

PSALM XXXV.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David.—*Here is all we know concerning this Psalm, but internal evidence seems to fix the date of its composition in those troublous times when Saul hunted David over hill and dale, and when those who fawned upon the cruel king, slandered the innocent object of his wrath, or it may be referred to the unquiet days of frequent insurrections in David's old age. The whole Psalm is the appeal to heaven of a bold heart and a clear conscience, irritated beyond measure by oppression and malice. Beyond a doubt David's Lord may be seen here by the spiritual eye.*

DIVISIONS.—*The most natural mode of dividing this Psalm is to note its triple character. Its complaint, prayer, and promise of praise are repeated with remarkable parallelism three times, even as our Lord in the Garden prayed three times using the same words. The first portion occupies from verse 1 to 10, the second from 11 to 18, and the last from 19 to the close : each section ending with a note of grateful song.*

EXPOSITION.

PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me : fight against them that fight against me.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me : say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul : let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind : and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery ; and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

7 For without cause have they hid for me their net *in* a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares ; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself : into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD : it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, LORD, who *is* like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him ?

1. “ *Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me.*” Plead against those who plead against me ; strive with my strivers ; contend with my contenders. If they urge their suit in the law-court, Lord, meet them there, and beat them at their own weapons. Every saint of God shall have this privilege : the accuser of the brethren shall be met by the Advocate of the saints. “ *Fight against them that fight against me.*” If my adversaries try force as well as fraud, be a match for them ; oppose thy strength to their strength. Jesus does this for all his beloved—for them he is both intercessor and champion ; whatever aid they need they shall receive from him, and in whatever manner they are assaulted they shall be effectually defended. Let us not fail to leave our case into the Lord's hand. Vain is the help of man, but ever effectual is the interposition of heaven. What is here asked for as a boon, may be regarded as a promise, to all the saints ; in judgment they shall have a divine advocate, in warfare a divine protection.

2 “ *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.*” In vivid metaphor the Lord is pictured as coming forth armed for battle, and interposing himself between his servant and his enemies. The greater and lesser protections of providence may be here intended by the two defensive weapons, and by the

Lord's standing up is meant his active and zealous preservation of his servant in the perilous hour. This poetic imagery shows how the Psalmist realised the existence and power of God; and thought of him as a real and actual personage, truly working for his afflicted.

3. "*Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me.*" Before the enemy comes to close quarters the Lord can push them off as with a long spear. To stave off trouble is no mean act of lovingkindness. As when some valiant warrior with his lance blocks up a defile, and keeps back a host until his weaker brethren have made good their escape, so does the Lord often hold the believer's foes at bay until the good man has taken breath, or clean fled from his foes. He often gives the foes of Zion some other work to do, and so gives rest to his church. What a glorious idea is this of Jehovah blocking the way of persecutors, holding them at the pike's end, and giving time for the hunted saint to elude their pursuit! "*Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" Besides holding off the enemy the Lord can also calm the mind of his servant by express assurance from his own mouth, that he is, and shall be, safe under the Almighty wing. An inward persuasion of security in God is of all things the most precious in the furnace of persecution. One word from the Lord quiets all our fears.

4. "*Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul.*" There is nothing malicious here, the slandered man simply craves for justice, and the petition is natural and justifiable. Guided by God's good spirit the Psalmist foretells the everlasting confusion of all the haters of the righteous. Shameful disappointment shall be the portion of the enemies of the gospel, nor would the most tender-hearted Christian have it otherwise: viewing sinners as men, we love them and seek their good, but regarding them as enemies of God, we cannot think of them with anything but detestation, and a loyal desire for the confusion of their devices. No loyal subject can wish well to rebels. Squeamish sentimentality may object to the strong language here used, but in their hearts all good men wish confusion to mischief-makers.

5. "*Let them be as chaff before the wind.*" They were swift enough to attack, let them be as swift to flee. Let their own fears and the alarms of their consciences unman them so that the least breeze of trouble shall carry them hither and thither. Ungodly men are worthless in character, and light in their behaviour, being destitute of solidity and fixedness; it is but just that those who make themselves chaff should be treated as such. When this imprecation is fulfilled in graceless men, they will find it an awful thing to be for ever without rest, without peace of mind, or stay of soul, hurried from fear to fear, and from misery to misery. "*And let the angel of the Lord chase them.*" Fallen angels shall haunt them, good angels shall afflict them. To be pursued by avenging spirits will be the lot of those who delight in persecution. Observe the whole scene as the Psalmist sketches it: the furious foe is first held at bay, then turned back, then driven to headlong flight, and chased by fiery messengers from whom there is no escape, while his pathway becomes dark and dangerous, and his destruction overwhelming.

6. "*Let their way be dark and slippery.*" What terrors are gathered here! No light, no foothold, and a fierce avenger at their heels! What a doom is appointed for the enemies of God! They may rage and rave to-day, but how altered will be their plight ere long! "*And let the angel of the Lord persecute them.*" He will follow them hot-foot, as we say, never turning aside, but like a trusty pursuivant serving the writ of vengeance upon them, and arresting them in the name of unflinching justice. Woe, woe, woe, unto those who touch the people of God; their destruction is both swift and sure.

7. In this verse the Psalmist brings forward the gravamen of his charge against the servants of the devil. "*For without cause*"—without my having injured, assailed, or provoked them; out of their own spontaneous malice "*have they hid for me their net in a pit,*" even as men hunt for their game with cunning and deception. Innocent persons have often been ruined by traps set for them, into which they have fallen as guilelessly as beasts which stumble into concealed pits, and are taken as in a net. It is no little thing to be able to feel that the enmity which assails us is undeserved—uncaused by any wilful offence on our part. Twice does David assert in one verse that his adversaries plotted against him "*without cause.*" Net-making and pit-digging require time and labour, and both of these the wicked will expend cheerfully if they may but overthrow the people of God. Fair warfare belongs to honourable men, but the assailants of God's church prefer

mean, ungenerous schemes, and so prove their nature and their origin. We must all of us be on our guard, for gins and pitfalls are still the favourite weapons of the powers of evil.

8. "*Let destruction come upon him at unawares.*" This tremendous imprecation is frequently fulfilled. God's judgments are often sudden and signal. Death enters the persecutor's house without pausing to knock at the door. The thunderbolt of judgment leaps from its hiding-place, and in one crash the wicked are broken for ever. "*And let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*" There is a *lex talionis* with God which often works most wonderfully. Men set traps and catch their own fingers. They throw up stones, and they fall upon their own heads. How often Satan outwits himself, and burns his fingers with his own coals! This will doubtless be one of the aggravations of hell, that men will torment themselves with what were once the fond devices of their rebellious minds. They curse and are cursed; they kick the pricks and tear themselves; they pour forth floods of fire, and it burns them within and without.

9. "*And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord.*" Thus rescued, David ascribes all the honour to the Judge of the right; to his own valorous arm he offers no sacrifice of boasting. He turns away from his adversaries to his God, and finds a deep unbroken joy in Jehovah, and in that joy his spirit revels. "*It shall rejoice in his salvation.*" We do not triumph in the destruction of others, but in the salvation given to us of God. Prayer heard should always suggest praise. It were well if we were more demonstrative in our holy rejoicings. We rob God by suppressing grateful emotions.

10. As if the tongue were not enough to bless God with, David makes every limb vocal—" *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?*" His whole anatomy he would make resonant with gratitude. Those bones which were to have been broken by my enemies shall now praise God; every one of them shall bring its tribute, ascribing unrivalled excellence to Jehovah the Saviour of his people. Even if worn to skin and bone, yet my very skeleton shall magnify the Lord, "*which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him.*" God is the champion, the true knight-errant of all oppressed ones. Where there is so much condescension, justice, kindness, power, and compassion, the loftiest songs should be rendered. Come, dear reader, have you not been delivered from sin, Satan, and death, and will not you bless the Redeemer? You were poor and weak, but in due time Christ sought you, and set you free. O magnify the Lord to-day, and speak well of his name.

11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good *to* the spoiling of my soul.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth *for his* mother.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:

16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

11. "*False witnesses did rise up.*" This is the old device of the ungodly, and we must not wonder if it be used against us as against our Master. To please Saul, there were always men to be found mean enough to impeach David. "*They laid to my charge things that I knew not.*" He had not even a thought of sedition; he was loyal even to excess; yet they accused him of conspiring against the Lord's

anointed. He was not only innocent, but ignorant of the fault alleged. It is well when our hands are so clean that no trace of dirt is upon them.

12. "*They rewarded me evil for good.*" This is devilish; but men have learned the lesson well of the old Destroyer, and practise it most perfectly. "*To the spoiling of my soul.*" They robbed him of comfort, and even would have taken his life had it not been for special rescues from the hand of God. The wicked would strip the righteous naked to their very soul: they know no pity. There are only such limits to human malice as God himself may see fit to place.

13 "*But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth.*" David had been a man of sympathy; he had mourned when Saul was in ill health, putting on the weeds of sorrow for him as though he were a near and dear friend. His heart went into mourning for his sick master. "*I humbled my soul with fasting.*" He prayed for his enemy, and made the sick man's case his own, pleading and confessing as if his own personal sin had brought on the evil. This showed a noble spirit in David, and greatly aggravated the baseness of those who now so cruelly persecuted him. "*And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*" Prayer is never lost: if it bless not those for whom intercession is made, it shall bless the intercessors. Clouds do not always descend in showers upon the same spot from which the vapours ascended, but they come down somewhere; and even so do supplications in some place or other yield their snows of mercy. If our dove find no rest for the sole of her foot among our enemies, it shall fly into our bosoms and bring an olive branch of peace in its mouth. How sharp is the contrast all through this Psalm between the righteous and his enemies! We must be earnest to keep the line of demarcation broad and clear.

14. "*I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother:*" I waited on him assiduously, comforted him affectionately, and sympathised with him deeply. This may refer to those days when David played on the harp, and chased away the evil spirit from Saul. "*I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*" He bowed his head as mourners do. The strongest natural grief was such as he felt when they were in trouble. The mother usually wins the deepest love, and her loss is most keenly felt: such was David's grief. How few professors in these days have such bowels of compassion; and yet under the gospel there should be far more tender love than under the law. Had we more hearty love to manhood, and care for its innumerable ills, we might be far more useful; certainly we should be infinitely more Christ-like. "He prayeth best that loveth best."

15. "*But in mine adversity they rejoiced.*" In my halting they were delighted. My lameness was sport to them. Danger was near, and they sang songs over my expected defeat. How glad are the wicked to see a good man limp! "Now," say they, "he will meet with his downfall." "*And gathered themselves together,*" like kites and vultures around a dying sheep. They found a common joy in my ruin, and a recreation in my sorrow, and therefore met together to keep the feast. They laid their heads together to devise, and their tongues to deceive. "*Yea, the objects gathered themselves together against me.*" Those who deserved horsewhipping, fellows the soles of whose feet were needing the bastinado, came together to plot, and held hole and-corner meetings. Like curs around a sick lion, the mean wretches taunted and insulted one whose name had been their terror. The very cripples hobbled out to join the malicious crew. How unanimous are the powers of evil; how heartily do men serve the devil; and none decline his service because they are not endowed with great abilities! "*I knew it not.*" It was all done behind my back. What a fluster the world may be in, and the cause of it all may not even know that he has given offence. "*They did tear me, and ceased not.*" It is such dainty work to tear to pieces a good man's character, that when slanderers have their hand in they are loath to leave off. A pack of dogs tearing their prey is nothing compared with a set of malicious gossips mauling the reputation of a worthy man. That lovers of the gospel are not at this time rent and torn as in the old days of Mary, is to be attributed to the providence of God rather than to the gentleness of men.

16. "*With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*" Like professional buffoons who grin around the banquet to make sport, so they made a business of jeering at the good man; not, however, out of mirth, but from violent, insatiable hatred. Like cake-scoffers, or men who will jeer for a bit of bread, these hireling miscreants persecuted David in order to get a bellyful for themselves from Saul's table: having moreover an inward grudge against the son of Jesse because he was a better man than themselves.

Very forcibly might our Lord have used the words of these verses ! Let us not forget to see the Despised and Rejected of men here painted to the life. Calvary and the ribald crew around the cross seem brought before our eyes.

17. "*Lord, how long will thou look on ?*" Why be a mere spectator ? Why so neglectful of thy servant ? Art thou indifferent ? Carest thou not that we perish ? We may thus reason with the Lord. He permits us this familiarity. There is a time for our salvation, but to our impatience it often seems to be very slow in coming ; yet wisdom has ordained the hour, and nothing shall delay it. "*Rescue my soul from their destructions.*" From their many devices ; their multiplied assaults, be pleased to set me free. "*My darling,*" my lovely, only, precious soul, do thou rescue "*from the lions.*" His enemies were fierce, cunning, and strong as young lions ; God only could deliver him from their jaws, to God be therefore addresses himself.

18. "*I will give thee thanks in the great congregation.*" Notable deliverances must be recorded, and their fame emblazoned. All the saints should be informed of the Lord's goodness. The theme is worthy of the largest assembly ; the experience of a believer is a subject fit for an assembled universe to hear of. Most men publish their griefs, good men should proclaim their mercies. "*I will praise thee among much people.*" Among friends and foes will I glorify the God of my salvation. Praise—personal praise, public praise, perpetual praise—should be the daily revenue of the King of heaven. Thus, for the second time, David's prayer ends in praise, as indeed all prayer should.

19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me : *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace : but they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

22 *This* thou hast seen, O LORD : keep not silence : O LORD, be not far from me.

23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, **my** God and my Lord.

24 Judge me, O LORD, my God, according to thy righteousness ; and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it : let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt : let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause : yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

19. He earnestly prays that as they have no cause for their enmity, they may have no cause for triumph either in his folly, sin, or overthrow. "*Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*" The winking of the eye was the low-bred sign of congratulation at the ruin of their victim, and it may also have been one of their scornful gestures as they gazed upon him whom they despised. To cause hatred is the mark of the wicked, to suffer it causelessly is the lot of the righteous. God is the natural Protector of all who are wronged, and he is the enemy of all oppressors.

20. "*For they speak not peace.*" They love it not ; how can they speak it ? They are such troublers themselves that they cannot judge others to be peaceable. Out of the mouth comes what is in the heart. Riotous men charge others with sedition. "*They devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.*" David would fain have been an orderly citizen, but they laboured to make him a

rebel. He could do nothing aright, all his dealings were misrepresented. This is an old trick of the enemy to brand good men with S.S. on their cheeks, as sowers of sedition, though they have ever been a harmless race, like sheep among wolves. When mischief is meant, mischief is soon made. Unscrupulous partisans could even charge Jesus with seeking to overturn Cæsar, much more will they thus accuse his household. At this very hour, those who stand up for the crown rights of King Jesus are called enemies of the church, favourers of Popery, friends of Atheists, levellers, red republicans, and it were hard to say what besides. Billingsgate and Babylon are in league.

21. "*Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me.*" As if they would swallow him. Uttering great lies which needed wide mouths. They set no bounds to their infamous charges, but poured out wholesale abuse, trusting that if all did not stick, some of it would. "*And said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.*" Glad to find out a fault or a misfortune, or to swear they had seen evil where there was none. Malice has but one eye; it is blind to all virtue in its enemy. Eyes can generally see what hearts wish. A man with a mote in his eye sees a spot in the sun. How like a man is to an ass when he brays over another's misfortunes! how like to a devil when he laughs a hyæna-laugh over a good man's slips! Malice is folly, and when it holds a festival its tones and gestures far exceed all the freaks and mummeries of the Lord of misrule.

22. "*This thou hast seen, O Lord.*" Here is comfort. Our heavenly Father knows all our sorrow. Omniscience is the saint's candle which never goes out. A father will not long endure to see his child abused. Shall not God avenge his own elect? "*Keep not silence.*" Rebuke thine enemies and mine, O Lord. A word will do it. Clear my character, comfort my heart. "*O Lord, be not far from me.*" Walk the furnace with me. Stand in the pillory at my side. The sweet presence of God is the divine cordial of the persecuted; his painful absence would be their deepest misery.

23. "*Stir up thyself.*" Be upon thy mettle. Prove that thou art no indifferent witness to all this infamy. "*Awake to my judgment.*" Take the sceptre and summon the great assize; vindicate justice, avenge oppression. Do not tarry as men do who sleep. "*Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*" He claims a nearness to his God, he holds him with both hands; he leaves his case with the righteous Judge. He begs that the suit may be brought on, heard, tried, and verdict given. Well is it for a man when his conscience is so clear that he dares to make such an appeal.

24. The appeal is here repeated; the plaintiff feels that the joy of his accusers will be shortlived as soon as impartial justice rules. The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely, the fool's grimace—all, all will cease when the righteous Lord sits down upon the judgment seat.

25. "*Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*" Disappoint them of their prey when their mouths are ready to swallow it. Saints are too dear a morsel for the powers of evil; God will not give his sheep over to the wolfish jaws of the persecutors. Just when they are tuning their pipes to celebrate their victory, they shall be made to laugh on the other side of their mouths. They are all too sure, and too boastful; they reckon without their host: little do they dream of the end which will be put to their scheming. Their bird shall be flown, and they themselves shall be in the trap. The prayer of this text is a promise. Even before the lips of the wicked can frame a speech of exultation, they shall be disappointed; their heart-speech shall be forestalled, their wishes frustrated, their knavish tricks exposed.

26. Here is the eternal result of all the laborious and crafty devices of the Lord's enemies. God will make little of them, though they "*magnified themselves;*" he will shame them for shaming his people, bring them to confusion for making confusion, pull off their fine apparel and give them a beggarly suit of dishonour, and turn all their rejoicing into weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Truly, the saints can afford to wait.

27. "*Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause.*" Even those who could not render him active aid, but in their hearts favoured him, David would have the Lord reward most abundantly. Men of tender heart set great store by the good wishes and prayers of the Lord's people. Jesus also prizes those whose hearts are with his cause. The day is coming when shouts of victory shall be raised by all who are on Christ's side, for the battle will turn, and the foes of

truth shall be routed. "Yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified." He would have their gladness contributory to the divine glory; they are not to shout to David's praise, but for the honour of Jehovah. Such acclamations may fitly be continued throughout time and eternity. "Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant." They recognised David as the Lord's servant, and saw with pleasure the Lord's favour to him. We can have no nobler title than "servant of God," and no greater reward than for our Master to delight in our prosperity. What true prosperity may be we are not always best able to judge. We must leave that in Jesus' hand; he will not fail to rule all things for our highest good.

"For by his saints it stands confessed.
That what he does is always best."

28. Unceasing praise is here vowed to the just and gracious God. From morning till evening the grateful tongue would talk and sing, and glorify the Lord. O for such a resolve carried out by us all!

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Bonar entitles this Psalm, "The awful utterance of the Righteous One regarding those that hate him without cause;" and he makes the following remarks thereupon:—"Throughout the endless day of eternity the Lord Jesus shall himself speak the Father's 'praise,' and shall put marked emphasis on his 'righteousness'—that righteousness which shall have been exhibited, both in the doom of those who hated the offered Redeemer, and in the salvation of those who received him. There is nothing in all this wherein his own may not fully join, especially on that day when their views of justice shall be far clearer and fuller than now. On that day we shall be able to understand how Samuel could hew Agag in pieces, and the godly hosts of Israel slay utterly in Canaan man and woman and child, at God's command. We shall be able, not only fully to agree in the doom, 'Let them be confounded,' etc., but even to sing, 'Amen, Hallelujah,' over the smoke of torment. Rev. xix. 1, 2. We should in some measure now be able to use every verse of this Psalm in the spirit in which the Judge speaks it, we feeling ourselves his assessors in judging the world. 1 Cor. vi. 2. We shall, at all events, be able to use it on that day when what is written here shall be all accomplished."—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"Plead my cause, O God, with them that strive with me." 1. Doth the world condemn thee for thy zeal in the service of God? Reproachfully scorn thee for thy care to maintain good works? not blush to traduce thee with imputations of preciseness, conceited singularity, pharisaical hypocrisy? Oh but if thy conscience condemn thee not all this while, if that be rectified by the sacred word of God, if thou aim at his glory in pursuing thine own salvation, and side not with the disturbers of the church, go on, good Christian, in the practice of piety, discourage not thyself in thy laudable endeavours, but recount with comfort that the Lord is thy judge (1 Cor. iv. 4), with a *scio cui crediderim*, "I know whom I have believed." 2 Tim. i. 12. 2. Art thou wrongfully adjudged in the erroneous courts of men? are truth and righteousness gone aside from their proper places? Is equity neglected, and poverty overlaid? Well, have patience awhile, cheer up thy fainting spirits, there is a God that beholdeth the innocency of thy cause, unto whom thou hast liberty to make thy last appeal: "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me." Or, 3. Art thou otherwise injured by the hands of malicious men? and doth a penurious estate disable thee to sue for amends? Doth a *Nimrod* oppress thee? A *Laban* defraud thee? A covetous landlord gripe thee? Well, yet take not the matter into thine own hands by attempting unlawful courses; presume not to be judge in thine own cause, for default of a present redress; but often remember what the apostle taught his Thessalonians: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you."—*Isaac Craven's Sermon at Paul's Cross, 1630.*

Verse 1.—"Plead," etc. More literally, *litigate*, O Lord, with them that litigate

against me, contend against them that contend with me; *i.e.*, avenge me of mine adversaries.—*Daniel Cresswell, D.D., F.R.S., in "The Psalms of David according to the Book of Common Prayer: with Critical and Explanatory Notes," 1843.*

Verse 2.—"Shield and buckler." The word rendered "shield" is in the Hebrew text מגן, *magen*, which was a short buckler intended merely for defence. The word rendered "buckler" is תִּינַח *tsinnah*; it was double the weight of the *magen*, and was carried by the infantry; the *magen*, being lighter and more manageable, was used by the cavalry. The *tsinnah* answered to the *scutum*, and the magento the *clypeus*, among the Romans. The word *tsinnah*, means that kind of shield from the middle of which there arose a large boss, surmounted by a dagger, and which was highly useful both as a defensive and an offensive weapon in ancient warfare.—*James Anderson, note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 3.—"Draw out the spear, and stop the way." The spear in the days of Saul and David was a favourite weapon. (See 1 Chron. xi.) A vallant man bravely defending a narrow pass might simply with his lance keep back a pursuing host, and give time for his friends to escape. Very remarkable were the feats of valour of this sort performed in Oriental warfare. David would have his God become his heroic defender, making his enemies pause.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 3.—"Draw out;" or, as the Hebrew phrase is, *empty*, that is *unsheath* the like is of the sword. Exod. xv. 9; Levit. xxvi. 33.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 3.—"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Observe, 1. That salvation may be made sure to a man. David would never pray for that which could not be. Nor would Peter charge us with a duty which stood not in possibility to be performed. 2 Peter 1. 10. "Make your election sure." And to stop the bawling throats of all cavilling adversaries, Paul directly proves it: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii. 5. We may then know that Christ is in us. If Christ be in us, we are in Christ; if we be in Christ, we cannot be condemned, for (Rom. viii. 1) "There is no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." But I leave this point that it may be sure, as granted; and come to ourselves that we may make it sure. The Papists deny this, and teach the contrary, that salvation cannot be made sure; much good do it them, with their sorry and heartless doctrine! If they make that impossible to any which God hath made easy for many, "into their secret let not my soul come." Gen. xlix. 6. Observe, 2. That the best saints have desired to make their salvation sure. David that knew it, yet entreats to know it more. "I know thou favourest me" (Psalm xli. 11); yet here still, *dic animæ*, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." A man can never be too sure of his going to heaven.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 3.—"Say unto my soul." God may speak with *his own voice*; and thus he gave assurance to Abraham, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Gen. xv. 1. If God speak comfort, let hell roar horror. 2. He may speak by *his works*: actual mercies to us demonstrate that we are in his favour, and shall not be condemned. "By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me." 3. He may speak by *his Son*. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. 4. He may speak by *his Scripture*; this is God's epistle to us, and his letters patent, wherein are granted to us all the privileges of salvation. A universal *si quis*; "Whosoever believes, and is baptised, shall be saved." 5. He may speak by *his ministers*, to whom he hath given "the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. v. 19. 6. He doth speak this by *his Spirit*: he "sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. iv. 6. By all these voices God says to his elect, "*I am your salvation.*" "*My.*" There is no vexation to the vexation of the soul; so no consolation to the consolation of the soul. Let this teach us to make much of this "*My.*" Luther says there is great divinity in pronouns. The assurance that God will save some is a faith incident to devils. The very reprobates may believe that there is a book of election; but God never told them that their names were written there. The hungry beggar at the feast-house gate smells good cheer, but the master doth not say, "This is provided for thee." It is small comfort to the harbourless wretch to pass through a goodly city, and see many glorious buildings, when he cannot say, *Hæc mea domus*, I have a place here. The beauty of that excellent city

Jerusalem, built with sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, and such precious stones, the foundation and walls whereof are perfect gold (Rev. xxi.), affords a soul no comfort, unless he can say, *Mea civitas*, I have a mansion in it. The all-sufficient merits of Christ do thee no good, unless, *tua pars et portio*, he be thy Saviour. Happy soul that can say with the Psalmist, "O Lord, thou art my portion!" Let us all have oil in our lamps, lest if we be then to buy, beg, or borrow, we be shut out of doors like the fools, not worthy of entrance. Pray, "*Lord, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*" Who? What? To whom? When? Who? *The Lord!* To the Lord David prays. He hath made a good choice, for there is salvation in none other. "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." Hosæ xiii. 9. The world fails, the flesh fails, the devil kills. Only the Lord saves. **WHAT?** Salvation. A special good thing; every man's desire. I will give thee a lordship, saith God to Esau. I will give thee a kingdom, saith God to Saul. I will give thee an apostleship, saith God to Judas. But, I will be thy salvation, he says to David, and to none but saints. To whom? "*My salvation.*" Not others only, but "*thine.*" A man and a Christian are two creatures. He may be a man that hath reason and outward blessings; he is only a Christian that hath faith, and part in the salvation of Christ. God is plentiful salvation, but it is not ordinary to find a *cui*—to whom. Much of heaven is lost for lack of a hand to apprehend it. **WHEN?** In the present, "*I am.*" *Sum, non sufficit quod ero.* It is comfort to Israel in captivity that God says, *Ero tua redemptio*, I will redeem thee; but the assurance that quiets the conscience is this, "*I am thy salvation.*" As God said to Abraham, "Fear not, I am with thee." Deferred hope faints the heart. Whatsoever God forbears to assure us of, oh, pray we him not to delay this, "Lord, say to our souls, *I am your salvation.*"—*Condensed from Thomas Adams.*

Verse 4.—"Let them be confounded and put to shame." Here David beginneth his imprecations, which yet, saith Theodoret, he doth not utter as cursing, but as prophesying rather. If we shall at any time take upon us thus to imprecate (as we may in some cases), we must see to it, first, that our cause be good; secondly, that we do it not out of private revenge, but merely for the glory of God; thirdly, that we utter not a syllable this way, but by the guidance of God's good Spirit.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 4—8, 26.—How are we to account for such prayers for vengeance? We find them chiefly in four Psalms, the seventh, thirty-fifth, sixty-ninth, and one-hundred and ninth, and the imprecations in these form a terrible climax. In the last no less than thirty anathemas have been counted. Are these the mere outbursts of passionate and unsanctified feeling, or are they the legitimate expression of a righteous indignation? Are they to be excused as being animated by the "spirit of Elias?" a spirit not unholy indeed, but far removed from the meekness and gentleness of Christ; or are they the stereotyped forms in which the spirit of devotion may utter itself? Are they Jewish only, or may they be Christian also? An un instructed fastidiousness, it is well known, has made many persons recoil from reading these Psalms at all. Many have found their lips falter when they have been called to join in using them in the congregation, and have either uttered them with bated breath and doubting heart, or have interpreted them in a sense widely at variance with the letter. Some have tried to reconcile them with a more enlightened conscience, by regarding such words not as the expression of a wish, but as the utterance of a prediction; the Hebrew optative, which is distinct enough from the simple future, absolutely forbids this expedient. Others again would see in them expressions which may lawfully be used in the soul's wrestling against spiritual enemies. And finally, some would defend them as utterances of righteous zeal for God's honour, and remind us that if we do not sympathise with such zeal, it may be not because our religion is more pure, but because our hearts are colder.

Now the real source of the difficulty lies in our not observing and bearing in mind the essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The older dispensation was in every sense a sterner one than the new. The spirit of Elias, though not an evil spirit, was not the spirit of Christ. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke ix. 56. And through him his disciples are made partakers of the same spirit. But this was not the spirit of the older economy. The Jewish nation had been trained in a sterner school. It had been steeled and hardened by the discipline which had pledged it to a war of exter-

mination with idolaters ; and however necessary such a discipline might be, it would not tend to foster the gentler virtues ; it is conceivable how even a righteous man, under it, feeling it to be his bounden duty to root out evil wherever he saw it, and identifying, as he did, his own enemies with the enemies of Jehovah, might use language which to us appears unnecessarily vindictive. To men so trained and taught, what we call "religious toleration," was a thing not only wrong, but absolutely inconceivable.

It may be quite true that we find revenge forbidden as directly in the Old Testament as in the New, as, for instance, in Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt not avenge," etc., though even there there is a limitation, "against the children of thy people." And it may be no less true that we find instances of imprecation in the New ; as when St. Paul says (2 Tim. iv. 14), "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil : the Lord reward him according to his works," or when he exclaims (Acts xxiii. 3), "God will smite thee, thou whited wall ;" or, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." But even these expressions are very different from the varied, deliberate, carefully-constructed, detailed anathemas of the Psalms. And our Lord's denunciations, to which Hengstenberg refers, are in no way parallel. They are not curses upon individuals, but in fact solemn utterances of the great truth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But after all, whatever may be said of particular passages, the general tone which runs through the two covenants, is unquestionably different. To deny this is not to honour Moses, but to dishonour Christ. Matt. v. 43 ; xix. 8. On the other hand, we must not forget that these imprecations are not the passionate longing for personal revenge. The singer undoubtedly sees in his enemies the enemies of God and his church. They that are not with him are against God. And because the zeal of God's house even consumes him, he prays that all the doers of iniquity may be rooted out. The indignation therefore is righteous, though it may appear to us wrongly directed, or excessive in its utterance.

Once more, the very fact that a dark cloud hid God's judgment in the world to come from the view of the Old Testament saints, may be alleged in excuse of this their desire to see him take vengeance on his enemies here. How deeply the problem of God's righteousness exercised their minds, is abundantly evident from numerous places in the Psalms. They longed to see that righteousness manifested. It could be manifested, they thought, only in the evident exaltation of the righteous, and the evident destruction of the wicked here. Hence, with their eye always fixed on temporal recompense, they could even wish and pray for the destruction of the ungodly. The awful things of the world to come were to a great extent hid from their eyes. Could they have seen these, then surely their prayer would have been not, "Let the angel of the Lord persecute them," "Blot them out of thy book ;" but rather with him who hung upon the cross ; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 4, 8, 26.—David was about as devoid of vindictiveness as any public character who can well be named. His conduct in relation to Saul, from first to last displayed a singularly noble spirit, far removed from anything like the lust of vengeance ; and the meekness with which he endured the bitter reproaches of Shimei, bore witness to the same spirit after his accession to the throne.

When David's whole career is intelligently and fairly reviewed, it leaves on the mind the impression of a man possessed of as meek and placable a temper as was ever associated with so great strength of will, and such strong passions. Even in the heats of sudden resentment, he was not apt to be hurried into deeds of revenge. Such being the case, it would certainly have been a strange and unaccountable thing if he had shown himself less the master of his own spirit in poems composed in seasons of retirement and communion with God, especially since these very poems express a keen sense of the heinousness of the sin that has been laid to his charge. He can affirm regarding his implacable enemies, "As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth : I humbled my soul with fasting ; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother : I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Psalm xxxv. 13, 14. "O Lord, my God, if I have done this ; if there be iniquity in my hands ; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy) : let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it ; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth." Psalm vii. 3—5. Surely one ought to think twice before

putting on the imprecations an interpretation which would make them utterly incongruous with these appeals, uttered almost in the same breath.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

Verse 5.—“*As chaff.*” Literally, “*As the thistledown.*”—*John Morison.*

Verse 6.—“*Let their way be dark and slippery.*” A horrible way! Darkness alone who feareth not? A slippery way alone who avoids not? In a dark and slippery way, how shalt thou go? where set foot? These two ills are the great punishments of men: darkness, ignorance; a slippery way, luxury. “*Let their way be darkness and slipping; and let the angel of the Lord persecute them,*” that they be not able to stand. For anyone in a dark and slippery way, when he seeth that if he move his foot he will fall, and there is no light before his feet, haply resolving to wait until light come; but here is the angel of the Lord persecuting them.—*Augustine.*

Verse 6.—“*Slippery.*” Margin, as in Heb., *slipperiness*. This is a circumstance which adds increased terror to the image. It is not only a *dark* road, but a road made slippery by rains; a road where they are in danger every moment of sliding down a precipice where they will be destroyed.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 7.—“*They hid for me their net in a pit.*” As if David had said that they had dug a pit, and covered and hid its mouth with a net, that I might pass upon it and fall into it.—*Kimchi.*

Verse 8.—“*Let destruction come upon him at unawares.*” Or a storm, such as is caused in the Eastern countries by a south wind, very sudden, violent, and destructive.—*John Gill.*

Verse 8.—“*Let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.*” By giving Ahithophel rope enough, the Lord preserved David from perishing. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai’s stirrup, and be the herald of his honour? The wicked shall be undone by their own doings; all the arrows that they shoot at the righteous shall fall upon their own pates. Maxentius built a false bridge to drown Constantine, but was drowned himself. Henry the Third of France was stabbed in the very same chamber where he had helped to contrive the cruel massacre of the French Protestants. And his brother, Charles the Ninth, who delighted in the blood of the saints, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for his people, as many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her confederates are this day a-laying of snares and traps and a-digging of pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal, yet do but wait and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and digged for his people.—*Condensed from Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 8.—“*Let his net that he hath hid catch himself.*” Thou fool, who opposeth thy counsels to those of the Most High. He who devises evil for another, falls at last into his own pit, and the most cunning finds himself caught by what he had prepared for another. But virtue without guile, erect like the lofty palm, rises with greater vigour when it is oppressed.—*Pietro Metastasio, 1698—1782.*

Verse 9.—“*And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord,*” etc. While some ascribe to fortune, and others to their own skill, the praise of their deliverance from danger, and few, if any, yield the whole praise of it to God, David here declares that he will not forget the favour which God had bestowed upon him. My soul, says he, shall rejoice, not in a deliverance of the author of which it is ignorant, but in the salvation of God. To place the matter in a still stronger light, he assigns to his very bones the office of declaring the divine glory. As if not content that his tongue should be employed in this, he applies all the members of his body to the work of setting forth the praises of God. The style of speaking which he employs is hyperbolic, but in this way he shows unfeignedly that his love to God was so strong that he desired to spend his sinews and bones in declaring the reality and truth of his devotion.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 10.—"All my bones," etc. These words contain the most vivid description of the highest delight which by the whole soul and body should be experienced and openly manifested. He mentions his soul (verse 9) and all his bones as about to take part in the joy, to indicate that he most heartily and with his whole body was about to rejoice, and that the joy which he would manifest would not be of an ordinary character, but of the highest order, so that each several bone should sing forth the praises of God.—*Hermon Venema, 1697—1787.*

Verse 10.—"All my bones." In the Scriptures emotions are generally ascribed to the viscera, the bones are usually regarded as passive; in this place and Psalm li. 8, and in these two places only, exulting joy is attributed to the bones. Ordinary experience shows us that the intestines have sympathy with our passionate excitements, but we have no consciousness of the bones becoming sympathetically sensitive. The expression therefore is highly poetical, and indicates that the joy intended would be far beyond ordinary and common delight; it would be so profound that even the most callous part of the human frame would partake of it. Doubtless the poetry has a basis of truth in it, for though we may not perceive it, there is most assuredly a true and real sympathy with our mental states in every particle of bone and muscle, as well as in those tender organs which are more apparently affected.—*C. H. S. Thoughts suggested by a passage in "Biblical Psychology," by Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 10.—"All my bones." That is, whatsoever strength and vigour is in me it shall be spent in celebrating thy praises. Or, although I have nothing left me but skin and bones, so poor am I grown, yet I will not be wanting to the work.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 10.—"My bones are riving through my skin, and yet all my bones are praising him. "I said, I am cast out of thy sight, but I will look again towards thy holy temple."—*Thomas Haliburton, 1674—1711.*

Verse 11.—"They laid to my charge things that I knew not." You will say, Why does God permit wicked people to lay to the charge of the godly such things as they are clear of: God if he pleased could prevent it, and stop the mouths of the wicked, that they should not be able to speak against his children? Answer—As all things work for the best to them that love God, so this works for the good of God's people. God doth permit it for the good of his people, and thus he frustrates the hopes of the wicked: they intend evil against the godly, and God disposes of it for good. As Joseph said to his brethren, "You intended evil against me, and God disposed of it for good;" so we may say to such as falsely slander God's people, You intended evil against the people of God, but God disposes of it for good. There is a fivefold good that God brings out of it to his people. *First*, God doth by this means humble them, and brings them to examine what is amiss: so that though they be clear of that crime laid to their charge, yet they will then examine whether there be nothing else amiss betwixt God and them; they will search their hearts, and walk more humbly, and cleave more close to the Lord. *Secondly*, God doth by this means bring them oftener upon their knees, to seek unto him, to plead their cause, and to clear their innocency. How oft did the prophet speak unto God when the wicked did falsely accuse him; how did he make his moan at the throne of grace unto God, beseeching him to plead his cause, and to keep him close in his way, that the wicked might not rejoice at his downfall! So when God's people see that it is that which the wicked would have, that which is their joy, to see the godly fall into such and such a sin; then the godly will pray more earnestly with David, Lord, lead me in a right path because of my observers; then they will be earnest with God to keep them from falling into that sin that the wicked desire they might fall into; and this is a second good that comes of it. *Thirdly*, God doth use the reproach of the wicked as a preventing medicine against that crime which the wicked lay to their charge. The godly have unrenewed nature as well as renewed, and if God should leave them never so little to themselves, they are not their own keepers, they might fall into that sin which the wicked lay to their charge: and every godly man and woman may say when they are falsely accused, It is God's mercy that I did not fall into that sin that lay to my charge. God doth use wicked people's tongues as a warning against such a sin, that when they see how the wicked joy at a brat of their own hatching, then they consider, if the wicked thus joy without a cause, what would they do if they had just cause? Well, by the help of God this shall be a warning to me for ever to watch against

that sin : for the time to come I will pray more against that particular sin than I have done, and watch more against that sin than I have done ; through God's help they shall never have occasion to rejoice over me in that kind. Truly, I verily believe many a child of God can say by experience, I never should have prayed and watched against such a sin so much, had not God used the tongues of the wicked as preventing physic : I knew not my own heart, but that I might have fallen into such and such a sin had not God by this means hedged up my way with thorns ; and this is the third good comes of it. *Fourthly*, God doth by this means exercise the graces of his people by letting them undergo bad report as well as good report : he tries whether they will cleave close to him in all conditions, as Psalm xliv. 15—17. *Fifthly*, God doth by this means teach them how to judge of others when they are falsely accused. For the time to come they will not receive a false report against their neighbour ; they will know the truth of a thing before they believe it, and they know how to comfort others in the like condition ; and thus God disposes of it for good, and thus God makes the wicked the servant of his people in that very thing which the wicked think to wrong them most in ; for he uses the wicked as the rod and wisp, to scour off the rust of their graces and to correct their security ; and when the rod hath done its office then it is thrown into the fire : and thus you see how God disposes of the wicked's false accusations of his people for good.—*Zephaniah Smyth's Sermon, "The Malignant's Plot,"* 1647.

Verse 12.—"They rewarded me evil for good." For the good David did in killing Goliath, and slaying his ten thousands of the Philistines, and thereby saving his king and country, Saul and his courtiers envied him, and sought to slay him : so our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good he did to the Jews, by healing their bodies of diseases, and preaching the gospel to them for the benefit of their souls, was rewarded with reproaches and persecutions, and at last with the shameful death of the cross ; and in like manner as his people used, but this is an evil that shall not go unpunished ; see Prov. xvii. 13.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"To the spoiling of my soul." They robbed not his body of goods but his soul of consolation. They bereaved his soul (that is the word), like a widow who loses her children in whom she delighted and found succour. They were not content with injuring his estate, but they were for ruining the man himself by their undeserved malice, they attacked him in name and reputation, which were as dear to him as his sons and daughters, or even as his soul. It is evermore an injury to the soul to be attacked with slander, it puts a man into a warring attitude, endangers his peace of mind, imperils his enjoyment of quiet contemplation, and tends to interrupt his communion with God. Thus the spiritual nature is despoiled and suffers bereavement.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 13.—"My prayer returned into, or was directed to, my bosom." Of the many interpretations that are given of this passage, that appears to me the most probable which derives it from the posture of the worshipper ; who standing with his head inclined downward toward his bosom, turned away his attention from all external objects, and uttered his mournful and earnest requests, as if they were directed to his own bosom. Such a posture of devotion is in use both among Jews and Mohammedans.—*Koehler in Repertor. Lit. Orient. ; and Reland de Relig. Mohammedica, quoted by Walford in loc.*

Verse 13 (last clause).—We may read it thus : *Let my prayer return into my bosom* ; that is, I wished no worse to them than to myself : let me receive of God such good as I prayed for them. See Psalm lxxix. 12.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 14.—"For his mother." On account of the plurality of wives in an Eastern household, the sons are usually far more attached to their mother than their father. Their father they share with a numerous band of half-brothers, who are envious of them, or of whom they are jealous, but their mother is all their own, with her they are brought up in childhood ; she takes their part in youth, in the numerous battles of the harem ; and on their part when they are grown up, they love her intensely, and hence their mourning at her decease is of the bitterest kind.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 14.—"His mother." Mahomet was once asked what relation had the strongest claim upon our affection and respect ; when he instantly replied, "The mother, the mother, the mother."

Verse 14 (last clause).—Bewailleth his mother : mourneth at her funeral. In this case the affections are most strong. Therefore the priests were permitted to mourn for such. Levit. xxi. 1, 2, 3.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 15.—“But in mine adversity they rejoiced,” etc.—Do not glory in your neighbour's ruins. The fire-fly leaps and dances in the fire, and so do many wicked men rejoice in the sufferings of others. Such as rejoice in the sufferings of others are sick of the devil's disease ; but from that disease the Lord deliver all your souls. 'Tis sad to insult over those whom God hath humbled ; 'tis high wickedness to triumph over those to whom God hath given a cup of astonishment to drink. Such as make the desolations of their neighbours to be the matter either of their secret repast, or open exultation, such may fear that the very dregs of divine wrath are reserved for them. 'Tis bad playing upon the harp because others have been put to hang their harps upon the willows. We must not pray with him in the tragedy, but it may rain calamities ; nor with Clemens' Gnostic, Give me calamities that I may glory in them. There cannot be a greater evidence of a wicked heart, than for a man to be merry because others are in misery. “He that is glad at calamities (that is, at the calamities of others) shall not be unpunished.” Prov. xvii. 5. If God be God, such as congratulate our miseries instead of condoling them, shall be sure to be punished with the worst of punishments ; for such do not only sin against the law of grace, but also against the very law of nature ; the law of nature teaching men to sympathise with those that are in misery, and not to rejoice over them because of their miseries. O, sirs, do not make others' mourning your music, do not make others' tears your wine ; as you would not be made drunk at last with the wine of astonishment.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 15.—“But in mine adversity they rejoiced,” etc. Marvellous prophecy of the cross ! second only, if indeed second, to that in the twenty-second Psalm. Still closer to the history if we take the Vulgate : *the scourges* were gathered *together upon me*. Even so, O Lord Jesus, the ploughers ploughed upon thy back, and made long furrows : precious furrows for us, where are sown patience for the present life, and glory in the next ; where are sown hope that maketh not ashamed, and love that many waters cannot quench. “*The very abjects.*” Even those worst of abjects, who said, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are ;” who had set the poor sinner before the Lord, with their “Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned.” “*Making mouths at me.*” And is it not wonderful that, well knowing the prophecy, yet the chief priests and scribes should have so fulfilled it, as that it should be written concerning them. “They that passed by mocked him, wagging their heads” ?—*Lewis de Grenada, 1504—1588.*

Verse 15.—“In mine adversity they rejoiced.” Now, as men often relent at seeing the misfortunes of their enemies, so that they cease to hate or persecute those who are already miserably wretched, it was an evidence of the very cruel and fierce spirit by which David's former friends were actuated against him, when, upon seeing him cast down and afflicted, they were rather by this incited furiously and insolently to assail him.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 15.—“The abjects.” The very abjects (Prayer Book Version). The Hebrew word *Nechim*, thus translated, comes from a verb signifying to be smitten. Hence, in the Septuagint it is rendered *scourges*. But it may also be rendered, with Jerome, *smilers*, and may mean *smitten with the tongue*. Com. Jer. xviii. 18. Another of its meanings is, according to Buxtorf, the *wry-legged, the lame* ; and so it is used in 2 Sam. iv. 4 ; ix. 3 ; whence the epithet of *Necho* was given to one of the Pharaohs who halted in his gait. Our translators seem to have understood the word in this last sense, as a term of contempt.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

*Verse 15.—*David, having showed how compassionate he was to his enemies in their affliction (verse 14), he presently shows (verse 15), how incompassionate, or barbarously cruel rather, his enemies were to him in his. “*Abjects*” are vile persons, men smitten in their estates and credits ; yea, often as slaves or ill servants smitten with cudgels or whips. So a learned translator renders the Psalm, *The smitten gathered against me* ; that is, vile men who deserve to be beaten and cudgelled.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 16.—“With hypocritical mockers in feasts.” Some cannot be merry, but it must be with Scripture ; if they want a little diversion, the saints must be the subject of their discourse ! they can vent their profane jests upon the word

of God; this is their pastime over their cups upon the ale-bench. How ready they are with their contumelious reflections; they have learnt their father's dialect, they are accusers of the brethren, their speech bewrays them to be Heliians. You know that in ordinary, we can tell what countryman a person is by his speech, every country having almost a peculiar idiom; so it is here, these scoffers at religion by speaking the language of hell, let us understand whence they are. They have, it may be, a little wit, which they set off with a sort of an air in rhetorical railery, and oh, how quick and sharp when they are upon this subject! These scoffing Ishmaelites are seated in the devil's chair, somewhat above their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place; and there is less ground to hope that such persons will be savingly wrought upon who arrive to such a height in sin as to make a mock of it, and to sport with holiness, than of others. Persons are got a great way towards hell when they mock at what is serious, and that with delight. This the Lord will visit for in his due time; for he knows who they are that so dishonour him by reproaching them that are his.—*Oliver Heywood.*

Verse 16.—“*Hypocritical mockers in feasts.*” מִן לֵב עֵינַם. Very difficult. The word עֵינַם, in Kings xvii. 12, the only other passage where it occurs, means “a cake.” Hence מִן לֵב is interpreted by Gesenius and other to mean, hangers-on at the tables of the rich (lit. “cake-mockers”) whose business it was, by witticisms and buffoonery to make entertainment for the guests, and who got their dinner in return, like the Gr. ψωμοκόλακες, κνισοκόλακες, and the Mediæv. Lat. *buccellarii*. Then the words would mean, “Amongst the profanest.”—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.* [Would not our word *loafers* be somewhat analogous to these cake-eaters of antiquity!]
—*C. H. S.*

Verse 16.—“*Hypocritical mockers.*” David aggravates the sin of those jeering companions who made him their table-talk, and could not taste their cheer except seasoned with some salt jest quibbled out at him, with this, that they were “*hypocritical mockers* ;” they did it slyly, and wrapped up their scoffs, it is like in such language as might make some think, who did not well observe them, that they applauded him. There is a way of commending which some have learned to use when they mean to cast the greatest scorn upon those they hate bitterly, and these hypocritical mockers deserve the chair to be given them from all other scorers.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 16.—“*Mockers in feasts.*” If it were known at a feast that there was any one present or absent, whom the host disliked, it was customary for the guests to “make fun of them,” and use sarcastic language respecting them. These are the “*hypocritical mockers in feasts.*”—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 17.—Satan no sooner spies our wanderings, but he presently runs with a complaint to God, filing bills against us in the star-chamber of heaven, where the matter would go hard with us, but for the Great Lord Chancellor of peace, our Advocate Jesus Christ. As God keeps all our tears in a bottle, and registereth the very groans of our holy passion in a book, so Satan keeps a record of our sins, and solicits justice against us. Were God like man, subject to passions, or incensible by the suggestions of the common barrator, woe were us. But he will hear one son of truth before ten thousand fathers of lying. No matter what the plaintiff libelleth, when the judge acquitteth. We have forfeited our estates by treason, and the busy devil begs us; but there is one that steps in, and pleads a former grant, and that both by promise and purchase. “*Lord, rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.*” Lord Jesus, challenge thine own; let not Satan enter upon by force or fraud, what thou hast bought with thine own blood.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17.—“*My darling.*” In Poole's Synopsis the critics explain this name for the soul, as my only one, my solitary one, desolate, deserted, and destitute of human hope. Such is the soul under sore affliction. See Ps. xxii. 21. “*From the lions.*” Daniel in the den was literally where David was spiritually. Shut in among fierce, cruel, and angry creatures, and himself defenceless, having no weapon but prayer, no helper but the Lord. The people of God may be exposed to the lions of hell, and their roarings may grievously affright them; but the soul which is their “*darling*” is also God's dear one, and therefore they shall be rescued.
—*C. H. S.*

Verse 19.—“*Wink with the eye.*” Showing pleasure in their eyes because of my evil.—*Francis Vatablus, 1545.*

Verse 19.—“*Wink the eye.*” This was a sign which malicious persons made to each other when the object of their malice was gained, scornfully twisting their eyes together. The Hebrew word here has no sufficiently expressive substitute in English.—*Benjamin Weiss.*

Verse 21.—“*Our eye hath seen.*” *Eye for eyes*, unless we would say that all the wicked are so conjoined, that they may seem to have but one eye, heart, head.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 21.—Yet, O ye saints, divulge not these things to wicked men; whisper them softly one to another, with fear and trembling, lest some profane wretch or other overhear you, and take that for encouragement that was only meant for caution. What is more common than for the vilest sinners to plead for their excuse, or warrant rather, the foul miscarriages of God’s dearest saints? Thus the drunkard looks upon holy Noah as a pot-companion, whereby he discovers his nakedness in a worse sense than ever Cham did; and thus the unclean sensualist quotes David, and calls him in to be the patron of his debauchery. Certainly, if there be any grief that can overcast the perfect joys of the saints in heaven, it is that their names and examples should, to the great dishonour of God, be produced by wicked and sinful men, to countenance their grossest sins and wickednesses. But let such know, that God hath set up these in his church to be monuments of his mercy, to declare to humble and penitent sinners how great sins he can pardon; yet if any hereupon imbolden themselves in sin, instead of being set up as monuments of mercy, God will set them up as pillars of salt.—*Ezekiel Hopkins (Bishop).*

Verse 21.—He who rejoices in another’s fall rejoices in the devil’s victory.—*Ambrose, quoted in Nichol’s Proverbs.*

Verses 21, 22:—

They gape and drawe their mouthes in scornful wise,
And crie, fie, fie, wee sawe it with our eyes.
But thou their deed, (O Lord!) dost also see;
Then bee not silent soe, nor farr from mee.

Sir John Davies.

Verse 23.—“*My God and my Lord.*” The cry of Thomas when he saw the wounds of Jesus. If he did not count our Lord to be divine, neither does David here ascribe Deity to Jehovah, for there is no difference except in the order of the words and the tongue in which they were spoken, the meaning is identical. What words they are, with their two eyes seeing Jehovah in two aspects yet as one, grasping him with two hands in the double “my” to one heart, for the word is but one, bowing before him on both knees to worship him in lowliest reverence. Well might Nouet, in his exposition of the words as used by Thomas, exclaim, “Oh, sweet word, I will say it all my life long; I will say it in the hour of death; I will say it in eternity.”—*C. H. S.*

Verse 24.—“*O Lord my God.*” O Jehovah my God; here is another precious word. He takes Jehovah to be his God, in opposition to those who make idols, or riches, or their own lusts their god. He claims a full possession of all that is in the great I AM. Even though he views him as a judge he lays the hand of faith upon his God, and flinches not even before the blaze of his righteousness. It is a noble word, a grand utterance of faith; he who can pronounce that word “my” from his inmost soul in such a connection may well laugh to scorn all his enemies.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 25.—“*Let them not say we have swallowed him up.*” And even if they could, like Jonah’s whale, they would soon be sickened of their feast. A living child of God were more easily swallowed than digested by the malice of hell.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 27.—See how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. The Romans being in great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temples of their gods to fight with their enemies, and so they overcame them: so when the people of God have been hard put to it by reason of afflictions and persecutions, the weapons that they

have fled to have been prayers and tears, and with these they have overcome their persecutors.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 28.—“*My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.*” See now I have made a discourse something longer; ye are wearied. Who endureth to praise God all the day long? I will suggest a remedy whereby thou mayest praise God all the day long if thou wilt. Whatever thou dost, do well, and thou hast praised God. When thou singest a hymn, thou praisest God, but what doth thy tongue, unless thy heart also praise him? Hast thou ceased from singing hymns, and departed that thou mayest refresh thyself? Be not drunken, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou go away to sleep? Rise not to do evil, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou transact business? Do no wrong, and thou hast praised God. Dost thou till thy field? Raise not strife, and thou hast praised God. In the innocency of thy works prepare thyself to praise God all the day long.—*Augustine.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—Jesus our Advocate and Champion; our friend in the courts of heaven and the battles of earth.

Verse 2.—Jesus armed as the defender of the faithful.

Verse 3.—Enemies kept at arm’s length. How the Lord does this, and the blessedness of it to us

Verse 3 (last clause)—Full assurance. An assurance positive, personal, spiritual, present, divine, complete, coming by a word from God.

Verse 3 (last clause).—Heaven made sure.—*Thomas Adams’ Sermon.*

Verse 4.—The everlasting confusion of the devil.

Verse 6.—The horrible pilgrimage of the ungodly.

Verse 6.—The trinity of dangers in the pathway of the wicked, their way dark with ignorance, and slippery with temptation, while behind them is the avenger.

Verse 8.—Destruction at unawares, an awful topic.

Verse 9.—Joy in God and in his salvation.

Verse 10.—A matchless God, and his matchless grace—these are the themes. An experienced heart, thoroughly quickened—this is the songster; and from this cometh matchless music.

The music of a shattered harp.

Verse 11.—The meanness, cruelty, sinfulness, and commonness of slander.

Verse 12.—How a soul may be robbed.

Verse 13.—Christian sympathy even for the froward.

Verse 13 (last clause).—Personal benefit of intercessory prayer.

Verses 13, 14.—Compassion to the sick.—*C. Simeon.*

Verse 15.—The shameful conspiracy of men against our Lord Jesus at his passion.

Verse 17.—The limit of divine endurance.

Verse 18.—The duty, blessedness, and seasonableness of public praise.

Verse 22.—Omniscience pleaded, a word sought for, presence requested, action entreated, affiance urged as a claim.

Verse 25.—The ungodly man’s delight, and the righteous man’s refuge.

Verse 26.—The convict dress of the wicked—“*clothed with shame,*” etc.

Verse 27 (last clause).—What is that prosperity in which the Lord hath pleasure?

Verse 28.—A blessed theme, a fitting tongue, an endless speech.