among the Hebrews, which he thinks to be the same with that of the Romans; as writing with a pencil upon wax spread upon tables, which when they would blot out they made the wax plain, and drawing it over the writing, covered the former letters. And so it is equivalent with that expression of "blotting out sin," as in the other allusion it is with "casting sin into the depths of the sea."

Impute. Not charging upon account. As sin is a defection from the law, so it is forgiven; as it is offensive to God's holiness, so it is covered; as it is a debt involving man in a debt of punishment, so it is not imputed; they all note the certainty, and extent, and perfection of pardon; the three words expressing sin here, being the same that are used by God in the declaration of his name.—*Stephen Charnock.*

Verses 1, 2, 6, 7.—Who is blessed? Not he who cloaks, conceals, confesses not his sin. As long as David was in this state he was miserable. There was guile in his spirit (2), misery in his heart, his very bones waxed old, his moisture was dried up as the drought in summer (3, 4). Who is blessed? He that is without sin, he who sins not, he who grieves no more by his sin the bosom on which he reclines. This is superlative blessedness, its highest element, the happiness of heaven. To be like God, to yield implicit, ready, full, perfect obedience, the obedience of the heart, of our entire being; this is to be blessed above all blessedness. But among those who live in a world of sin, who are surrounded by sin, who are themselves sinners, who is blessed? "*He whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity;*" and especially does he feel it to be so, who can, in some degree, enter into the previous state of David's soul (3, 4). Ah, in what a wretched state was the Psalmist previously to this blessedness! How must sin have darkened and deadened his spiritual faculties, to have guile in the spirit of one who could elsewhere exclaim, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me," any way of pain or grief, any way of sin which most surely leads to these. Ps. cxxxix. 23, 34. What a mournful condition of soul was his, who while he roared all the day long, yet kept silence before God, had no heart to open his heart unto God, was dumb before him, not in submission to his will, not in accepting the punishment of his iniquity (Lev. xxvi. 46), not in real confession, and honest, upright, and sincere acknowledgment of his iniquity to him against whom he had committed it. "*I kept silence,*" not merely I was silent, "*I kept silence,*" resolutely, perseveringly; I kept it notwithstanding all the remembrance of my past mercies, notwithstanding my reproaches of conscience, and my anguish of heart. I kept it notwithstanding "*thy hand was heavy upon me day and night,*" notwithstanding "*my moisture,*" all that was spiritual in me, my vital spirit, all that was indicative of spiritual life in my soul, seemed dried up and gone. Yes, Lord, notwithstanding all this, I kept it. But Nathan came, thou didst send him. He was to me a messenger full of reproof, full of faithfulness, but full of love. He came with thy word, and with the word of a King there was power. I acknowledged my sin unto him, and my iniquity did I not hide, but this was little. Against thee, thee only, did I sin, and to thee was my confession made. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, O Lord. I solemnly said that I would do so, and I did it. I confessed my transgression unto the Lord, "*and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*"

"*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.*" Behold the man who is blessed; blessed in the state of his mind, his guileless spirit, his contrite heart, the fruit of the spirit of grace; blessed in the forgiveness of a forgiving God; a forgiveness, perfect, entire, lacking nothing, signified by sin "*covered,*" "*iniquity not imputed*" of the Lord; blessed in the blessings which followed it. "*Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*" Beneath the hollow of that hand which was once

so heavy upon me, I can now repose. Thou art my hiding place, I dread thee no more; nay, I dwell in thee as my habitation, and my high tower, my covert, my safety, my house. Safe in thy love, whatever trouble may be my portion, and by the mouth of Nathan thy servant thou hast declared that trouble shall be my portion, I shall yet be preserved; yea, more, so fully wilt thou deliver me that I believe thou wilt encompass me so with the arms of thy mercy, as to call forth songs of grateful praise for thy gracious interposition.

Behold the blessedness of him whom God forgives! No wonder, then, that the Psalmist adds, "for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." As much as if he said, Surely after this thy gracious conduct towards me, all that truly love and fear thee, "every one that is godly," when he hears of thy dealings with me, "will pray unto thee." Encouraged by my example, he will not keep silence as I foolishly and sinfully did, but will confess and supplicate before thee, since thou art to be "found," and hast so wondrously shown that thou art, of all that truly seek thee, since there is the *place* of finding, as I lay my hand upon the victim, and look through that victim to him the promised Seed; since there is the *time* of finding, declared in thy word, and manifested by the secret drawing of my heart to thee by thy grace: since the unwillingness is not in thee, but in thy sinning creature to come to thee; "for this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee," then, however deep the waterfloods may be, however fierce the torrent, and headlong the stream, they shall not even come nigh unto him, much less shall they overwhelm him.—James Harrington Evans, M.A., 1735—1849.

Verse 2.—"Unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." Aben-Ezra paraphrases it, of whose sins God does not think, does not regard them, so as to bring them into judgment, reckoning them as if they were not; οὐ μὴ λογίζεται does not count or calculate them; does not require for them the debt of punishment. To us the remission is entirely free, our Sponsor having taken upon him the whole business of paying the ransom. His suffering is our impunity, his bond our freedom, and his chastisement our peace; and therefore the prophet says, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."—Robert Leighton.

Verse 2.—"In whose spirit there is no guile." In the saint's trouble, conscience is full of Scripture sometimes, on which it grounds its verdict, but very ill interpreted. Oh, saith the poor soul, this place is against me! "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Here, saith he, is a description of a sincere soul, to be one in whose spirit there is no guile; but I find much guile in me, therefore I am not the sincere one. Now this is a very weak yea, false inference. By a spirit without guile, is not meant a person that hath not the least deceitfulness and hypocrisy remaining in his heart. To be without sin, and to be without guile, in this strict sense are the same—a prerogative here on earth peculiar to the Lord Christ (1 Pet. ii. 22), "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And therefore when we meet with the same phrase attributed to the saints, as to Levi, Mal. ii. 6: "Iniquity was not found in his lips;" and to Nathanael, John i. 47: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" we must sense it in an inferior way, that may suit with their imperfect state here below, and not put that which was only Christ's crown on earth, and is the glorified saint's robe in heaven, on the weak Christian while militant here on earth, not only with a devil without, but with a body of sin within him. Wipe thine eyes again, poor soul, and then if thou readest such places, wherein the Spirit of God speaks so highly and hyperbolically of his saints' grace, thou shalt find he doth not assert the perfection of their grace, free from all mixture of sin, but rather to comfort poor drooping souls, and cross their misgiving hearts, which, from the presence of hypocrisy, are ready to overlook their sincerity as none at all, he expresseth his high esteem of their little grace, by speaking of it as if it were perfect, and their hypocrisy none at all.—William Gurnall.

Verse 2. "In whose spirit there is no guile." When once pardon is realised the believer has courage to be truthful before God: he can afford to have done with "guile" in the spirit. Who would not declare all his debts when they are certain to be discharged by another? Who would not declare his malady when he was sure of a cure? True faith knows not only that "guile" before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal: he sees himself as before God, stripped, and laid open, and bare; and if he has learned

to see himself as he is, so also has he learned to see God as he reveals himself. There is no guile in the spirit of one who is justified by faith; because in the act of justification truth has been established in his inward parts. There is no guile in the spirit of him who sees the truth of himself in the light of the truth of God. For the truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners. Such a one knows he is not his own, for he is bought with a price, and therefore he is to glorify God. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose real object is to glorify Christ and not himself. But when a man is not quite true to Christ, and has not quite ceased to magnify self, there may be guile, for he will be more occupied with thoughts about himself than with the honour of Christ. But if the truth, and honour, and glory of Christ be his supreme care, he may leave himself out of the question, and, like Christ, "commit himself to him that judgeth righteously."—*J. W. Reeve, M.A., in "Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm," 1860.*

Verse 2.—"No guile." Sincerity is that property to which pardoning mercy is annexed. True, indeed, it is that Christ covers all our sins and failings; but it is only the sincere soul over which he will cast his skirt. "*Blessed is he whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.*" None will doubt this; but which is the man? The next words tell us his name; "*And in whose spirit there is no guile.*" Christ's righteousness is the garment which covers the nakedness and shame of our unrighteousness; faith the grace that puts this garment on; but what faith? None but the faith unfeigned, as Paul calls it. 2 Tim. i. 5. "Here is water," said the eunuch, "what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Acts viii. 36. Now mark Philip's answer, ver. 37: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest;" as if he had said, Nothing but an hypocritical heart can hinder thee. It is the false heart only that finds the door of mercy shut.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—"Guile." The guile of the spirit is an inward corruption in the soul of man, whereby he dealeth deceitfully with himself before God in the matter of salvation.—*Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 3.—"My bones waxed old." God sporteth not at the sins of his elect, but outwardly doth deal with them more hardly, and chastise them more rigorously than he doth the reprobate. David's troubles and pains were partly external, partly internal: external I call those that were cast on his body; internal upon his conscience. And in the body there were torments and vexations, seizing sometimes on his flesh—which was less painful—sometimes on his bones, which was more grievous, yea, almost intolerable, as experience teacheth. And this is God's just recompence; when we bestow our strength on sin, God abateth it, and so weakeneth us. Samson spent his strength on Delilah, but to what weakness was he brought! Let us, therefore, learn, that God hath given us bones and the strength thereof for another use, that is, to serve him, and not waste or be prodigal of them in the devil's service.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 3.—"My bones waxed old." By bones, the strength of the body, the inward strength and vigour of the soul is meant. The conscience of sin, and the terror of judgment doth break the heart of a true penitent, so long as he beholdeth his sin deserving death, his judge ready to pronounce the sentence of it, hell open to receive him for it, and the evil angels, God's executioners, at hand to hurry him to it.—*Samuel Page, in "David's Broken Heart," 1646.*

Verse 3.—"My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." David here not only mourns for sin as a man, but he roars, as it were, like a pained beast. He seems fitter for a wilderness to cry out, than for a secret chamber to weep in; at other times he can "water his couch" in the night, now he "roars" all the day long; at other times "his moisture is dried," now his "bones," the pillars of his house, shake and wax old.—*Alexander Carmichael, 1677.*

Verse 4.—"Thy hand." A correcting hand, whereby God scourgeth and buffeteth his own children. Now the sense of God's power punishing or correcting, is called God's hand, as 1 Sam. v. 11. The hand of God was sore at Ekron, because of the ark; and a heavy hand in resemblance, because when men smite they lay their hand heavier than ordinary. Hence, we may note three points of doctrine: first, that all afflictions are God's hand; secondly, that God lays his hand heavily often upon his dear children; thirdly, that God often continues his heavy hand night and day on them.—*Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 4.—"My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." Another meaning may be attributed to these words. We may suppose the Psalmist to be referring to *spiritual drought*.—Charles H. Bingham, B.A., in "*Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm*," 1836.

Verse 4.—"My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." The summer is from the middle of August to the middle of November. The intensity of the heat is great, and almost intolerable. . . Up to the beginning or middle of September there are no showers, rain being as scarce in summer as snow. . . . The dry grass of the fields sometimes takes fire, and produces desolating conflagrations, and the parched earth is cleft and broken into chasms.—John Eadie, D.D., LL.D., in *Biblical Cyclopædia*, 1868.

Verse 4.—"The drought of summer." Dr. Russell, in his account of the weather at Aleppo, which very much resembles that of Judea, says that the verdure of the spring fades before the middle of May, and before the end of that month the whole country puts on so parched and barren an aspect that one would scarce think it capable of producing anything, there being but very few plants that have vigour enough to resist the extreme heat.—Thomas Harmer's "*Observations*," 1775.

Verse 4.—"The drought of summer." During the twelve years from 1846 to 1859 only two slight showers fell in Jerusalem between the months of May and October. One fell in July, 1858, another in June, 1859.—Dr. Whitty's "*Water Supply of Jerusalem*," quoted in *Kitto's Cyclopædia*.

Verse 4.—If God striketh those so sore whom he favoureth, how sharply and sore will he strike them whom he favoureth not.—Gregory.

Verses 4, 5.—If our offences have been not gnats, but camels, our sorrow must be not a drop, but an ocean. Scarlet sins call for bloody tears; and if Peter sin heinously he must weep bitterly. If, then, thy former life hath been a cord of iniquity, twisted with many threads, a writing full of great blots, a course spotted with various and grievous sins, multiply thy confessions and enlarge thy humiliation; double thy fastings and treble thy prayers; pour out thy tears, and fetch deep sighs; in a word, iterate and aggravate thy acknowledgments, though yet, as the apostle saith in another case, I say in this, "Grieve not as without hope," that upon thy sincere and suitable repentance divine goodness will forgive thee thy sins.—Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5.—"Selah." See Vol. I., pp. 22, 23, 25, 27, 29.

Verse 5.—"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid." The godly man is ingenuous in laying open his sins. The hypocrite doth veil and smother his sin; he doth not *abscindere peccatum*, but *abscondere*; like a patient that hath some loathsome disease in his body, he will rather die than confess his disease; but a godly man's sincerity is seen in this—he will confess and shame himself for sin. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly." 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. Nay a child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale; he will acknowledge he is a sinner in general, whereas David doth, as it were, point with his finger to the sore: "I have done this evil" (Psalm li. 4); he doth not say I have done evil, but this evil. He points at his blood-guiltiness.—Thomas Watson.

Verse 5.—"I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Be thine own accuser in the free confession of thy sins. *Peccati pater* (as the prodigal child), "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." For it fares not in the court of heaven as it doth in our earthly tribunals. With men a free confession makes way for a condemnation; but with God, the more a sinner bemoans his offence the more he extenuates the anger of his Judge. Sin cannot but call for justice, as it is an offence against God; yet, when once 'tis a wound to the soul it moveth him to mercy and clemency. Wherefore, as David having but resolved to confess his sins, was accosted eftsoon with an absolution: so, *Tu agnosce, et Dominus ignosce*.* Be thou unfeigned in confessing, and God will be faithful in forgiving. 1 John i. 9. Only let *confessio peccati* be *professio desinendi* †—the acknowledgment of thy sin an obligation to leave it; and then thou mayest build upon it. "He that confesseth and forsaketh shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii. 13.—Isaac Craven's *Sermon at Paul's Cross*, 1630.

Verse 5.—"I said, I will confess," etc. Justified persons, who have their sins

* Augustine.

† Hilary.

forgiven, are yet bound to confess sin to God. . . . There are many queries to be despatched in the handling of this point. The first query, is, what are the reasons why persons justified and pardoned are yet bound to make confession of sin unto God in private? The reasons are six. First, they are to confess sin unto God because holy confession gives a great deal of ease and holy quiet unto the mind of a sinner: conceal edand indulged guilt constracts horror and dread on the conscience. Secondly, because God loves to hear the complaints and the confessions of his own people. Lying on the face is the best gesture, and the mourning weed the best garment that God is well pleased with. A third reason is, because confession of sin doth help to quicken the heart to strong and earnest supplication to God (see verse 6). Confession is to the soul as the whetstone is to the knife, that sharpens it and puts an edge on it; so doth confession of sin. Confessing thy evils to God doth sharpen and put an edge on thy supplication; that man will pray but faintly that doth confess sin but slightly. A fourth reason is, because confession of sin will work a holy contrition and a godly sorrow in the heart. (Psalm xxxviii. 18). Declaration doth work compunction. Confession of sin is but the causing of sin to recoil on the conscience, which causeth blushing and shame of face, and grief of heart. A fifth reason is, because secret confession of sin doth give a great deal of glory to God. It gives glory to God's justice. I do confess sin, and do confess God in justice may damn me for my sin. It gives glory to God's mercy. I confess sin, yet mercy may save me. It gives glory to God's omniscieny. In confessing sin I do acknowledge that God knoweth my sin. A sixth reason why justified persons must confess sin unto God is, because holy confession of sin will embitter sin, and endear Christ to them, when a man shall let sin recoil on his conscience by a confession.—*Condensed from Christopher Love's "Soul's Cordial," 1683.*

Verse 5.—“*I said I will confess . . . and thou forgavest.*” It remaineth as a truth, remission is undoubtedly annexed to confession. *Tantum valent tres syllabæ* PEC-CA-VI, saith St. Austin, of so great force are those three syllables in the Latin, three words in the English, when uttered with a contrite heart, “*I have sinned.*”—Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 5.—“*Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*” This sin seems very probably to have been his adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah. Now David to nake the pardoning mercy of God more illustrious, saith he did not only forgive his *sin*, but the *iniquity* of his sin; and what was that? Surely the worst that can be said of that, his complicated sin, is that there was so much hypocrisy in it, he woefully juggled with God and man in it; this, I do not doubt to say, was *the iniquity* of his sin, and put a colour deeper on it than the blood which he shed. And the rather—I lay the accent there—because God himself, when he would set out the heinousness of this sin, seems to do it rather from the hypocrisy in the fact than the fact itself, as appears by the testimony given this holy man (1 Kings xv. 5): “David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.” Were there not other false steps which David took besides this? Doth the Spirit of God, by excepting this, declare his approbation of all that else he ever did? No, sure the Spirit of God records other sins that escaped this eminent servant of the Lord; but all those are drowned here, and this mentioned as the only stain of his life. But why? Surely because there appeared less sincerity, yea, more hypocrisy in this one sin than in all his others put together; though David in them was wrong as to the matter of his actions, yet his heart was more right in the manner of committing them. But here his sincerity was sadly wounded, though not to the total destruction of the habit, yet to lay it in a long swoon, as to any actings thereof. And truly the wound went very deep when that grace was stabbed in which did run the life blood of all the rest. We see, then, God hath reason, though his mercy prompted him, yea, his covenant obliged him, not to let his child die of this wound, yet so to heal it that a scar might remain upon the place, a mark upon the sin, whereby others might know how odious hypocrisy is to God.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 5.—“*Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*” We must observe the *matter forgiven*, and the *manner of forgiving*. The matter forgiven is the *iniquity of his sin*. It is disputed what is meant here by *iniquity*, whether *culpa* or *pœna*. Some understand *pœnam*, and think that an allusion is made in this word unto the message of Nathan, wherein God doth remit the heaviest stroke of his wrath, but yet retains some part in punishing the child, and permitting Absalom to rebel and abuse king

David's concubines: so Theodoret, *Deus non condigna pœna Davidem punivit*. Some understand *culpam*, and will have this phrase to be an amplification of that, as if *superbia defendens*, or *taciturnitas celans*, or *impietas contra Deum assurgens*, or some such great guilt were meant by this phrase. But as I do not censure these opinions, which may well stand, so I think the phrase looks back unto that word which was in the *confession*. The sin confessed was *רָפָה*, and this is but an analysis of this word; for *רָפָה* *פָּה*, what is it, word for word, but the *perverseness of my aberration*? *רָפָה* is an aberration from the scope or mark whereat we aim; all men aim at felicity, but most men stray from it, because they are not led by the law that guides unto it, the violating whereof is called *רָפָה*. But some do stray out of mere ignorance, and they only break the law; some out of stubbornness, which will not submit themselves to the Lawgiver; these men's sin is called *perverseness*, which God is said here to forgive. So that David did not confess more against himself than God includes in his pardon. Well may God exceed our desire; he never doth come short thereof if it do concern our spiritual, our eternal good. As he doth exclude no sinner that doth confess, so doth he except against no sin that is confessed.—Arthur Lake.

Verse 6.—“*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found,*” etc. Seeing he is such a God, who should refuse or delay his return! Surely every rational and pious mind will, without delay, invoke so gentle and mild a Lord; will pray to him while he is exorable, or, as the Hebrew expresses it, *in a time of finding*. For he who promises pardon, does not promise to-morrow. There are *tempora findi*—certain times in which he may be spoken with, and a certain appointed day of pardon and of grace, which if a man by stupid perverseness despise, or by sloth neglect, surely he is justly overwhelmed with eternal might and misery, and must necessarily perish by the deluge of divine wrath; since he has contemned and derided that Ark of salvation which was prepared and in which whoever enters into it shall be safe, while the world is perishing.—Robert Leighton.

Verse 6.—“*For this shall every one that is godly pray to thee,*” said David. “*For this!*” What? Because of his sins. And who? Not the wickedest, but the “*godly,*” in this respect, have cause to pray. And for what should he pray? Surely, for renewed pardon, for increase of grace, and for the perfection of glory. We cannot say we have no sin. Oh then, let us pray with David, “*Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!*” Where there is a double emphasis observable it is not *ab hoste*, but *a servo*. Though God's servant, yet he would not have God to enter into judgment with him. And again, *ne intres*, it is the very entrance into judgment that he dreads and prayeth against; not only do not proceed, but not so much as enter.—Nathanael Hardy.

Verse 6.—“*For this shall every one that is godly.*” We are here furnished with a fact which does not appear in the history of David. It is commonly supposed that after his grievous fall, till Nathan reproved him, he had been careless and stupefied; and this has often been adduced as a proof of the hardening nature of sin. But the thing was far otherwise. He was all the while tortured in his mind yet unwilling to humble himself before God, and condemn himself before men, as he ought to have done. He kept silence, and endeavoured to pass off the distress by time, palliation, and excuse. But the repression and concealment of his anguish preyed not only upon his peace, but his health, and endangered life itself. At length he was reduced to the deepest penitence, and threw himself, by an unqualified confession, on the compassion of God. “*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee.*” Here we see not only that all the godly pray, but every one of them prays for pardon. This is the very thing which our Saviour teaches his disciples: “*When ye pray, say, Forgive us our trespasses.*” And this praying does not only regard the manifestation of forgiving mercy, as some would have it but the exercise of it.—William Jay.

Verse 6.—“*Godly.*” A godly man is like God, he hath the same judgment with God! he thinks of things as God doth; he hath a God-like disposition; he partakes of the divine nature. 2. Peter i. 4. A godly man doth bear God's name and image: godliness is Godlikeness.—Thomas Watson.

Verse 6.—“*A time.*” There be seasons, which, if taken, sweeten actions, and open the door for their better entertainment: Prov. xxv. 11, “*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver;*” the Hebrew is, *A word spoken upon its wheels: fit times and seasons are wheels to carry words with great advantage.*

And so for actions ; when things are done in due time they are beautiful, acceptable. When God gives rain to a land in season, how acceptable is it ! when a tree bears fruit in its season, it is grateful : so when angels or men do things seasonably, it is pleasing to the Lord Christ : there are fit times, which, if we miss, actions are unlovely, and miss of their aims. "*For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.*" There are times, if we have the wisdom to discern them, when prayer will be seasonable, acceptable, effectual.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 6.—" *Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" The effects of prayer heretofore have been wonderful. Prayer hath sent down hailstones from heaven to overcome five kings with their armies. Prayer hath shut up the windows of heaven that it should not rain, and again hath opened them that the earth might give her increase. Prayer hath stayed the swift course of the sun and caused it to go backward fifteen degrees. Prayer hath held God's hands that he could not strike when he was ready to plague his people. Prayer without any other help or means hath thrown down the strong walls of Jericho. Prayer hath divided the sea that the floods thereof could not come near the Israelites. In this place it delivereth the faithful man from all the dangers of this world. "*Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" The sum is this, That no calamity of this world, no troubles of this life, no terrors of death, no guiltiness of sin, can be so great, but that a "*godly*" man by means of his faith and felicity in Christ shall wade out of them well enough. For howsoever other things go, still he shall have such a solace in his soul, such a comfort in his conscience, such a heaven in his heart, knowing himself reconciled to God and justified by faith, that "*Surely in the floods of many waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*" Which, that it may better appear, I shall desire you to observe two things, the danger, the deliverance. The danger is in these words, "*In the floods of many waters ;*" where the tribulations that the godly man is subject to in this life are likened, first, to *waters* ; then, to *many waters* ; thirdly, to a *flood* of many waters. The deliverance is in these words, "*Surely they shall not come near him ;*" where the deliverance of the godly man hath three degrees also. First, "*they shall not come near ;*" secondly, *him*, "*they shall not come near him ;*" then, *surely*—" *surely they shall not come near him.*"—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 6.—" *The floods of great waters.*" The afflictions of the faithful are likened to *waters*. Fire and water have no mercy, we say. But of the two water is the worst. For any fire may be quenched with water ; but the force of water, if it begins to be violent, cannot by any power of man be resisted. But these our tribulations which are "*waters*," are "*many waters.*" Our common proverb is, "*Seldom comes sorrow alone :*" but as waters come rolling and waving many together, so the miseries of this life.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 6.—" *Floods of great waters.*"—Unfamiliar with the sudden flooding of thirsty water-courses, we seldom comprehend the full force of some of the most striking images in the Old and New Testaments.—*W. J. Conybeare, and J. S. Howson, in "Life and Epistles of St. Paul."*

Verse 6.—" *In the floods,*" etc.—Washed he may be, as Paul was in the shipwreck, but not drowned with those floods of great waters : be they never so great they are bounded.—*Joseph Trapp.*

Verse 6.—" *Him.*" This word must in no case be omitted ; it helpeth us to answer a very strong objection. For it may be said, Many holy men have lost their goods, have suffered great torments in their body, have been troubled also in mind ; how then did not the "*floods of many waters*" come near them ? The word "*him*" helps us to answer. The very philosophers themselves reckoned their goods pertained no more to them, than, be it spoken with reverence and regard, the parings of their nails. Zenon hearing news he had lost all he had by sea, said only thus, Thou hast done very well, Fortune, to leave me nothing but my cloak. Another, called Anaxarchus, when as Nicocreon the tyrant commanded he should be beaten to death in a mortar, spake thus to the executioner, Beat and bray as long as thou wilt Anaxarchus his bag or satchel (so he called his own body), but Anaxarchus thou canst not touch. Yet these, making so small reckoning of their goods and body, set their mind notwithstanding at a high rate. The mind of a man is himself, say they. Hence it is that Julius Cæsar, when Amyclas the pilot was greatly afraid of the tempest, spake to him thus : What meanest thou to fear, base fellow ? dost thou not know thou carriest Cæsar with thee ? As if he should say,

Cæsar's body may well be drowned, as any other man's may; but his mind, his magnanimity, his valour, his fortitude, can never be drowned. Thus far went philosophy; but divinity goeth a degree further. For philosophy defineth *him*, that is, a man, by his reason, and the moral virtues of the mind; but divinity defineth a Christian man by his faith, and his conjunction thereby with Christ. Excellently saith Saint Austin: Whence comes it that the soul dieth? Because faith is not in it. Whence that the body dieth? Because a soul is not in it. Therefore the soul of thy soul is faith. So that if we would know what is a faithful man, we must define him, not by his natural soul, as he is reasonable, but by the soul of his soul, which is his faith. And then we easily answer the objection, that a flood may come near a faithful man's goods, near his body, near his reasonable soul; but to his faith, that is, to HIM, it can never come near.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 6.—Few verses in the Psalms are harder to be understood than this: and none has given rise to more varied expositions among the commentators. "*For this.*" Some will have it: encouraged by this example, that after so loud a fall God so readily forgave. Others again: "*for this,*" namely, warned by this example, they who are holy shall make their prayers that they may not be permitted to fall as David did. Whichever be the sense, they well argue from this passage, that the state of absolute and enduring perfection is impossible to a Christian in this life.—*Lorinus, and Cajetan (1469—1534), quoted by Neale.*

Verse 7.—"Thou art my hiding place." David does not say, "Thou art a hiding-place" merely as one among many; or *the* "hiding-place," as the only one; but, "Thou art *my* hiding-place." *There* lies all the excellency of the text. "He is *mine* ; I have embraced the offer of his salvation," says David; "I have applied to him in my own person: I have, as a sinner, taken shelter in his love and compassion; I have placed myself under his wings; I have covered myself with the robe of his righteousness; and now, therefore, I am safe." "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." This is having a part and a lot in the matter, having the personal and individual benefit of the Saviour's work of atonement. How different is an *appropriating* from a *speculative* faith! Men tell us that they believe the doctrine, that they acknowledge the truth, that they assent to our creed; and they say, that to declare to them the character of Christ, as the sinner's only help and safety, is merely putting before them what they already know. Now, follow up the idea suggested by the figure in our text, and see the folly and danger of acting thus. Suppose a traveller upon a bleak and exposed heath to be alarmed by the approach of a storm. He looks out for shelter. But if his eye discern a place to hide him from the storm, does he stand still and say, "I see there *is* a shelter, and therefore I may remain where I am"? Does he not betake himself to it? Does he not run, in order to escape the stormy wind and tempest? It was a "hiding-place" before; but it was *his* hiding-place only when he ran into it, and was safe. Had he not gone into it, though it might have been a protection to a thousand other travellers who resorted there, to him it would have been as if no such place existed. Who does not see at once, from this simple illustration, that the blessings of the gospel are such only in their being *appropriated* to the soul? The physician can cure only by being *applied to*; the medicine can heal them by being *taken*; money can enrich only by being *possessed*; and the merchantman in the parable would have been none the wealthier for discovering that there was a "pearl of great price," had he not made it *his*. So with the salvation of the gospel: if Christ is the "Balm in Gilead," *apply* the remedy; if he is the "Physician there," *go* to him; if he is the "pearl of great price," sell all that you have and buy it; and if he is the "hiding-place," *run into* it and be safe; there will be no solid joy and peace in the mind until he is *your* "hiding-place."—*Fountain Elwin, 1842.*

Verse 7.—"Thou art my hiding-place."—An allusion, probably, to the *city of refuge*.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7.—"Hiding place." Kirke White has a beautiful hymn upon this word, beginning, "Awake, sweet harp of Judah, wake." We have no room to quote it, but it will be found in "Our Own Hymn Book," No. 381.

Verse 7.—"Thou shalt preserve me from trouble." If we content ourselves with that word which our translators have chosen here, "*trouble,*" we must rest in one of these two senses; either that God shall arm, and indue those that are his with such a constancy, as those things that trouble others shall not trouble them; but,

“As the sufferings of Christ abound in them, so their consolation also aboundeth by Christ:” “As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor. i. 5; vi. 9); for God uses both these ways in the behalf of his servants—sometimes to suspend the working of that that should work their torment, as he suspended the rage of the lions for Daniel, and the heat of the fire in the furnace for the others; sometimes by imprinting a holy stupefaction and insensibleness in the person that suffers; so St. Laurence was not only patient, but merry and facetious when he lay broiling upon the fire, and so we read of many other martyrs that have been less moved, less affected with their torments than their executioners or their persecutors have been. That which troubled others never troubled them; or else the phrase must have this sense, that though they be troubled with their troubles, though God submit them so far to the common condition of men, that they be sensible of them, yet he shall preserve them from that trouble so as that it shall never overthrow them, never sink them into a dejection of spirit, or diffidence in his mercy! they shall find storms, but a stout and strong ship under foot; they shall feel thunder and lightning, but garlands of triumphant bays shall preserve them; they shall be trodden into earth with scorns and contempts, but yet as seed is buried, to multiply to more. So far this word of our translators assists our devotion, “*Thou shalt preserve me from trouble,*” thou shalt make me insensible of it, or thou shalt make me victorious in it.—*John Donne.*

Verse 7.—“*Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*” In these words the prophet David riseth up by a gradation, and goeth beyond that which he had formerly said concerning his confidence in God. First, he had said that God was his *hiding-place*; secondly, that he would *preserve him in trouble*; and now, thirdly, that the Lord would make him *joyful*, and to triumph over his troubles and enemies, by compassing him, instead of troubles, with mercies. . . . Learn to acknowledge God’s goodness to thyself with particular application, as David saith here, “*Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*” Not only confess his goodness to others, as to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; nor only his deliverance of Noah, Daniel, Lot; but also his mercies to and deliverance of thyself, as Paul did: “*Christ gave himself for me, and died for me.*” Gal. ii. 20. This will exceedingly whet up thankfulness; whereas only to acknowledge God good in himself, or to others, and not to thyself, will make thee murmur and repine.—*Thomas Taylor.*

Verse 7.—“*Thou shalt compass me about.*” This word importeth that as we are besieged on every side with troubles, so we are compassed with as many comforts and deliverances; as our crosses grow daily, so our consolations are augmented day by day. We are on every side offended and on every side defended; therefore we ought on every side to sound God’s praise, as David saith, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me.*” Ps. ciii. 1.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 7.—“*Songs of deliverance.*” In that he will not be content only with thanks, but also will have them conjoined with “*songs,*” he letteth us see how high all the strings of his heart are bended that he cannot contain himself for the mercies of God to his church, and for his manifold deliverances for the same. Many sing praises to God with an half-open mouth; and, albeit, they can sing aloud any filthy ballad in their house, they make the mean, I warrant you, in the church, that scarce can they hear the sound of their own voice. I think they be ashamed to proclaim and show forth God’s praises, or they fear to deafen God by their loud singing; but David bended all his forces within and without to praise his God. *Archibald Symson.*

Verse 8.—“*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.*” No other than God himself can undertake so much as is promised in the text. For here is faith, a rectifying of the understanding, “*I will instruct thee,*” and in the original there is somewhat more than our translation reaches to; it is there, *Intelligere faciam te, I will make thee understand.* Man can instruct, God only can make us understand. And then it is *Faciam te, I will make thee, thee, understand;* the work is the Lord’s, the understanding is the man’s: for God does not work in man as the devil did in idols and *in pythonissis*, and *in ventriloquis*, in possessed persons, who had no voluntary concurrence with the action of the devil, but were merely passive; God works so in man as that he makes man work too, *faciam te, I will make thee understand;* that that shall be done shall be done by me, but in thee; the power that rectifies the act is God’s, the act is man’s; *Faciam te, says God, I*

will make thee, *thee*, every particular person (for that arises out of this singular and distributive word, *thee*, which threatens no exception, no exclusion), I will make every person to whom I present instruction, capable of that instruction; and if he receive it not, it is only his, and not my fault. And so this first part is an instruction *de credendis*, of such things, as by God's rectifying of our understanding we are bound to believe. And then, in a second part, there follows a more particular instructing, *Docebo*, "*I will teach thee*," and that *in via*, "*in the way*;" it is not only *de via*, to teach thee which is the way, that thou mayst find it, but *in via*, how to keep the way when thou art in it; he will teach thee, not only *ut gradiaris*, that thou mayst walk in it and not sleep, but *quomodo gradieris*, that thou mayst walk in it and not stray; and so this second part is an institution *de agendis*, of those things which thine understanding being formerly rectified, and deduced into a belief, thou art bound to do. And then in the last words of the text, "*I will guide thee with mine eye*," there is a third part, an establishment, a confirmation, by an incessant watchfulness in God; he will consider, consult upon us (for so much the original word imports) he will not leave us to contingencies, to fortune; no, nor to his own general providence, by which all creatures are universally in his protection and administration, but he will ponder us, consider us, study us; and that with his eye, which is the sharpest and most sensible organ and instrument, soonest feels if anything be amiss, and so inclines him quickly to rectify us; and so this third part is an instruction *de sperandis*, it hath evermore a relation to the future, to the constancy and perseverance of God's goodness towards us; to the end, and in the end he will guide us with his eye: except the eye of God can be put out we cannot be put out of his sight and his care. So that, both our freight which we are to take in, that is, what we are to believe concerning God; and the voyage which we are to make, how we are to steer and govern our course, that is, our behaviour and conversation in the household of the faithful; and then the haven to which we must go, that is, our assurance of arriving at the heavenly Jerusalem, are expressed in this chart, in this map, in this instruction, in this text.—*John Donne*.

Verse 8.—This threefold repetition, "*I will instruct thee*," "*I will teach thee*," "*I will guide thee*," teaches us three properties of a good teacher. First, to make the people understand the way of salvation; secondly, to go before them; thirdly, to watch over them and their ways.—*Archibald Symson*.

Verse 8.—"The way." If we compare this way with all other ways, it will whet our care to enter into and continue in it; for, first, this is the *King's highway*, in which we have promise of protection. Ps. xci. 11. Secondly, God's ways are the *cleanest* of all. 2 Sam. xxii. 31. Thirdly, God's ways are the *rightest* ways; and, being rightest, they be also the *shortest* ways. Hosea xiv. 9. Fourthly, God's ways are most *lightsome* and *cheerful*. Prov. iii. 17. Therefore, God's ways being the safest, cleanest, rightest, shortest, and lightsomest ways, we must be careful to walk in them.—*Condensed from Thomas Taylor*.

Verse 8.—"I will guide thee with mine eye." We read in natural story* of some creatures, *Qui solo oculorum aspectu fovent ova*,† which hatch their eggs only by looking upon them. What cannot the eye of God produce and hatch in us? *Plus est quod probatur aspectu, quam quod sermone*.‡ A man may seem to commend in words, and yet his countenance shall dispraise. His word infuses good purposes into us; but if God continue his eye upon us it is a further approbation, for he is a God of pure eyes, and will not look upon the wicked. "This land doth the Lord thy God care for, and the eyes of the Lord are always upon it from the beginning of the year, even to the end thereof." Deut. xi. 12. What a cheerful spring, what a fruitful autumn hath that soul, that hath the eye of the Lord always upon her! The eye of the Lord upon me makes midnight noon; it makes Capricorn Cancer, and the winter's the summer's solstice; the eye of the Lord sanctifies, nay, more than sanctifies, glorifies all the eclipses of dishonour, makes melancholy cheerfulness, diffidence assurance, and turns the jealousy of the sad soul into infallibility. . . . This guiding us with his eye manifests itself in these two great effects; conversion to him, and union with him. First, his eye works upon ours; his eye turns ours to look upon him. Still it is so expressed with an *Ecce*; "Behold the eye of the Lord is

* A reviewer remarks upon the bad natural history which we quote. We reply that to alter it would be to spoil the allusions, and we are making a book for men, not for babes. No person in his senses is likely at this day to believe the fables which in former ages passed current for facts.

† Pliny.

‡ Ambrose.

upon all them that fear him ;" his eye calls ours to behold that ; and then our eye calls upon his, to observe our cheerful readiness. . . . When, as a well made picture doth always look upon him that looks upon it, this image of God in our soul is turned to him, by his turning to it, it is impossible we should do any foul, any uncomely thing in his presence. . . . The other great effect of his guiding us with his eye, is, that it unites us to himself ; when he fixes his eye upon us, and accepts the return of ours to him, then he " keeps " us as the " apple " of his " eye." Zech. ii. 8. . . . These are the two great effects of his guiding us by his eye, that first, his eye turns us to himself, and then turns us into himself ; first, his eye turns ours to him, and then, that makes us all one with himself, so as that our afflictions shall be put upon his patience, and our dishonours shall be injurious to him ; we cannot be safer than by being his ; but thus we are not only his, but he—to every persecutor, in every one of our behalf, he shall say, *Cur me ?* Why persecutest thou me ? And as he is all power, and can defend us, so here he makes himself all eye, which is the most tender part, and most sensible of our pressures.—*Condensed from John Donne.*

Verse 8.—" *I will guide thee with mine eye.*" Marg., *I will counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee.* The margin expresses the sense of the Hebrew. The literal meaning is, " I will counsel thee ; mine eye shall be upon thee." De Wette : " my eye shall be directed towards thee." The *idea* is that of one who is telling another what way he is to take in order that he may reach a certain place ; and he says he will watch him, or will keep an eye upon him ; he will not let him go wrong.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 8.—" *Mine eye.*" We may consider mercies as the beamings of the Almighty's eye when the light of his countenance is lifted up upon us ; and that man as guided by the eye, whom mercies attract and attach to his Maker. But oh ! let us refuse to be guided by the eye, and it will become needful that we be curbed with the hand. If we abuse our mercies, if we forget their Author, and yield him not gratefully the homage of our affections, we do but oblige him, by his love for our souls, to apportion us disaster and trouble. Complain not, then, that there is so much of sorrow in your lot ; but consider rather how much of it you may have wilfully brought upon yourselves. Listen to the voice of God. "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye*"—mine eye, whose glance gilds all that is beautiful, whose light disperses all darkness prevents all danger, diffuses all happiness. And why, then, is it that ye are sorely disquieted ? why is it that " fear and the pit " are so often upon you ; that one blessing after another disappears from your circle ; and that God seems to deal with you as with the wayward and unruly, on whom any thing of gentleness would be altogether lost ? Ah ! if you would account for many mercies that have departed, if you would insure permanence to those that are yet left, examine how deficient you may hitherto have been, and strive to be more diligent for the future, in obeying an admonition which implies that we should be guided by the soft lustres of the eye, if our obduracy did not render indispensable the harsh constraints of the rein.—*Henry Melvill.*

Verse 9.—" *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,*" etc. How many run mad of this cause, inordinate and furious lusts ! The prophet Jeremiah, chap. ii. 24, compareth Israel to " a swift dromedary, traversing her ways," and to a " wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure." "*Be ye not,*" saith the Psalmographer, " as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding : whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." Men have understanding, not beasts ; yet when the frenzy of lust overwhelmeth their senses, we may take up the word of the prophet and pour it on them : " Every man is a beast by his own knowledge." And therefore " man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like unto beasts that perish " (Ps. xlix. 20). Did not the bridle of God's overruling providence restrain their madness, they would cast off the saddle of reason, and kick nature itself in the face.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 9.—" *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule,*" etc. According to the several natures of these two beasts, the fathers and other expositors have made several interpretations ; at least, several allusions. They consider the horse and the mule to admit any rider, any burden, without discretion or difference, without debatement or consideration ; they never ask whether their rider be noble or base, nor whether their load be gold for the treasure, or roots for the market. And those expositors

Verse 11.—“*Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*” This exhortation containeth three parts. First, what he doth exhort unto, *to rejoice*. Secondly, whom, *the righteous, and upright men*. Thirdly, the limitation, “*in the Lord.*” He exhorteth them three times—be glad, rejoice, and be joyful; and as he made mention of a threefold blessing, so doth he of a threefold joy. Wherein we have two things necessary to be observed. First, the dulness of our natures, who as slow horses need many spurs and provocations to spiritual things, whereas we are naturally overmuch bent to carnal things, that we need no incitations thereunto. But by the contrary in spiritual things, we are cast into a deep sleep, who cannot be awakened at the first cry; but as men after drink have need to be roused often, that they may behold the light; so men drunken with the pleasures of sin, as Nazianzen saith, must be wakened by divers exhortations; as this same prophet in the subsequent Psalm redoubleth his exhortations for the same effect. And the apostle to Philippians saith: “*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice*” (chap. iv. 4). Next, perceive that this exhortation grows; for the word *be glad*, properly in the original signifieth an inward and hearty joy, by the presence or hope at least of a thing desirable or good. The word *rejoice*, to express our joy by some outward gesture, sometimes used for dancing, as, “*The hills skip for gladness.*” Ps. lxxv. 12. The word *be joyful*, to cry for gladness, as the dumb man’s tongue shall sing. This gradation teacheth us, that this is the nature of spiritual joy—that it still increaseth in us by certain degrees, until it come to the perfection of all joy, which is signified by the last word, importing, as it were, a triumph and shouting after victory. So that they are truly penitent who have overcome sin and Satan in their spiritual combat, and have triumphed over them as vanquished enemies.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 11.—“*Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous.*” There is never a joyful man alive but a believer. Will you say that men take pleasure in their sins? Why, that is the *Devil’s* joy; or that they rejoice in full barns and bags? That is the *fool’s* joy; or that they rejoice in wine, that is, all dainties that gratify the palate? That is a *Bedlam* joy. Read and believe Eccl. ii. 3; indeed, from the first verse to the eleventh, the whole book, but especially that chapter, is the divinen philosophy that ever was or will be.—*Christopher Fowler* (1610—1678), in “*Morning Exercises.*”

Verse 11.—“*Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*” When the poet Carpani enquired of his friend Haydn, how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. “*I cannot,*” he said, “*make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen: and, since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve him with a cheerful spirit.*”—*John Whitecross’s Anecdotes.*

Verse 11.—Here the sensual man, that haply would catch hold when it is said, “*Rejoice,*” by-and-by, when it is added, “*in the Lord,*” will let his hold go. But they that, by reason of the billows and waves of the troublesome sea of this world, cannot brook the speech when it is said, “*Rejoice,*” are to lay sure hold fast upon it when it is added, “*Rejoice in the Lord.*”—*Henry Airay.*

Verse 11.

O sing unto this glittering, glorious King;
O praise his name, let every living thing;
Let heart and voice, like bells of silver ring
The comfort that this day doth bring.

Kinwellmersh, quoted by A. Moody Stuart.

Verse 11.—It is storied by the famous Tully concerning Syracuse, that there is no day throughout the whole year so stormy and tempestuous in which the inhabitants have not some glimpse and sight of the sun. The like observation may be truly made on all those Psalms of David in which his complaints are most multiplied, his fears and pressures most insisted on; that there is not any of them so totally overcast with the black darkness of despair, but that we may easily discern them to be here and there intervened and streaked with some comfortable expressions of his faith and hope in God. If in the beginning of a Psalm we find him restless in his motions, like Noah’s dove upon the overspreading waters; yet in the close we shall see him like the same dove returning with an olive branch in its mouth, and fixing upon the ark. If we find him in another Psalm staggering in the midst

of his distresses, through the prevalency of carnal fears, we may also in it behold him recovering himself again, by fetching arguments from faith, whose topics are of a higher elevation than to be shaken by the timorous suggestions that arise from the flesh. If at another time we behold him like to a boat on drift, that is, tossed and beaten by the inconstant winds and fierce waves; yet we shall still find all his rollings and agitations to be such as carry him towards the standing shore, where he rides at last both in peace and safety.—*William Spurstowe.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—Gospel benedictions. Take the first Psalm with thirty-second, show the doctrinal and practical harmoniously blended. Or, take the first, the thirty-second, and the forty-first, and show how we go from reading the word, to feeling its power, and thence to living charitably towards men.

Verse 1.—*Evangelical Blessedness.* I. The original condition of its possessor. II. The nature of the benefit received. III. The channel by which it came. IV. The means by which it may be obtained by us.

Verses 1, 2.—The nature of sin and the modes of pardon.

Verse 2.—Non-imputation, a remarkable doctrine. Prove, explain, and improve it.

Verse 2.—“*No guile.*” The honesty of heart of the pardoned man.

Verse 3.—*Retention of our griefs to ourselves.* Natural tendency of timidity and despair; danger of it; means of divulging grief; encouragements to do so; the blessed person who is ready to hear confession.

The silent mourner the greatest sufferer.

Verses 3, 4.—“*Terrible Convictions and Gentle Drawings.*” See “*Spurgeon’s Sermons,*” No. 313.

Verse 4.—The sorrows of a convinced soul. Daily, nightly, from God, heavy, weakening, destroying.

Verse 4 (last clause).—Spiritual drought.

Verse 5.—The gracious results of a full confession; or, confession and absolution scripturally explained.

Verse 6.—The *godly man’s* picture, drawn with a Scripture pencil.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 6.—The experience of one, the encouragement of all.

Verse 6 (first clause).—The day of grace, how to improve it.

Verse 6 (whole verse).—Pardon of sin the guarantee that other mercies shall be given.

Verse 6 (last clause).—Imminent troubles, eminent deliverances.

Verse 6 (last clause).—The felicity of the faithful.—*Thomas Playfere.*

Verse 7.—Danger felt, refuge known, possession claimed, joy experienced.

Verse 7 (first sentence).—Christ, a hiding-place from sin, Satan, and sorrow, in death, and at judgment.

Verse 7 (second sentence).—Troubles from which saints shall be preserved.

Verse 7 (last sentence).—The circle of song—who draws the circle, what is the circumference, who is in the centre.

Verse 7.—“*Songs of deliverance.*” From guilt, hell, death, enemies, doubts, temptations, accidents, plots, etc.

The divine schoolmaster, his pupils, their lessons, their chastisements and their rewards.

Verse 8.—The power of the eye.—*Henry Melvill.* In which he vainly tries to prove infant baptism and episcopacy, which he admits are not expressly taught in Scripture, but declares them to be hinted at as with the divine eye.

Verse 9.—God’s bits and bridles, the mules who need them, and reasons why we ought not to be of the number.

Verse 9.—How far in our actions we are better, and how far worse than horses and mules.

Verse 10.—The many sorrows which result from sin. The encompassing mercy of the believer's life even in his most troublous times.

The portion of the wicked, and the lot of the faithful.

Verse 11.—A believer's gladness. *Its spring*, "in the Lord;" *its vivacity*, "shout;" *its propriety*, it is commanded; *its beneficial results and its abundant reasons*.

Verse 11.—"Upright in heart," an instructive description. Not horizontal or grovelling, nor bent, nor inclined, but vertical in heart.
