

## PSALM XLI.

**TITLE.**—To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. *This title has frequently occurred before and serves to remind us of the value of the Psalm, seeing that it was committed to no mean songster; and also to inform us as to the author who has made his own experience the basis of a prophetic song, in which a far greater than David is set forth. How wide a range of experience David had! What power it gave him to edify future ages! And how full a type of our Lord did he become! What was bitterness to him has proved to be a fountain of unfailing sweetness to many generations of the faithful.*

*Jesus Christ betrayed of Judas Iscariot is evidently the great theme of this Psalm, but we think not exclusively. He is the antitype of David, and all his people are in their measure like him; hence words suitable to the Great Representative are most applicable to those who are in him. Such as receive a vile return for long kindness to others, may read this song with much comfort, for they will see that it is alas! too common for the best of men to be rewarded for their holy charity with cruelty and scorn; and when they have been humbled by falling into sin, advantage has been taken of their low estate, their good deeds have been forgotten, and the vilest spite has been vented upon them.*

**DIVISION.**—*The Psalmist in verses 1—3, describes the mercies which are promised to such as consider the poor, and this he uses as a preface to his own personal plea for succour: from verses 4—9 he states his own case, proceeds to prayer in verse 10, and closes with thanksgiving, verses 11—13.*

### EXPOSITION.

**BLESSED** is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

2 The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

1. "*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*" This is the third Psalm opening with a benediction, and there is a growth in it beyond the first two. To search the word of God comes first, pardoned sin is second, and now the forgiven sinner brings forth fruit unto God available for the good of others. The word used is as emphatic as in the former cases, and so is the blessing which follows it. The poor intended, are such as are poor in substance, weak in bodily strength, despised in repute, and desponding in spirit. These are mostly avoided and frequently scorned. The worldly proverb bequeathes the hindmost to one who has no mercy. The sick and the sorry are poor company, and the world deserts them as the Amalekite left his dying servant. Such as have been made partakers of divine grace receive a tenderer nature, and are not hardened against their own flesh and blood; they undertake the cause of the down trodden, and turn their minds seriously to the promotion of their welfare. They do not toss them a penny and go on their way, but enquire into their sorrows, sift out their cause, study the best ways for their relief, and practically come to their rescue; such as these have the mark of the divine favour plainly upon them, and are as surely the sheep of the Lord's pasture as if they wore a brand upon their foreheads. They are not said to have considered the poor years ago, but they still do so. Stale benevolence, when boasted of, argues present churlishness. First and foremost, yea, far above all others put together in tender compassion for the needy is our Lord Jesus, who so remembered our low estate, that though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor. All his attributes were charged with the task of our uplifting. He weighed our case and came in the fulness of wisdom to execute the wonderful work of mercy by which we are

redeemed from our destructions. Wretchedness excited his pity, misery moved his mercy, and thrice blessed is he both by his God and his saints for his attentive care and wise action towards us. He still considereth us; his mercy is always in the present tense, and so let our praises be.

"*The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*" The compassionate lover of the poor thought of others and therefore God will think of him. God measures to us with our own bushel. Days of trouble come even to the most generous, and they have made the wisest provision for rainy days who have lent shelter to others when times were better with them. The promise is not that the generous saint shall have no trouble, but that he shall be preserved in it, and in due time brought out of it. How true was this of our Lord! never trouble deeper nor triumph brighter than his, and glory be to his name, he secures the ultimate victory of all his blood-bought ones. Would that they all were more like him in putting on bowels of compassion to the poor. Much blessedness they miss who stint their alms. The joy of doing good, the sweet reaction of another's happiness, the approving smile of heaven upon the heart, if not upon the estate; all these the niggardly soul knows nothing of. Selfishness bears in itself a curse, it is a cancer in the heart; while liberality is happiness, and maketh fat the bones. In dark days we cannot rest upon the supposed merit of almsgiving, but still the music of memory brings with it no mean solace when it tells of widows and orphans whom we have succoured, and prisoners and sick folk to whom we have ministered.

2. "*The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.*" His noblest life shall be immortal, and even his mortal life shall be sacredly guarded by the power of Jehovah. Jesus lived on till his hour came, nor could the devices of crafty Herod take away his life till the destined hour had struck; and even then no man took his life from him, but he laid it down of himself, to take it again. Here is the portion of all those who are made like their Lord, they bless and they shall be blessed, they preserve and shall be preserved, they watch over the lives of others and they themselves shall be precious in the sight of the Lord. The miser like the hog is of no use till he is dead—then let him die; the righteous like the ox is of service during life—then let him live. "*And he shall be blessed upon the earth.*" Prosperity shall attend him. His cruse of oil shall not be dried up because he fed the poor prophet. He shall cut from his roll of cloth and find it longer at both ends.

"There was a man, and some did count him mad,  
The more he gave away the more he had."

If temporal gains be not given him, spirituals shall be doubled to him. His little shall be blessed, bread and water shall be a feast to him. The liberal are and must be blessed even here; they have a present as well as future portion. Our Lord's real blessedness of heart in the joy that was set before him is a subject worthy of earnest thought, especially as it is the picture of the blessing which all liberal saints may look for. "*And thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*" He helped the distressed, and now he shall find a champion in his God. What would not the good man's enemies do to him if they had him at their disposal? Better be in a pit with vipers than be at the mercy of persecutors. This sentence sets before us a sweet negative, and yet it were not easy to have seen how it could be true of our Lord Jesus, did we not know that although he was exempted from much of blessing, being made a curse for us, yet even he was not altogether nor for ever left of God, but in due time was exalted above all his enemies.

3. "*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing.*" The everlasting arms shall stay up his soul as friendly hands and downy pillows stay up the body of the sick. How tender and sympathising is this image; how near it brings our God to our infirmities and sicknesses! Whoever heard this of the old heathen Jove, or of the gods of India or China? This is language peculiar to the God of Israel; he it is who deigns to become nurse and attendant upon good men. If he smites with one hand he sustains with the other. Oh, it is blessed fainting when one falls upon the Lord's own bosom, and is upborne thereby! Grace is the best of restoratives; divine love is the noblest stimulant for a languishing patient; it makes the soul strong as a giant, even when the aching bones are breaking through the skin. No physician like the Lord, no tonic like his promise, no wine like his love. "*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*" What, doth the Lord turn bedmaker to his sick children? Herein is love indeed. Who would not consider the poor if such be the promised reward? A bed soon grows hard when the body

is weary with tossing to and fro upon it, but grace gives patience, and God's smile gives peace, and the bed is made soft because the man's heart is content; the pillows are downy because the head is peaceful. Note that the Lord will make *all* his bed, from head to foot. What considerate and indefatigable kindness! Our dear and ever blessed Lord Jesus, though in all respects an inheritor of this promise, for our sakes condescended to forego the blessing, and died on a cross and not upon a bed; yet, even there, he was after awhile upheld and cheered by the Lord his God, so that he died in triumph.

We must not imagine that the benediction pronounced in these three verses belongs to all who casually give money to the poor, or leave it in their wills, or contribute to societies. Such do well, or act from mere custom, as the case may be, but they are not here alluded to. The blessing is for those whose habit it is to love their neighbour as themselves, and who for Christ's sake feed the hungry and clothe the naked. To imagine a man to be a saint who does not consider the poor as he has ability, is to conceive the fruitless fig tree to be acceptable; there will be sharp dealing with many professors on this point in the day when the King cometh in his glory.

4 I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see *me*, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; *when* he goeth abroad, he telleth *it*.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me; against me do they devise my hurt.

8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

Here we have a controversy between the pleader and his God. He had been a tender friend to the poor, and yet in the hour of his need the promised assistance was not forthcoming. In our Lord's case there was a dark and dreary night in which such arguments were well befitting himself and his condition.

4. "*I said*"—said it in earnest prayer—"Lord, be merciful unto me." Prove now thy gracious dealings with my soul in adversity, since thou didst aforetime give me grace to act liberally in my prosperity. No appeal is made to justice; the petitioner but hints at the promised reward, but goes straightforward to lay his plea at the feet of mercy. How low was our Redeemer brought when such petitions could come from his reverend mouth, when his lips like lilies dropped such sweet smelling but bitter myrrh! "*Heal my soul.*" My time of languishing is come, now do as thou hast said, and strengthen me, especially in my soul. We ought to be far more earnest for the soul's healing than for the body's ease. We hear much of the cure of souls, but we often forget to care about it. "*For I have sinned against thee.*" Here was the root of sorrow. Sin and suffering are inevitable companions. Observe that by the Psalmist sin was felt to be mainly evil because directed against God. This is of the essence of true repentance. The immaculate Saviour could never have used such language as this unless there be here a reference to the sin which he took upon himself by imputation; and for our part we tremble to apply words so manifestly indicating personal rather than imputed sin. Applying the petition to David and other sinful believers, how strangely evangelical is the argument: heal me, not for I am innocent, but "*I have sinned.*" How contrary is this to all self-righteous pleading! How consonant with grace! How inconsistent with merit! Even the fact that the confessing penitent had remembered the poor, is but obliquely urged, but a direct appeal is made to mercy on the ground of great sin. O trembling reader, here is a divinely revealed precedent for thee, be not slow to follow it.

5. "*Mine enemies speak evil of me.*" It was their nature to do and speak evil; it was not possible that the child of God could escape them. The viper fastened on Paul's hand: the better the man the more likely, and the more venomous the slander. Evil tongues are busy tongues, and never deal in truth. Jesus was

traded to the utmost, although no offence was in him. "When shall he die, and his name perish?" They could not be content till he was away. The world is not wide enough for evil men to live in while the righteous remain, yea, the bodily presence of the saints may be gone, but their memory is an offence to their foes. It was never merry England, say they, since men took to Psalm-singing. In the Master's case, they cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live." If persecutors could have their way, the church should have but one neck, and that should be on the block. Thieves would fain blow out all candles. The lights of the world are not the delights of the world. Poor blind bats, they fly at the lamp, and try to dash it down; but the Lord liveth, and preserveth both the saints and their names.

6. "And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity." His visits of sympathy are visitations of mockery. When the fox calls on the sick lamb his words are soft, but he licks his lips in hope of the carcass. It is wretched work to have spies haunting one's bedchamber, calling in pretence of kindness, but with malice in their hearts. Hypocritical talk is always fulsome and sickening to honest men, but especially to the suffering saint. Our divine Lord had much of this from the false hearts that watched his words. "His heart gathereth iniquity to itself." Like will to like. The bird makes its nest of feathers. Out of the sweetest flowers chemists can distil poison, and from the purest words and deeds malice can gather groundwork for calumnious report. It is perfectly marvellous how spite spins webs out of no materials whatever. It is no small trial to have base persons around you lying in wait for every word which they may pervert into evil. The Master whom we serve was constantly subject to this affliction. "When he goeth abroad, he telleth it." He makes his lies, and then vends them in open market. He is no sooner out of the house than he outs with his lie, and this against a sick man whom he called to see as a friend—a sick man to whose incoherent and random speeches pity should be showed. Ah, black-hearted wretch! A devil's cub indeed. How far abroad men will go to publish their slanders! They would fain placard the sky with their falsehoods. A little fault is made much of; a slip of the tongue is a libel, a mistake a crime, and if a word can bear two meanings the worse is always fathered upon it. Tell it in Gath, publish it in Askelon, that the daughters of the uncircumcised may triumph. It is base to strike a man when he is down, yet such is the meanness of mankind towards a Christian hero should he for awhile chance to be under a cloud.

7. "All that hate me whisper together against me." The spy meets his comrades in conclave and sets them all a whispering. Why could they not speak out? Were they afraid of the sick warrior? Or were their designs so treacherous that they must needs be hatched in secrecy? Mark the unanimity of the wicked—"all." How heartily the dogs unite to hunt the stag! Would God we were half as united in holy labour as persecutors in their malicious projects, and were half as wise as they are crafty, for their whispering was craft as well as cowardice, the conspiracy must not be known till all is ready. "Against me do they devise my hurt." They lay their heads together, and scheme and plot. So did Ahithophel and the rest of Absalom's counsellors, so also did the chief priests and Pharisees. Evil men are good at devising; they are given to meditation, they are deep thinkers, but the mark they aim at is evermore the hurt of the faithful. Snakes in the grass are never there for a good end.

8. "An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him." They whisper that some curse has fallen upon him, and is riveted to him. They insinuate that a foul secret stains his character, the ghost whereof haunts his house, and never can be laid. An air of mystery is cast around this doubly dark saying, as if to show how indistinct are the mutterings of malice. Even thus was our Lord accounted "smitten of God and afflicted." His enemies conceived that God had forsaken him, and delivered him for ever into their hands. "And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more." His sickness they hoped was mortal, and this was fine news for them. No more would the good man's holiness chide their sin, they would now be free from the check of his godliness. Like the friars around Wickliffe's bed, their prophesyings were more jubilant than accurate, but they were a sore scourge to the sick man. When the Lord smites his people with his rod of affliction for a small moment, their enemies expect to see them capitally executed, and prepare their *jubilates* to celebrate their funerals, but they are in too great a hurry, and have to alter their ditties and sing to another tune. Our Redeemer eminently fore-

tokened this, for out of his lying in the grave he has gloriously risen. Vain the watch, the stone, the seal! Rising he pours confusion on his enemies.

9. "Yea." Here is the climax of the sufferer's woe, and he places before it the emphatic affirmation, as if he thought that such villany would scarcely be believed. "*Mine own familiar friend.*" "The man of my peace," so runs the original, with whom I had no differences, with whom I was in league, who had aforetime ministered to my peace and comfort. This was Ahithophel to David, and Iscariot with our Lord. Judas was an apostle, admitted to the privacy of the Great Teacher, hearing his secret thoughts, and, as it were, allowed to read his very heart. "*Et tu Brute?*" said the expiring Cæsar. The kiss of the traitor wounded our Lord's heart as much as the nail wounded his hand. "*In whom I trusted.*" Judas was the treasurer of the apostolic college. Where we place great confidence an unkind act is the more severely felt. "*Which did eat of my bread.*" Not only as a guest but as a dependant, a pensioner at my board. Judas dipped in the same dish with his Lord, and hence the more accursed was his treachery in his selling his Master for a slave's price. "*Hath lifted up his heel against me.*" Not merely turned his back on me, but left me with a heavy kick such as a vicious horse might give. Hard is it to be spurned in our need by those who formerly fed at our table. It is noteworthy that the Redeemer applied only the last words of this verse to Judas, perhaps because, knowing his duplicity, he had never made a familiar friend of him in the fullest sense, and had not placed implicit trust in him. Infernal malice so planned it that every circumstance in Jesus' death should add wormwood to it; and the betrayal was one of the bitterest drops of gall. We are indeed, wretched when our *quondam* friend becomes our relentless foe, when confidence is betrayed, when all the rites of hospitality are perverted, and ingratitude is the only return for kindness; yet in so deplorable a case we may cast ourselves upon the faithfulness of God, who, having delivered our Covenant Head, is in verity engaged to be the very present help of all for whom that covenant was made.

10 But thou O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

10. "*But thou, O Lorr<sup>3</sup>, be merciful unto me.*" How the hunted and affrighted soul turns to her God! How she seems to take breath with a "but, thou!" How she clings to the hope of mercy from God when every chance of pity from man is gone! "*And raise me up.*" Recover me from my sickness, give me to regain my position. Jesus was raised up from the grave; his descent was ended by an ascent. "*That I may requite them.*" This as it reads is a truly Old Testament sentence, and quite aside from the spirit of Christianity, yet we must remember that David was a person in magisterial office, and might without any personal revenge, desire to punish those who had insulted his authority and libelled his public character. Our great Apostle and High Priest had no personal animosities, but even he by his resurrection has requited the powers of evil, and avenged on death and hell all their base attacks upon his cause and person. Still the strained application of every sentence of this Psalm to Christ is not to our liking, and we prefer to call attention to the better spirit of the gospel beyond that of the old dispensation.

11 By this I know thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen and Amen.

11. We all are cheered by tokens for good, and the Psalmist felt it to be an auspicious omen, that after all his deep depression he was not utterly given over to his foe. "*By this I know that thou favourest me.*" Thou hast a special regard to me, I have the secret assurance of this in my heart, and, therefore, thine outward dealings do not dismay me, for I know that thou lovest me in them all. "*Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*" What if the believer has no triumph over his foes, he must be glad that they do not triumph over him. If we have not all

we would we should praise God for all we have. Much there is in us over which the ungodly might exult, and if God's mercy keeps the dogs' mouths closed when they might be opened, we must give him our heartiest gratitude. What a wonder it is that when the devil enters the lists with a poor, erring, bedridden, deserted, slandered saint, and has a thousand evil tongues to aid him, yet he cannot win the day, but in the end slinks off without renown.

"The feeblest saint shall win the day  
Though death and hell obstruct his way."

12. "And as for me," despite them all and in the sight of them all, "thou upholdest me in mine integrity;" thy power enables me to rise above the reach of slander by living in purity and righteousness. Our innocence and consistency are the result of the divine upholding. We are like those glasses without feet, which can only be upright while they are held in the hand; we fall, and spill, and spoil all, if left to ourselves. The Lord should be praised every day if we are preserved from gross sin. When others sin they show us what we should do but for grace. "He to-day and I to-morrow," was the exclamation of a holy man, whenever he saw another falling into sin. Our integrity is comparative as well as dependant, we must therefore be humbled while we are grateful. If we are clear of the faults alleged against us by our calumniators, we have nevertheless quite enough of actual blameworthiness to render it shameful for us to boast. "And settest me before thy face for ever." He rejoiced that he lived under the divine surveillance; tended, cared for, and smiled upon by his Lord; and yet more, that it would be so world without end. To stand before an earthly monarch is considered to be a singular honour, but what must it be to be a perpetual courtier in the palace of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible?

13. The Psalm ends with a doxology. "Blessed be the Lord," i.e., let him be glorified. The blessing at the beginning from the mouth of God is returned from the mouth of his servant. We cannot add to the Lord's blessedness, but we can pour out our grateful wishes, and these he accepts, as we receive little presents of flowers from children who love us. Jehovah is the personal name of our God. "God of Israel" is his covenant title, and shows his special relation to his elect people. "From everlasting and to everlasting." The strongest way of expressing endless duration. We die, but the glory of God goes on and on without pause. "Amen and amen." So let it surely, firmly, and eternally be. Thus the people joined in the Psalm by a double shout of holy affirmation; let us unite in it with all our hearts. This last verse may serve for the prayer of the universal church in all ages, but none can sing it so sweetly as those who have experienced as David did the faithfulness of God in times of extremity.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Title.*—The *Syriac* says, "It was a Psalm of David, when he appointed overseers to take care of the poor."—*Adam Clarke*.

*Whole Psalm.*—A prophecy of Christ and the traitor Judas.—*Eusebius of Cæsarea, quoted by J. M. Neale*.

*Verse 1.*—"Blessed is he that considereth the poor." Interpreters are generally of opinion that the exercise of kindness and compassion, manifested in taking care of the miserable, and helping them, is here commended. Those, however, who maintain that the Psalmist here commends the considerate candour of those who judge wisely and charitably of men in adversity, form a better judgment of his meaning. Indeed, the participle, מַשְׂכִּיל *maskil*, cannot be explained in any other way. At the same time it ought to be observed on what account it is that David declares those to be blessed who form a wise and prudent judgment concerning the afflictions by which God chastises his servants. . . . Doubtless it happened to him as it did to the holy patriarch Job, whom his friends reckoned to be one

of the most wicked of men, when they saw God treating him with great severity. And certainly it is an error which is by far too common among men, to look upon those who are oppressed with afflictions as condemned and reprobate. . . . For the most part, indeed, we often speak rashly and indiscriminately concerning others, and, so to speak, plunge even into the lowest abyss those who labour under affliction. To restrain such a rash and unbridled spirit, David says, that they are blessed who do not suffer themselves, by speaking at random, to judge harshly of their neighbours ; but discerning aright the afflictions by which they are visited, mitigate by the wisdom of the spirit, the severe and unjust judgments to which we naturally are so prone.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 1.*—“*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*” As Christ considered us in our state of poverty, so ought we most attentively to consider him in his ; to consider what he suffered in his own person ; to discern him suffering in his poor afflicted members ; and to extend to them the mercy which he extended to us. He, who was “blessed” of Jehovah, and “delivered in the evil day” by a glorious resurrection, will “bless” and “deliver” in like manner, such as for his sake, love and relieve their brethren.—*George Horne.*

*Verse 1.*—“*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*” Not the poor of the world in common, nor poor saints in particular but some single poor man ; for the word is in the singular number, and designs our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the last verse of the preceding Psalm, is said to be *poor and needy.*—*John Gill.*

*Verse 1.*—“*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.*” I call your attention to the way in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say in the text before us, Commiserate the poor ; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provides them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful to the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may embitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle in which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it ; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for *consideration*—“*Blessed is he that considereth the poor,*” a grave and prosaic exercise, I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high-wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstasies of gratitude on the other. The Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognisance of a higher faculty—a faculty of steadier operation than to be weary in well-doing, and of surdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to *consider* the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation, as well as of sentiment, and in so doing puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions, by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object ; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with ; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of *consideration* to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle. . . .

It must be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributions of charity. You must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the object of your benevolent exercises. . . . To give money is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man’s sick-bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It may be recorded in no earthly documents ; but, if done under the influence of Christian principle, in a word, if done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which his disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity.—*From a Sermon*

preached before the Society for Relief of the Destitute Sick, in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, by Thomas Chalmers, D.D. and LL.D. (1780—1847).

Verse 1.—“Blessed is he that considereth the poor.” A Piedmontese nobleman into whose company I fell, at Turin, told me the following story: “I was weary of life, and after a day such as few have known, and none would wish to remember, was hurrying along the street to the river, when I felt a sudden check, I turned and beheld a little boy, who had caught the skirt of my cloak in his anxiety to solicit my notice. His look and manner were irresistible. No less so was the lesson he had learnt—‘There are six of us, and we are dying for want of food.’ ‘Why should I not,’ said I to myself, ‘relieve this wretched family? I have the means, and it will not delay me many minutes. But what if it does?’ The scene of misery he conducted me to I cannot describe. I threw them my purse, and their burst of gratitude overcame me. It filled my eyes, it went as a cordial to my heart. ‘I will call again to-morrow,’ I cried. ‘Fool that I was to think of leaving a world where such pleasure was to be had, and so cheaply!’”—Samuel Rogers (1763—1855) in “Italy.”

Verse 1.—“He that considereth the poor :”

An ardent spirit dwells with Christian love,  
The eagle's vigour in the pitying dove.  
'Tis not enough that we with sorrow sigh,  
That we the wants of pleading man supply,  
That we in sympathy with sufferers feel,  
Nor hear a grief without a wish to heal;  
Not these suffice—to sickness, pain, and woe,  
The Christian spirit loves with aid to go:  
Will not be sought, waits not for want to plead,  
But seeks the duty—nay, prevents the need;  
Her utmost aid to every ill applies,  
And plants relief for coming miseries.

George Crabbe, 1751—1832.

Verse 1.—How foolish are they that fear to lose their wealth by giving it, and fear not to lose themselves by keeping it! He that lays up his gold may be a good jailer, but he that lays it out is a good steward. Merchants traffic thither with a commodity where 'tis precious in regard of scarcity. We do not buy wines in England to carry them to France, spices in France to carry them to the Indies; so for labour and work, repentance and mortification, there is none of them in heaven, there is peace and glory, and the favour of God indeed. A merchant without his commodity hath but a sorry welcome. God will ask men that arrive at heaven's gates, *ubi opera?* Rev. xxii. 12. His reward shall be according to our works. Thou hast riches here, and here be objects that need thy riches—the poor; in heaven there are riches enough but no poor, therefore, by faith in Christ make over to them thy moneys in this world, that by bill of exchange thou mayest receive it in the world to come; that only you carry with you which you send before you. Do good while it is in your power; relieve the oppressed, succour the fatherless, while your estates are your own; when you are dead your riches belong to others. One light carried before a man is more serviceable than twenty carried after him. In your compassion to the distressed, or for pious uses, let your hands be your executors, and your eyes your overseers.—Francis Raworth, *Teacher to the Church at Shoreditch, in a Funeral Sermon*, 1656.

Verses 1, 3.—It is a blessed thing to receive when a man hath need; but 'tis a more blessed thing to give than to receive. “Blessed (saith the prophet David) is he that considereth the poor.” What? to say, alas, poor man! the world is hard with him, I would there were a course taken to do him good? No, no; but so to consider him as to give; to give till the poor man be satisfied, to draw out one's sheaf, ay, one's very soul to the hungry. But what if troubles should come? were it not better to keep money by one? Money will not deliver one. It may be an occasion to endanger one, to bring one into, rather than help one out of trouble; but if a man be a merciful man, *God will deliver him*, either by himself, or by some other man or matter. Ay, but what if sickness come? Why, “the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing;” and, which is a great ease and kindness; God, as it were, himself “will make all his bed in his sickness.” Here poor people have the advantage: such must not say, Alas, I am a poor woman, what works of mercy can I do? for they are they who can best make the beds of sick folk, which we see



is a great act of mercy in that it is said, that *the Lord himself will make their bed in their sickness*. And there are none so poor, but they may *make the beds* of the sick.—*Richard Capel*.

Verses 1, 5.—“*He that considereth.*” “*Mine enemies.*” Strigelius has observed, there is a perpetual antithesis in this Psalm between the few who have a due regard to the poor in spirit, and the many who afflict or desert them.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 2.—“*The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.*” It is worthy of remark, that *benevolent persons*, who “*consider the poor,*” and especially the *sick poor*; who search cellars, garrets, back lanes, and such abodes of misery, to find them out (even in the places where contagion keeps its seat), very seldom fall a prey to their own benevolence. The Lord, in an especial manner, keeps them *alive*, and preserves them; while many, who endeavour to keep far from the contagion, are assailed by it, and fall victims to it. God loves the merciful man.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 2.—“*He shall be blessed upon the earth.*” None of the godly man’s afflictions shall hinder or take away his begun blessedness, even in this world.—*David Dickson*.

Verse 3.—“*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*” Into what minuteness of exquisite and touching tenderness does the Lord condescend to enter! One feels almost as we may suppose Peter felt when the Saviour came to him, and would have washed his feet, “*Lord! thou shalt never wash my feet;*” thou shalt never make my bed. And yet, “*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;*” if the Lord make not our bed in our sickness, there is no peace nor comfort there. We have had David calling on God to bow down his ear, like a loving mother listening to catch the feeblest whisper of her child; and the image is full of the sweetest sympathy and condescension; but here the Lord, the great God of heaven, he that said when on earth, “*I am among you as one that serveth,*” does indeed take upon him the form, and is found in fashion as a servant, fulfilling all the loving and tender offices of an assiduous nurse.—*Barton Bouchier*.

Verse 3.—“*Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*” The meaning rather is, “*it is no longer a sick bed, for thou hast healed him of his disease.*”—*J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 3.—When a good man is ill at ease, God promiseth to make all his bed in his sickness. Pillow, bolster, head, feet, sides, all his bed. Surely that God who made him knows so well his measure and temper as to make his bed to please him. Herein his art is excellent, not fitting the bed to the person, but the person to the bed; infusing patience into him. But, oh! how shall God make my bed, who have no bed of mine own to make. Thou fool, he can make thy not having a bed to be a bed unto thee. When Jacob slept on the ground, who would not have had his hard lodging, therewithal to have his heavenly dream?—*Thomas Fuller*.

Verse 3.—Sure that bed must need be soft which God will make.—*T. Watson*.

Verse 3.—We must not forget that Oriental beds needed not to be made in the same sense as our own. They were never more than mattresses or quilts thickly padded, and were turned when they became uncomfortable, and that is just the word here used.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 3.—When I visited one day, as he was dying, my beloved friend Benjamin Parsons, I said, “*How are you to-day, Sir?*” He said, “*My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom.*” Preaching in the Canterbury Hall, in Brighton, I mentioned this some time since; and many months after I was requested to call upon a poor but holy young woman, apparently dying. She said, “*I felt I must see you before I died. I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head on pillows, and as they were taking them away I said, ‘Mayn’t I keep them?’ The surgeon said, ‘No, my dear, we must take them away.’ ‘But,’ said I, ‘you can’t take away Benjamin Parsons’ three pillows. I can lay my head on infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom.’*”—*Paxton Hood, in “Dark Sayings on a Harp,” 1865.*

Verses 3, 4.—What saith David from the very bottom of his heart, in his sickness? Not, take away this death only. No; but David being sick, first comforts himself with this promise, “*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;*” and then adds, “*I said, Lord, be merciful*

unto me, and heal my soul ;” that is, destroy my lusts, which are the diseases of my soul, Lord ; and heal my soul, and renew life and communion with thee, which is the health and strength of my soul. Do not take this sickness and death only away ; but this sin away, that hath dishonoured thee, hath separated between me and thee : “ *Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.*”—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 4.—“ *I said, Lord, be merciful.*” Mercy, not justice ! The extreme of mercy for the extreme of misery. Righteousness as filthy rags ; a flesh in which dwelleth no good thing, on the one side ; on the other, it is “ neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored ” to health ; “ but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things.” *Wisd. xvi. 12.*—*Thomas Aquinas, quoted by J. M. Neale.*

Verse 4.—God is the strength of a Christian’s heart, by healing and restoring him when the infused habits of grace fail, and sin grows strong and vigorous. A Christian never fails in the exercise of grace, but sin gives him a wound ; and therefore David prayed, “ *Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned.*” And what David prayed for, God promiseth to his people : “ I will heal their backsliding.” *Hosea xiv. 4.* The weakness and decay of grace, brings a Christian presently to the falling sickness ; and so it did David and Ephraim ; ay, but God will be a physician to the soul in this case, and will heal their diseases ; and so he did David’s falling sickness, for which he returned the tribute of praise. *Psalm ciii. 3.*—*Samuel Blackerby.*

Verse 4. (*last clause*).—Saul and Judas each said, “ I have sinned ;” but David says, “ I have sinned against thee.”—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 5.—“ *Mine enemies speak evil of me.*” To speak is here used in the sense of to imprecate.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 5.—“ *His name.*” It is the name, the character, and privileges of a true servant of God, that calls out the hatred of ungodly men, and they would gladly extirpate him from their sight.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

Verse 6.—“ *If he come to see me, he speaketh vanity :*” many fair words, but none of them true.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 6.—I remember a pretty apologue that Bromiard tells :—A fowler, in a sharp frosty morning, having taken many little birds for which he had long watched, began to take up his nets, and nipping the birds on the head laid them down. A young thrush, espying the tears trickling down his cheeks by reason of the extreme cold, said to her mother, that certainly the man was very merciful and compassionate, who wept so bitterly over the calamity of the poor birds. But her mother told her more wisely, that she might better judge of the man’s disposition by his hand than by his eye ; and if the hands do strike treacherously, he can never be admitted to friendship, who speaks fairly and weeps pitifully.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Verse 6.—“ *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself.*” 1. By adding sin to sin, in that he covers over his malice with such horrid hypocrisy. 2. By inventing or contriving all the several ways he can to ensnare me, or do me some mischief, thereby seeking to satisfy and please his corrupt lusts and affections ; 3. (which I like best), by observing all he can in me, and drawing what he can from me, and so laying all up together in his mind, as the ground of his unjust surmises and censures concerning me.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 8.—“ *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him.*” An evil deed of Belial cleaveth fast to him. Grammarians maintain that the word *Belial* is compounded of בִּלְיָ, *beli*, and יָאָל, *yaal*, which signify “ *not to rise* ;” the expression, “ *thing of Belial*” (for so it is literally in the Hebrew), I understand in this place as meaning an extraordinary and hateful crime which as we commonly say can never be expiated, and from which there is no possibility of escape ; unless perhaps some would rather refer it to the affliction itself under which he laboured, as if his enemies had said that he was seized by some incurable malady.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—“ *An evil disease,*” etc. What is here meant by דְּבַר־רִשְׁוֹעַ is matter of some difficulty. The ancient interpreters generally render it a *perverse*, or *mischievous*, or *wicked word* ; the Chaldee, a *perverse word* ; the Syriac, a *word of iniquity* ; the LXX. λόγον παράνομον ; the Latin, *iniquum verbum*, a *wicked word* ; the Arabic, *words contrary to the law*. And so in all probability it is set to signify a *great slander*, or *calumny*—that as “ *men of Belial*” are *slandering persons*, so the

*speech of Belial shall signify a slanderous speech. And this is said to "cleave" to him on whom it is fastened, it being the nature of calumnies, when strongly affixed on any, to cleave fast, and leave some evil mark behind them.—Henry Hammond.*

Verse 9.—“*Yea, mine own familiar friend,*” etc. The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home: her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands; and, unnatural as it may seem, they who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to “*lift the heel*” against her.—*George Horne.*

Verse 9.—“*Mine own familiar friend.*” He who, on visiting me, continually saluted me with the kiss of love and veneration, and the usual address; peace be to thee.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 9.—“*Which did eat of my bread.*” If the same sentiment prevailed among the Hebrews, which prevails at the present day among the Bedouin Arabs, of sacred regard to the person and property of one with whom they have eaten bread and salt, the language is very forcible. “*Hath lifted up his heel:*” a metaphor drawn from the horse, which attacks with its heel. This language may well have been used by our Saviour in John xiii. 18, in the way of rhetorical illustration or emphasis.—*George R. Noyes, D.D.*

Verse 9.—“*Hath lifted up his heel against me.*” In this phrase he seems to allude to a beast’s kicking at his master by whom he is fed, or the custom of men’s spurning at or trampling upon those that are cast down on the ground, in a way of despite and contempt.—*Arthur Jackson.*

Verse 9.—“*Hath lifted up his heel against me;*” *i.e.*, hath spurned me, hath kicked at me, as a vicious beast of burden does; hath insulted me in my misery.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 10.—“*That I may requite them.*” Either (1), kindness for injuries (as in Psalm xxxv. 13): it is the mark of a good and brave man to do good to all in his power, to hurt no one, even though provoked by wrong: or, (2), punishment for wrong-doing—*that I may punish them;* for am I not their magistrate, and the executioner of God’s justice!—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 10.—“*That I may requite them.*” David was not as one of the common people, but a king appointed by God and invested with authority, and it is not from an impulse of the flesh, but in virtue of the nature of his office, that he is led to denounce against his enemies the punishment which they had merited.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 11.—“*By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me:*” not because I have no enemies, or because I have no trouble which would overcome me. Therefore when he wrote down *many troubles*, he blotted it (as it were) with his pen again, as a merchant razeth his book when the debt is discharged; and instead of *many troubles*, he putteth in, *the Lord delivereth*. Because he forgiveth all sins, he is said to deliver from all troubles, to show that we have need of no Saviour, no helper, no comforter, but him.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 11.—“*By this I know that thou favourest me.*” In this text we see two things. 1. How David assureth himself of God’s love towards him. 2. How thankful he is to God for assuring him of his love. The first he doth by two arguments; one is taken from his enemies, they were prevented of their expectation “*Therefore thou lovest me.*” The other is taken from his own estate, which was not one whit hurt, or impaired, but bettered by them. . . . Here the prophet speaketh of his knowledge, and telleth us that though he knew not all things, yet he knew that God loved him, and so long as he knoweth that, he careth not greatly for other matters, how the world goeth with him, etc. And, to say the truth, he need not, for he that is sure of that, is sure of all. God loveth all his creatures as a good God, and hateth nothing that he made, but he loveth his elect children with a more especial love than the rest, as a Father in Christ Jesus, and he that is sure that God doth so favour him, is sure, I say, of all. For to him whom God loveth, he will deny no good thing, no, not his own Son; and if he gave us his Son, because he loved us, how shall he not with him give us all things else?

When the child is persuaded that his father loveth him, he is bold to ask this and that of his father: so may we be bold to ask anything of God our heavenly

Father that is good for us, when we be sure that he loveth us. As Mary and Martha put Christ in mind but of two things ; the first was, that Christ loved their brother Lazarus ; the second was, that Lazarus was sick ; “ He whom thou lovest is sick : ” it was no need to tell him what he should do, for they knew he would do what might be done for him, because he loved him. So we may say to the Lord, when we are sure that he loveth us : Lord, he whom thou lovest wanteth this or that for his body or his soul. We need not then appoint him what to do, or when, or how ; for look what he seeth most convenient for us, and for his own glory, he will surely do it. Therefore whatsoever David knoweth, he will be sure to know this ; and whatsoever he is ignorant of, yet of this he will not be ignorant ; to teach us that whatsoever we seek to make sure, this must first be made sure, or else nothing is sure. Peter bids us make our election sure ; Job, when he saith, “ I am sure that my Redeemer liveth,” teacheth us to make our redemption sure. And here David teacheth us to make *God’s favour* sure : now if we make that sure, then our election is sure, our redemption is sure, our vocation is sure, and our salvation is sure.—*William Burton, 1602.*

*Verse 11.*—“ *Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.*” When God doth deliver us from the hands of our enemies, or any trouble else, we may persuade ourselves thereby, he hath a favour unto us, as David did. But then it may be demanded, If God doth love his church, why doth he suffer his church to be troubled and molested with enemies ? The reason is this, because by this means his love may be made more manifest in saving and delivering them. For as a sure friend is not known but in time of need, so God’s goodness and love is never so well perceived as it is in helping of us when we cannot help ourselves. As Adam’s fall did serve to manifest God’s justice and mercy, the one in punishing, the other in pardoning of sin, which otherwise we had never known : so the troubles of the church serve to manifest, first, our deserts by reason of our sins ; secondly, our weakness and inability to help ourselves ; and, thirdly, the lovingkindness of the Lord our God, in saving and defending, that so we might be truly thankful, and return all the praise and glory to God, and none to ourselves. So that the church of God may have enemies, and yet be still the beloved of God, as Lazarus was beloved of Christ, although he was sick ; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and therefore he correcteth them because he loveth them.—*William Burton.*

*Verse 11.*—God preserves his own, and bringeth their foes to nought : after Passion week comes Easter.—*J. P. Lange’s Commentary.*

*Verse 12.*—“ *Integrity.*” This same integrity is like Noah’s ark, wherein he was preserved, when others perished, being without it. It is like the red thread, which the spies of Joshua gave to Rahab, it was a charter whereby she claimed her life when the rest were destroyed, which had not the like. So is this integrity of small reckoning, I confess, with the men of this world, which think that there is no other heaven but earth ; but as Rahab’s thread was better to her than all her goods and substance when the sword came, so this is better to God’s children than all the world when death comes. If they have this within they care not, nay, they need not care what can come without. If Satan’s buffeting come, this is a helmet of proof ; if Satan’s darts fly out, this is a shield to quench them ; if floods of crosses come to carry us away, this is a boat to bear us up ; if all the world cast mire and filth in our faces, we are never a whit the more deformed, but still beautiful for all that, for “ the king’s daughter,” (saith Solomon, Psalm xlv. 13), that is, the church of Christ, “ is all glorious within.”—*William Burton.*

*Verse 12.*—“ *Settest me before thy face for ever ;* ” or *hast confirmed or established me in thy presence ; i.e.,* either under thine eye and special care, or to minister unto thee, not only in thy temple, but as a king over thy people, or in that land where thou art peculiarly present.—*Matthew Pool.*

*Verse 13.*—“ *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.*” We are here taught, 1. To give glory to God, as “ the Lord God of Israel,” a God in covenant with his people ; that has done great and kind things for them, and has more and better in reserve. 2. To give him glory as an eternal God, that has both his being and his blessedness “ from everlasting and to everlasting.” 3. To do this with great affection and fervour of spirit, intimated in a double seal set to it, “ Amen, and Amen.” We say Amen to it, and let all others say Amen too.—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 13.*—"Amen and Amen." As the Psalms were not written by one man, so neither do they form one book. The Psalter is, in fact, a Pentateuch, and the lines of demarcation, which divide the five books one from another, are clear and distinct enough. At the end of the 41st Psalm, of the 72nd, of the 89th, and of the 106th, we meet with the solemn *Amen*, single or redoubled, following on a doxology, which indicates that one book ends and that another is about to begin. A closer study of the Psalms shows that each book possesses characteristics of its own. Jehovah, ("the Lord") for example, is prominent as the divine name in the first book, Elohim ("God") in the second.—*E. H. Plumptre, M.A., in "Biblical Studies," 1870.*

There is also another observable difference between the two books. In the first, all those Psalms which have any inscription at all are expressly assigned to David as their author, whereas in the second we find a whole series attributed to some of the Levitical singers.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

How ancient this division is cannot now be clearly ascertained. Jerome, in his epistle to Marcella, and Epiphanius speak of the Psalms as having been divided by the Hebrews into five books, but when this division was made they do not inform us. The forms of ascriptions of praise, added at the end of each of the five books, are in the Septuagint version, from which we may conclude that this distribution had been made before that version was executed. It was probably made by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own country, and the establishment of the worship of God in the new temple, and it was perhaps made in imitation of a similar distribution of the books of Moses. In making this division of the Hebrew Psalter, regard appears to have been paid to the subject matter of the Psalms.—*John Calvin.*

These forty-one Psalms, it has been observed, forming the first book, relate chiefly to the ministry of Christ upon earth, preparing those who were looking for the consolation of Israel, for his appearing amongst them. Accordingly, the second book, commencing with Psalm xlii., may refer chiefly to the infant church of Christ.—*W. Wilson, D.D.*

May not the growth of the Book of Psalms be illustrated by the case of our Modern Hymn Book which in the course of years require first one appendix and then another, so as to incorporate the growing psalmody of the church? In this case the purely Davidic Psalms of the first division formed the nucleus to which other sacred songs were speedily added.—*C. H. S.*

#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verse 1 (first clause).*—The incidental blessings resulting from considering the pious poor. 1. We learn gratitude. 2. We see patience. 3. We often remark the triumphs of great grace. 4. We obtain light on Christian experience. 5. We have their prayers. 6. We feel the pleasure of beneficence. 7. We enter into communion with the lowly Saviour.

*Verse 1.*—The support of the Small-pox Hospitals recommended.—*Bishop Squire, 1760.* Scores of sermons of this kind have been preached from this text.

*Verse 2.*—"Blessed upon the earth." What blessings of an earthly character godly character secures, and in general what it is to be blessed with regard to this life.

*Verse 2 (second clause).*—What it is to be delivered *in* trouble. From impatience, from despair, from sinful expedients, from violent attacks, from losing fellowship with God.

*Verse 3.*—Strength in weakness. Inward strength, divinely given, continuously sustained, enduring to the end, triumphant in death, glorifying to God, proving the reality of grace, winning others to the faith.

*Verse 3 (last clause).*—The heavenly bed-making.

*Verse 4 (first clause).*—A saying worth repeating: "*I said.*" It expresses penitence, humility, earnestness, faith, importunity, fear of God, etc.

*Verse 4.*—"Heal my soul." 1. The hereditary disease, breaking out in many

disorders—open sin, unbelief, decline of grace, etc. II. Spiritual health struggling with it; shown in spiritual pain, desire, prayer, effort. III. The well-proved Physician. Has healed, and will, by his word, his blood, his Spirit, etc.

*Verse 4.*—“*I have sinned against thee.*” This confession is personal, plain, without pretence of excuse, comprehensive and intelligent, for it reveals the very heart of sin—“against thee.”

*Verse 5.*—What we may expect. What our enemies desire. What we may, therefore prize, *i.e.*, the power of Christian life and name. What we should do—tell the Lord all in prayer. What good will then come of the evil.

*Verse 6 (first clause).*—The folly and sin of frivolous visits.

*Verse 6 (second and third clauses).*—Like to like, or the way in which character draws its like to itself. The same subject might be treated under the title of *The Chiffonnier*, or the rag-collector. What he gathers; where he puts it—in his “heart;” what he does with it; what he gets for it; and what will become of him.

*Verses 7—12.*—On a sick bed a man discovers not only his enemies and his friends, but himself and his God, more intimately.

*Verse 9.*—The treachery of Judas.

*Verse 11.*—Deliverance from temptation a token of divine favour.

*Verse 12.*—This text reveals the insignia of those whom grace has distinguished. 1. Their integrity is manifest. 2. Their character is divinely sustained. 3. They dwell in the favour of God. 4. Their position is stable and continuous. 5. Their eternal future is secure.

*Verse 13.*—I. The object of praise—Jehovah, the covenant God. II. The nature of the praise—without beginning or end. III. Our participation in the praise—“Amen and Amen.”

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THE ancient rabbins saw in the Five Books of the Psalter the image of the Five Books of the Law. This way of looking on the Psalms as a second Pentateuch, the echo of the first, passed over into the Christian church, and found favour with some early fathers. It has commended itself to the acceptance of good recent expositors, like Dr. Delitzsch, who calls the Psalter "the Congregation's five-fold word to the Lord, even as the *Thora* (the Law) is the Lord's five-fold word to the Congregation." This may be mere fancy, but its existence from ancient times shows that the five-fold division attracted early notice.—*William Binnie, D.D.*

God presented Israel with the Law, a Pentateuch, and grateful Israel responded with a Psalter, a Pentateuch of praise, in acknowledgment of the divine gift.—*J. L. K.*

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HERE ENDETH THE FIRST BOOK OF  
THE PSALMS.