

PSALM XLII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.—Dedicated to the Master of Music, this Psalm is worthy of his office ; he who can sing best can have nothing better to sing. It is called Maschil, or an instructive ode ; and full as it is of deep experimental expressions, it is eminently calculated to instruct those pilgrims whose road to heaven is of the same trying kind as David's was. It is always edifying to listen to the experience of a thoroughly gracious and much afflicted saint.

That choice band of singers, the sons of Korah, are bidden to make this delightful Psalm one of their peculiars. They had been spared when their father and all his company, and all the children of his associates were swallowed up alive in their sin. (Num. xxvii. 11). They were the spared ones of sovereign grace. Preserved, we know not why, by the distinguishing favour of God, it may be surmised that after their remarkable election to mercy, they became so filled with gratitude that they addicted themselves to sacred music in order that their spared lives might be consecrated to the glory of God. At any rate, we who have been rescued as they were from going down into the pit, out of the mere good pleasure of Jehovah, can heartily join in this Psalm, and indeed all the songs which show forth the praises of our God and the pantings of our hearts after him. Although David is not mentioned as the author, this Psalm must be the offspring of his pen ; it is so Davidic, it smells of the son of Jesse, it bears the marks of his style and experience in every letter. We could sooner doubt the authorship of the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress* than question David's title to be the composer of this Psalm.

SUBJECT.—It is the cry of a man far removed from the outward ordinances and worship of God, sighing for the long-loved house of his God ; and at the same time it is the voice of a spiritual believer, under depressions, longing for the renewal of the divine presence, struggling with doubts and fears, but yet holding his ground by faith in the living God. Most of the Lord's family have sailed on the sea which is here so graphically described. It is probable that David's flight from Absalom may have been the occasion for composing this Maschil.

DIVISION.—The structure of the song directs us to consider it in two parts which end with the same refrain ; 1—5 and then 6—11.

EXPOSITION.

AS the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ?

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God ?

4 When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me : for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and *why* art thou disquieted in me ? hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

1. "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." As after a long drought the poor fainting hind longs for the streams, or rather as the hunted hart instinctively seeks after the river to lave its smoking flanks and to escape the dogs, even so my weary, persecuted soul pants after the Lord my God. Debarred from public worship, David was heartsick. Ease he did not seek, honour he did not covet, but the enjoyment of communion with God was an urgent need of his soul ; he viewed it not merely as the sweetest of all luxuries, but as an absolute necessity, like water to a stag. Like the parched traveller in

the wilderness, whose skin bottle is empty, and who finds the wells dry, he must drink or die—he must have his God or faint. His *soul*, his very self, his deepest life, was insatiable for a sense of the divine presence. As the hart brays so his soul prays. Give him his God and he is as content as the poor deer which at length slakes its thirst and is perfectly happy; but deny him his Lord, and his heart heaves, his bosom palpitates, his whole frame is convulsed, like one who gasps for breath, or pants with long running. Dear reader, dost thou know what this is, by personally having felt the same? It is a sweet bitterness. The next best thing to living in the light of the Lord's love is to be unhappy till we have it, and to pant hourly after it—hourly, did I say? thirst is a perpetual appetite, and not to be forgotten, and even thus continual is the heart's longing after God. When it is as natural for us to long for God as for an animal to thirst, it is well with our souls, however painful our feelings. We may learn from this verse that the eagerness of our desires may be pleaded with God, and the more so, because there are special promises for the importunate and fervent.

2. "*My soul.*" All my nature, my inmost self. "*Thirsteth.*" Which is more than hungering; hunger you can palliate, but thirst is awful, insatiable, clamorous, deadly. O to have the most intense craving after the highest good! this is no questionable mark of grace. "*For God.*" Not merely for the temple and the ordinances, but for fellowship with God himself. None but spiritual men can sympathise with this thirst. "*For the living God.*" Because he lives, and gives to men the living water; therefore we, with greater eagerness, desire him. A dead God is a mere mockery; we loathe such a monstrous deity; but the ever-living God, the perennial fountain of life and light and love, is our soul's desire. What are gold, honour, pleasure, but dead idols? May we never pant for these. "*When shall I come and appear before God?*" He who loves the Lord loves also the assemblies wherein his name is adored. Vain are all pretences to religion where the outward means of grace have no attraction. David was never so much at home as in the house of the Lord; he was not content with private worship; he did not forsake the place where saints assemble, as the manner of some is. See how pathetically he questions as to the prospect of his again uniting in the joyous gathering! How he repeats and reiterates his desire! After his God, his Elohim (his God to be worshipped, who had entered into covenant with him), he pined even as the drooping flowers for the dew, or the moaning turtle for her mate. It were well if all our resortings to public worship were viewed as appearances before God, it would then be a sure mark of grace to delight in them. Alas, how many appear before the minister, or their fellow men, and think that enough! "To see the face of God" is the nearer translation of the Hebrew; but the two ideas may be combined—he would see his God and be seen of him; this is worth thirsting after!

3.—"*My tears have been my meat day and night.*" Salt meats, but healthful to the soul. When a man comes to tears, constant tears, plentiful tears, tears that fill his cup and trencher, he is in earnest indeed. As the big tears stand in the stag's eyes in her distress, so did the salt drops glitter in the eyes of David. His appetite was gone, his tears not only seasoned his meat, but became his only meat, he had no mind for other diet. Perhaps it was well for him that the heart could open the safety valves; there is a dry grief far more terrible than showery sorrows. His tears since they were shed because God was blasphemed, were "honourable dew," drops of holy water, such as Jehovah putteth into his bottle. "*While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*" Cruel taunts come naturally from coward minds. Surely they might have left the mourner alone; he could weep no more than he did—it was a supererogation of malice to pump more tears from a heart which already overflowed. Note how incessant was their jeer, and how artfully they framed it! It cut the good man to the bone to have the faithfulness of his God impugned. They had better have thrust needles into his eyes than have darted insinuations against his God. Shimei may here be alluded to who after this fashion mocked David as he fled from Absalom. He roundly asserted that David was a bloody man, and that God was punishing him for supplanting Saul and his house; his wish was father to his thought. The wicked know that our worst misfortune would be to lose God's favour, hence their diabolical malice leads them to declare that such is the case. Glory be to God, they lie in their throats, for our God is in the heavens, ay, and in the furnace too, succouring his people.

Verse 4.—"*When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.*" When

he harped upon his woes his heart melted into water and was poured out upon itself. God hidden, and foes raging, a pair of evils enough to bring down the stoutest heart ! Yet why let reflections so gloomy engross us, since the result is of no value : merely to turn the soul on itself, to empty it from itself into itself is useless, how much better to pour out the heart before the Lord ! The prisoner's treadmill might sooner land him in the skies than mere inward questioning raise us nearer to consolation. "*For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.*" Painful reflections were awakened by the memory of past joys ; he had mingled in the pious throng, their numbers had helped to give him exhilaration and to awaken holy delight, their company had been a charm to him as with them he ascended the hill of Zion. Gently proceeding with holy ease, in comely procession, with frequent strains of song, he and the people of Jehovah had marched in reverent ranks up to the shrine of sacrifice, the dear abode of peace and holiness. Far away from such goodly company the holy man pictures the sacred scene and dwells upon the details of the pious march. "*With the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*" The festive noise is in his ears, and the solemn dance before his eyes. Perhaps he alludes to the removal of the ark and to the glorious gatherings of the tribes on that grand national holy day and holiday. How changed his present place ! For Zion, a wilderness ; for the priests in white linen, soldiers in garments of war ; for the song, the sneer of blasphemy ; for the festivity, lamentation ; for joy in the Lord, a mournful dirge over his absence.

" I sigh to think of happier days
When thou, O God, wast nigh,
When every heart was tuned to praise ;
And none more blest than I."

When in a foreign land, amid the idolatries of Popery, we have felt just the same home-sickness for the house of the Lord which is here described ; we have said "*Ziona, Ziona, our holy and beautiful house, when shall I see thee again ? Thou church of the living God, my mother, my home, when shall I hear thy Psalms and holy prayers, and once again behold the Lord in the midst of his people ?*" David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of *the singing* of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettinesses of a quartette, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes ! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.

5. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?*" As though he were two men, the Psalmist talks to himself. His faith reasons with his fears, his hope argues with his sorrows. These present troubles, are they to last for ever ? The rejoicings of my foes, are they more than empty talk ? My absence, from the solemn feasts, is that a perpetual exile ? Why this deep depression, this faithless fainting, this chicken-hearted melancholy ? As Trapp says, "David chideth David out of the dumps ;" and herein he is an example for all desponding ones. To search out the cause of our sorrow is often the best surgery for grief. Self-ignorance is not bliss ; in this case it is misery. The mist of ignorance magnifies the causes of our alarm ; a clearer view will make monsters dwindle into trifles. "*Why art thou disquieted within me ?*" Why is my quiet gone ? If I cannot keep a public Sabbath, yet wherefore do I deny my soul her indoor Sabbath ? Why am I agitated like a troubled sea, and why do my thoughts make a noise like a tumultuous multitude ? The causes are not enough to justify such utter yielding to despondency. Up, my heart ! What aileth thee ? Play the man, and thy castings down shall turn to liftings up, and thy disquietudes to calm. "*Hope thou in God.*" If every evil be let loose from Pandora's box, yet is there hope at the bottom. This is the grace that swims, though the waves roar and be troubled. God is unchangeable, and therefore his grace is the ground for unshaken hope. If everything be dark, yet the day will come, and meanwhile hope carries stars in her eyes ; her lamps are not dependent upon oil from without, her light is fed by secret visitations of God, which sustain the spirit. "*For I shall yet praise him.*" Yet will my sighs give place to songs, my mournful ditties shall be exchanged for triumphal pæans. A loss of the present sense of God's love is not a loss of that love itself ; the jewel is there, though it gleams not on our breast ; hope knows her title good when she cannot read it clear ; she expects the promised boon though present providence stands before

her with empty hands. “*For I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*” Salvations come from the propitious face of God, and he will yet lift up his countenance upon us. Note well that the main hope and chief desire of David rest in the smile of God. His face is what he seeks and hopes to see, and this will recover his low spirits, this will put to scorn his laughing enemies, this will restore to him all the joys of those holy and happy days around which memory lingers. This is grand cheer. This verse, like the singing of Paul and Silas, looses chains and shakes prison walls. He who can use such heroic language in his gloomy hours will surely conquer. In the garden of hope grow the laurels for future victories, the roses of coming joy, the lilies of approaching peace.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me ; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts ; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 *Yet* the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song *shall be* with me, *and* my prayer unto the God of my life.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me ? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ?

10 *As* with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me ; while they say daily unto me, Where *is* thy God ?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

6. “*O my God, my soul is cast down within me.*” Here the song begins again upon the brass. So sweet an ending deserves that for the sake of a second hopeful close the Psalm should even begin again. Perhaps the Psalmist’s dejection continued, the spasm of despondency returned ; well, then, he will down with his harp again, and try again its power upon himself, as in his younger days, he saw its influence upon Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. With God the song begins the second time more nearly than at first. The singer was also a little more tranquil. Outward expression of desire was gone ; there was no visible panting ; the sorrow was now all restrained within doors. Within or upon himself he was cast down ; and, verily, it may well be so, while our thoughts look more within than upward. If self were to furnish comfort, we should have but poor provender. There is no solid foundation for comfort in such fickle frames as our heart is subject to. It is well to tell the Lord how we feel, and the more plain the confession the better : David talks like a sick child to its mother, and we should learn to imitate him. “*Therefore will I remember thee.*” ’Tis well to fly to our God. Here is *terra firma*. Blessed downcasting which drives us to so sure a rock of refuge as thee, O Lord ! “*From the hill Mizar.*” He recalls his seasons of choice communion by the river and among the hills, and especially that dearest hour upon the little hill, where love spake her sweetest language and revealed her nearest fellowship. It is great wisdom to store up in memory our choice occasions of converse with heaven ; we may want them another day, when the Lord is slow in bringing back his banished ones, and our soul is aching with fear. “His love in times past” has been a precious cordial to many a fainting one ; like soft breath it has fanned the smoking flax into a flame, and bound up the bruised reed. Oh, never-to-be-forgotten valley of Achor, thou art a door of hope ! Fair days, now gone, ye have left a light behind you which cheers our present gloom. Or does David mean that even where he was he would bethink him of his God ; does he declare that, forgetful of time and place, he would count Jordan as sacred as Siloa, Hermon as holy as Zion, and even Mizar, that insignificant rising ground, as glorious as the mountains which are round about Jerusalem ! Oh ! it is a heavenly heart which can sing—

“ To me remains nor place nor time ;
My country is in every clime ;
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there.

“ Could I be cast where thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot,
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all.”

7. “ *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts.*” Thy severe dealings with me seem to excite all creation to attack me; heaven, and earth, and hell, call to each other, stirring each other up in dreadful conspiracy against my peace. As in a waterspout, the deeps above and below clasp hands, so it seemed to David that heaven and earth united to create a tempest around him. His woes were incessant and overwhelming. Billow followed billow, one sea echoed the roaring of another; bodily pain aroused mental fear, Satanic suggestions chimed in with mistrustful forebodings, outward tribulation thundered in awful harmony with inward anguish: his soul seemed drowned as in a universal deluge of trouble, over whose waves the providence of the Lord moved as a watery pillar, in dreadful majesty inspiring the utmost terror. As for the afflicted one he was like a lonely bark around which the fury of a storm is bursting, or a mariner floating on a mast, almost every moment submerged. “ *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*” David thought that every trouble in the world had met in him, but he exaggerated, for all the breaking waves of Jehovah have passed over none but the Lord Jesus; there are griefs to which he makes his children strangers for his love’s sake. Sorrow naturally states its case forcibly; the mercy is that the Lord after all hath not dealt with us according to our fears. Yet what a plight to be in! Atlantic rollers sweeping in ceaseless succession over one’s head, waterspouts coming nearer and nearer, and all the ocean in uproar around the weary swimmer; most of the heirs of heaven can realise the description, for they have experienced the like. This is a deep experience unknown to babes in grace, but common enough to such as do business on great waters of affliction: to such it is some comfort to remember that the waves and billows are the Lords, “ *thy waves and thy billows,*” says David, they are all sent, and directed by him, and achieve his designs, and the child of God knowing this, is the more resigned.

8. “ *Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime.*” Come what may there shall be “ a certain secret something ” to sweeten all. Lovingkindness is a noble life-belt in a rough sea. The day may darken into a strange and untimely midnight, but the love of God ordained of old to be the portion of the elect, shall be by sovereign decree meted out to them. No day shall ever dawn on an heir of grace and find him altogether forsaken of his Lord: the Lord reigneth, and as a sovereign he will with authority command mercy to be reserved for his chosen. “ *And in the night.*” Both divisions of the day shall be illuminated with special love, and no stress of trial shall prevent it. Our God is God of the nights as well as the days; none shall find his Israel unprotected, be the hour what it may. “ *His song shall be with me.*” Songs of praise for blessings received shall cheer the gloom of night. No music sweeter than this. The belief that we shall yet glorify the Lord for mercy given in extremity is a delightful stay to the soul. Affliction may put out our candle, but if it cannot silence our song we will soon light the candle again. “ *And my prayer unto the God of my life.*” Prayer is yoked with praise. He who is the living God, is the God of our life, from him we derive it, with him in prayer and praise we spend it, to him we devote it, in him we shall perfect it. To be assured that our sighs and songs shall both have free access to our glorious Lord is to have reason for hope in the most deplorable condition.

9. “ *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me.*” Faith is allowed to enquire of her God the causes of his displeasure, and she is even permitted to expostulate with him and put him in mind of his promises, and ask why apparently they are not fulfilled. If the Lord be indeed our refuge, when we find no refuge, it is time to be raising the question, “ *Why is this?* ” Yet we must not let go our hold, the Lord must be “ *my* ” rock still; we must keep to him as our alone confidence, and never forego our interest in him. “ *Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* ” He who condescends to be pleaded with by Abraham, his friend, allows us to put to him the question that we may search out the causes of his severity towards us. Surely he can have no pleasure in seeing the faces of his servants stained and squalid with their tears; he can find no content in the harshness with which their foes assail them. He can never take pleasure in the tyranny with which Satan vexes them. Why then does he leave them to be mocked by his enemies and theirs? How can the strong God, who is as firm and abiding

as a rock, be also as hard and unmoved as a rock towards those who trust in him? Such enquiries humbly pressed often afford relief to the soul. To know the reason for sorrow is in part to know how to escape it, or at least to endure it. Want of attentive consideration often makes adversity appear to be more mysterious and hopeless than it really is. It is a pitiable thing for any man to have a limb amputated, but when we know that the operation was needful to save life, we are glad to hear that it has been successfully performed; even thus as trial unfolds, the design of the Lord in sending it becomes far more easy to bear.

10. "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me." Cruel mockeries cut deeper than the flesh, they reach the soul as though a rapier were introduced between the ribs to prick the heart. If reproaches kill not, yet they are killing, the pain caused is excruciating. The tongue cuts to the bone, and its wounds are hard to cure. "While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" This is the unkindest cut of all, reflecting as it does both upon the Lord's faithfulness and his servant's character. Such was the malice of David's foes, that having thought of the cruel question, they said it, said it daily, repeated it to him, and that for a length of time; surely the continual yapping of these curs at his heel was enough to madden him, and perhaps would have done so had he not resorted to prayer and made the persecutions of his enemies a plea with his Lord.

11. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" In the rehearsal of his sorrow, he finds after all no sufficient ground for being disquieted. Looked in the face, his fears were not so overwhelming as they seemed when shrouded in obscurity. "Hope thou in God." Let the anchor still keep its hold. God is faithful, God is love, therefore there is room and reason for hope. "Who is the health of my countenance, and my God." This is the same hopeful expression as that contained in verse five, but the addition of "and my God" shows that the writer was growing in confidence, and was able defiantly to reply to the question, "Where is thy God?" Here, even here, he is, ready to deliver me. I am not ashamed to own him amid your sneers and taunts, for he will rescue me out of your hands. Thus faith closes the struggle, a victor in fact by anticipation, and in heart by firm reliance. The saddest countenance shall yet be made to shine, if there be a taking of God at his word and an expectation of his salvation.

"For yet I know I shall praise
Who graciously to me,
The health is of my countenance,
Yea, mine own God is he."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Title.—"Sons of Korah." Who were the sons of Korah? These opinions have more or less prevailed. One is that they sprang from some one of that name in the days of David. Mudge and others think that the sons of Korah were a society of musicians, founded or presided over by Korah. Others think that the sons of Korah were the surviving descendants of that miserable man who, together with two hundred and fifty of his adherents, who were princes, perished when "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, together with Korah." In Numbers xxvi. 11, we read: "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." They had taken the warning given, and had departed from the tents of these wicked men. Numbers xvi. 24, 26. It must be admitted that the name *Korah* and the patronymic *Korahite* are found in the Scriptures in a way that creates considerable doubt respecting the particular man from whom the Korahites are named. See 1 Chron. i. 35; ii. 43; vi. 22, 54; ix. 19: xxvi. 1; 2 Chron. xx. 19. Yet the more common belief is that they descended from him who perished for his gain-saying. This view is taken by Ainsworth with entire confidence, by Gill, and others. Korah, who perished, was a Levite. Whatever may have been their origin, it is clear the sons of Korah were a Levitical family of singers. Nothing, then, could be more appropriate than the dedication of a sacred song to these very people.—William S. Plumer.

Title.—"Sons of Korah." The "Korah" whose "sons" are here spoken of, is the Levite who headed the insurrection against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. Numbers xvi. We find his descendants existing as a powerful Levitical family in the time of David, at least, if they are to be identified, as is probable, with the Korahites mentioned in 1 Chron. xii. 6, who, like our own warlike bishops of former times, seem to have known how to doff the priestly vestment for the soldier's armour, and whose hand could wield the sword as well as strike the harp. The Korahites were a part of the band who acknowledged David as their chief, at Ziklag; warriors "whose faces," it is said, "were like the faces of lions, and who were (for speed) like gazelles upon the mountains." According to 1 Chron. ix. 17—19, the Korahites were in David's time, keepers of the threshold of the tabernacle; and still earlier, in the time of Moses, watchmen at the entrance of the camp of the Levites. In 1 Chron. xxvi. 1—19, we find two branches of this family associated with that of Merari, as guardians of the doors of the Temple. There is probably an allusion to this their office, in Psalm lxxxiv. 10. But the Korahites were also celebrated musicians and singers; see 1 Chron. vi. 16—33, where Heman, one of the three famous musicians of the time, is said to be a Korahite (comp. 1 Chron. xxv). The musical reputation of the family continued in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 19), where we have the peculiar doubly plural form בְּנֵי קוֹרַח, "Sons of the Korahites."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Title.—"Sons of Korah." Mediæval writers remark how here, as so often, it was the will of God to raise up saints where they could have been least looked for. Who should imagine that from the posterity of him who said, "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Aaron," should have risen those whose sweet Psalms would be the heritage of the church of God to the end of time?—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1.—"The hart panteth after the water brooks." And here we have started up, and sent leaping over the plain another of Solomon's favourites. What elegant creatures those gazelles are, and how gracefully they bound! . . . The sacred writers frequently mention gazelles under the various names of harts, roes, and hinds. . . . I have seen large flocks of these panting harts gather round the water-brooks in the great deserts of Central Syria, so subdued by thirst that you could approach quite near them before they fled.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 1.—Little do the drunkards think that take so much pleasure in frequenting the houses of Bacchus that the godly take a great deal more, and have a great deal more joy in frequenting the houses of God. But 'tis a thing that God promised long ago by the prophet: "Them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." Isaiah lvi. 7. And methinks, I hear the willing people of God's power, merrily calling one to another in the words of Micah iv. 2, "come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." How is a godly man ravished with "the beauty of holiness," when he is at such meetings! How was holy David taken with being in the house of God at Jerusalem! insomuch, that if he were kept from it but a little while, his soul panted for it, and longed after it, and fainted for lack of it, as a thirsty hart would do for lack of water! "*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?*" The poor disconsolate captives preferred it to the best place in their memory. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Psalm cxxxvii. 5); nay, they preferred it to their chiefest joy: "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy," verse 6. There was no place in the world that David regarded or cared to be in comparison of it. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm lxxxiv. 10), insomuch, that he could find it in his heart, nay, and would choose, if he might have his desire, to spend all his days in that house. Psalm xxvii. 4.—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 1.—The soul strongly desires acquaintance with God here in his ordinances. Chrysostom's very rhetorical upon the text, and tells us how that David, like a lover in absence, must express his affection* as they have their dainty sighs,

and passionate complaints, their loving exclamations, and sundry discoveries of affection ; they can meet with never a tree, but in the bark of it they must engrave the name of their darling, Δεινὸς δ' ὁ ἔργος ὥσπερ ὁ κιστρός αὐτὸν ἐκ πάσης ἀναδῆσαι προφάσεως ; 'twill twine upon every opportunity, as the Moralist speaks. And the true lovers of God, they are always thinking upon him, sighing for him, panting after him, talking of him, and (if 'twere possible) would engrave the name of the Lord Jesus upon the breasts of all the men in the world. Look upon David, now a banished man, and fled from the presence of Saul, and see how he behaves himself : not like Themistocles or Camillus, or some of those brave banished worthies. He does not complain of the ungratefulness of his country, the malice of his adversaries, and his own unhappy success. No, instead of murmuring, he falls a panting, and that only after his God. He is banished from the sanctuary, the palace of God's nearest presence, and chiefest residence ; he can't enjoy the beauty of holiness, and all other places seem to him but as the tents of Kedar. He is banished from the temple, and he thinks himself banished from his God, as it is in the following words, " *When shall I come and appear before God?*" The whole stream of expositors run this way, that it is meant of his strong longing to visit the Temple, and those amiable courts of his God, with which his soul was so much taken.—*Nathanael Culverwel's "Panting Soul,"* 1652.

Verse 1, 2, 3, are an illustration of the frequent use of the word Elohim in the second book of Psalms. We give Fry's translation of the first three verses—

As the hart looketh for the springs of water,
So my soul looketh for thee, O Elohim.

My soul is athirst for Elohim, for the living El :
When shall I go and see the face of Elohim ?

My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they say to me continually, Where is thy Elohim ?

Verse 2.—" *My soul thirsteth for God,*" etc. See that your heart rest not short of Christ in any duty. Let go your hold of no duty until you find something of Christ in it ; and until you get not only an *handful*, but an *armful* (with old Simeon, Luke ii. 28) ; yea, a *heartful* of the blessed and beautiful babe of Bethlehem therein. Indeed you should have commerce with heaven, and communion with Christ in duty, which is therefore called the *presence of God*, or your appearing before him. Exodus xxiii. 17, and Psalm xlii. 2. Your duties then must be as a bridge to give you passage, or as a boat to carry you over into the bosom of Christ. Holy Mr. Bradford, Martyr, said he could not leave *confession* till he found his heart touched and broken for sin ; nor *supplication*, till his heart was affected with the beauty of the blessings desired ; nor *thanksgiving*, till his soul was quickened in return of praises ; nor *any duty*, until his heart was brought into a duty frame, and something of Christ was found therein. Accordingly Bernard speaks, *Nunquam abs te absque te recedam Domine* : I will never depart (in duty) from thee without thee, Lord. Augustine said he loved not Tully's elegant orations (as formerly) because he could not find *Christ* in them : nor doth a gracious soul love empty duties. Rhetorical flowers and flourishes, expressions without impressions in praying or preaching, are not true bread, but a tinkling cymbal to it, and it cannot be put off with the empty spoon of airy notions, or lovely (that are not also lively) songs : if Christ talk with you in the way (of duty) your heart will burn within you. Luke xxiv. 16, 32.—*Christopher Ness's "Crystal Mirrour,"* 1679.

Verses 2.—" *The living God.*" There are three respects especially in which our God is said to be the " *living God.*" First, *originally*, because he only hath life in himself, and of himself, and all creatures have it from him. Secondly, *operatively*, because he is the only giver of life unto man. Our life, in the threefold extent and capacity of it, whether we take it for natural, or spiritual, or eternal, flows to us from God. Thirdly, God is said to be the " *living God*" by way of *distinction*, and in opposition to all false gods.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—A wicked man can never say in good earnest, " *When shall I come and appear before God?*" because he shall do so too soon, and before he would, as the devils that said Christ came " *to torment them before their time.*" Ask a thief and a malefactor whether he would willingly appear before the judge. No, I warrant you, not he ; he had rather there were no judge at all to appear

before. And so is it with worldly men in regard of God they desire rather to be hidden from him.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 2.—“*Come and appear before God.*” When any of us have been at church, and waited in the sanctuary, let us examine what did we go thither to see ; a shadow of religion ? An outside of Christian forms ? A graceful orator ? The figures and shapes of devotion ? Surely then we might with as much wisdom, and more innocence, have gone to the wilderness “ to see a reed shaken with the wind.” Can we say as the Greeks at the feast (John xii. 21), “ We would see Jesus ? ” Or as Absalom (2 Sam. xiv. 32), “ It is to little purpose I am come to Jerusalem if I may not see the King’s face.” To little purpose we go to church, or attend on ordinances, if we seek not, if we see not God there.—*Isaac Watts, D.D., 1674—1748.*

Verse 2.—If you attempt to put a little child off with toys and fine things, it will not be pleased long, it will cry for its mother’s breast ; so, let a man come into the pulpit with pretty Latin and Greek sentences, and fine stories, these will not content a hungry soul, he must have the sincere milk of the word to feed upon. *Oliver Heywood.*

Verse 2.—“*When shall I come and appear before God ?*”—

While I am banish’d from thy house
I mourn in secret, Lord ;
“ When shall I come and pay my vows,
And hear thy holy word ? ”

So while I dwell in bonds of clay,
Methinks my soul shall groan.
“ When shall I wing my heavenly way
And stand before thy throne ? ”

I love to see my Lord below,
His church displays his grace ;
But upper worlds his glory know
And view him face to face.

I love to worship at his feet,
Though sin attack me there,
But saints exalted near his seat
Have no assaults to fear.

I’m pleased to meet him in his court,
And taste his heavenly love,
But still I think his visits short,
Or I too soon remove.

He shines, and I am all delight,
He hides and all is pain ;
When will he fix me in his sight,
And ne’er depart again ?

Isaac Watts, from his Sermons.

Verse 3.—“*My tears have been my meat day and night.*” The Psalmist could eat nothing because of his extreme grief.—*John Gadsby.*

Verse 3.—“*They say unto me.*” It is not only of me, but to me ; they spake it to his very face, as those who were ready to justify it and make it good, that God had forsaken him. Backbiting argues more baseness, but open reproach carries more boldness, and shamelessness, and impudence in it ; and this is that which David’s enemies were guilty of here in this place.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 3.—“*Where is thy God ?*” God’s children are impatient, as far as they are men, of reproaches ; but so far as they are Christian men, they are impatient of reproaches in religion ; “*Where is now thy God ?*” They were not such desperate Atheists as to think there was no God, to call in question whether there was a God or no, though, indeed, they were little better ; but they rather reproach and upbraid him with his singularity, *where is thy God ?* You are one of God’s darlings ; you are one that thought nobody served God but you ; you are one that will go alone—*your God !* So this is an ordinary reproach, an ordinary part for wicked men to cast at the best people, especially when they are in misery. What is become of your profession now ? What is become of your forwardness and strictness now ?

What is become of your God that you bragged so of, and thought yourselves so happy in, as if he had been nobody's God but yours? We may learn hence the disposition of wicked men. It is a character of a poisonous, cursed disposition to upbraid a man with his religion.

But what is the scope? The scope is worse than the words "*where is thy God?*" The scope is to shake his faith and his confidence in God, and this *that* is which touched him so nearly while they upbraided him. For the devil knows well enough that as long as God and the soul join together, it is in vain to trouble any man, therefore he labours to put jealousies, to accuse God to man, and man to God. He knows there is nothing in the world can stand against God. As long as we make God our confidence, all his enterprises are in vain. His scope is, therefore, to shake our affiance in God. "*Where is thy God?*" So he dealt with the head of the church, our blessed Saviour himself, when he came to tempt him. "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." Matt. iv. 3. He comes with an "*if,*" he laboured to shake him in his Sonship. The devil, since he was divided from God himself eternally, is become a spirit of division; he labours to divide even God the Father from his own Son; "*If thou be the Son of God?*" So he labours to sever Christians from their head Christ. "*Where is thy God?*" There was his scope, to breed division if he could, between his heart and God, that he might call God into jealousy, as if he had not regarded him: thou hast taken a great deal of pains in serving thy God; thou seest how he regards thee now; "*Where is thy God?*"—Richard Sibbes.

Verse 3.—How powerfully do the scoffs and reproaches of the ungodly tend to shake the faith of a mind already dejected! How peculiarly afflictive to the soul that loves God, is the dishonour cast upon him by his enemies!—Henry March, in "*Sabbaths at Home,*" 1823.

Verse 3.—"*Where is thy God?*"

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, sorrow!
Hourly thus to hear him say,
Finding thus the longed-for morrow,
Mournful as the dark to-day.
Yet not thus my soul would languish,
Would not thus be grieved and shamed,
But for that severer anguish,
When I hear the Lord defamed.

"Where is now thy God!" Oh, aid me,
Lord of mercy, to reply—
"He is HERE—though foes invade me,
Know his outstretched arm is nigh."
Help me thus to be victorious,
While the shield of faith I take;
Lord, appear, and make thee glorious:
Help me for thy honour's sake.

Henry March.

Verse 4.—"*When I remember these things,*" etc. To a person in misery it is a great increase of misery to have been once happy; it was to David an occasion of new tears when he remembered his former joys. Time was, says the poor soul, when I thought of God with comfort, and when I thought of him as my own God; and to lose a God that I once enjoyed is the loss of all my losses, and of all my terrors the most terrible. Time was when I could go and pray to him, and ease myself in prayer; but now I have no boldness, no hope, no success in prayer. I cannot call him *my Father* any more. Time was when I could read the Bible and treasure up the promises, and survey the land of Canaan as my own inheritance; but now I dare not look into the Word lest I read my own condemnation there. The Sabbath was formerly to me as one of the days of heaven, but now it is also, as well as the rest, a sad and a mournful day. I formerly rejoiced in the name of Christ, "*I sat under his shadow.*" Cant. ii. 3. I was in his eyes as one that found favour; but now my soul is like the deserts of Arabia, I am scorched with burning heat. From how great a height have I fallen! How fair was I once for heaven and for salvation, and now am like to come short of it! I once was flourishing in the courts of the Lord, and now all my fruit is blasted and withered away: "*his dew lay all night upon my branches,*" but now I am like the mountains of Gilboa,

no rain falls upon me. Had I never heard of heaven I could not have been so miserable as I now am : had I never known God, the loss of him had not been so terrible as now it is like to be. Job xxix. 2, 3.—*Timothy Rogers.*

Verse 4 (first clause).—The blessedness of even the remembrance of divine worship is so great, that it can save the soul from despair.—*J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 4.—“*I pour out my soul.*” The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God.—*Thomas Brooks.*

Verse 4.—“*I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*” The gracious God is pleased to esteem it his glory to have many beggars thronging at the beautiful gate of his temple, for spiritual and corporal alms. What an honour is it to our great Landlord that multitudes of tenants flock together to his house to pay their rent of thanks and worship for their all which they hold of him ! How loud and lovely is the noise of many golden trumpets ! Good Lord, what an echo do they make in heaven's ears ! When many skilful musicians play in concert with well tuned and prepared instruments the music cannot but be ravishing to God himself.—*George Swinnoek.*

Verse 4.—Do but consider David's tears and grief for want of, and his fervent prayers for the fruition of, public ordinances even then, when he had opportunities for private performances ; and surely thou wilt esteem the ministry of the Word no mean mercy. See his sorrow when he was driven from God's sanctuary. “*When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me : for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God.*” “*My soul is poured out ;*” that is, I am overwhelmed with grief, and ever ready to die when I compare my present condition with my former happiness in the fruition of religious assemblies. There is an elegance in the phrase “*poured out ;*” the word is applied to water, or any liquid thing, and in Scripture signifieth abundance. Joel ii. 28. My life is ready to be poured out as water upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, when I remember my former mercies, and consider my present misery. . . . The loss of his father, mother, wives, children, lands, liberty—nay, of his very life, would not have gone so near his heart as the loss of public ordinances. As his sorrow was great for the want, so was his suit most earnest for the enjoyment of them. How many a prayer doth he put up for the liberty of the tabernacle ! Psalm xliii. 3, 4, and xxvii. 4, 8. It is the one thing, the principal thing which he begs of God.—*Henry Smith.*

Verse 4.—The bias of the soul is remarkably shown by the objects of regretful recollection.—*Henry March.*

Verse 4.—“*With a multitude that kept holy day.*”

Though private prayer be a brave design
 Yet public hath more promises, more love :
 And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.
 We all are but cold suitors ; let us move
 Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven ;
 Pray with the most : for where most pray, is heaven.

George Herbert, in “The Temple.”

Verse 5.—See also on verse 11, and Psalm xliii. verse 5.

Verse 5.—“*Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?*” Athanasius counselled his friend, that when any trouble should fall upon him, he should fall presently to the reading of this Psalm ; for there was a way, he thought, of curing by the like, as well as by the *contrary* : for 'tis observed indeed that when two instruments are tuned to the same unison, if you touch the strings of the one, the strings of the other will move too, though untouched, if placed at a convenient distance. That therefore you may try the same experiments upon yourselves, do but set your affections for a tune in the same key in which these words were spoken ; if really you *feel* none, imagine some affliction laid upon you : when you have done so, that you may be the more fully moved, place your attention at a convenient distance, look narrowly on this holy prophet, observe how he retires himself, shuts out the world, calls his sad soul to as sad a reckoning : *Quare tam tristis ?* O my soul ! thou that wert infused to give me life ; nay, says Philo the Jew, a spark, a beam of the divinity, thou, which shouldst be to this dark body of mine as the sun is to the earth, enlightening, quickening, cheering up my spirits ; tell me, why art *thou* clouded ? why art *thou* cast down ? . . .

Think of this, ye that feel the heaviness of your soul; think of it, ye that do not, for ye may feel it. Know there is a sorrow "that worketh repentance not to be repented of." Know again there is a sorrow "that worketh death." Remember there were tears that got sinful Mary heaven; remember again, there were tears that got sinful Esau *nothing*. For as in martyrdom, it is not the sword, the boiling lead, or fire, not *what* we suffer, but *why*, that makes us martyrs; so in our sorrows, it is not how deep they wound, but *why*, that justifies them. Let every one, therefore, that hath a troubled heart, ask his soul the "Why:" "Why art thou cast down?" Is it not for thine own sins, or the sins of others? Take either of them, thine eyes will have a large field to water. Is it for that thou hast been a child of wrath, a servant of the devil? Is it for that thou art a candle set in the wind, blown at by several temptations? or is it for that thou wouldest be freed from them? "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" Psalm cxx. 5. Art thou troubled as St. Augustine was, when he read that the way to heaven was narrow, the number small that travelled thither? Or hast thou put on St. Bernard's resolution, who had made a compact with his soul, never to joy till he had heard his Saviour call him, "Come, ye blessed," nor never to leave sorrowing till he had escaped the bitter sentence, "Go, ye cursed"? If any of these be the "Why," the ground of thy sorrows, if such thoughts have *cast thee down*; know, that thy Saviour hath already blessed thee, for, "Blessed are they that mourn." The angels are thy servants, they gather thy tears; God is thy treasurer, he lays them up in his bottle; the Holy Ghost is thy comforter, he will not leave thee. Fear not, then, to be thus "*cast down*," fear not to be thus *disquieted within thee*.—Brian Duppa (Bishop), 1588—1662, in a Sermon entitled "The Soule's Soliloquie."

Verse 5.—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Why, or what may be the reason, that this text is three times used in this Psalm and in the next? whereas you do not find two verses of the same length used in all the Book of Psalms besides, except in Psalm cvii., where is often repeated, "O that men would praise the Lord," etc. Now, surely, the frequent mention of this text and words doth argue and note unto us the weightiness of the matter.

Wicked men oppressed David, and the devil tempted him; yet he chides his own heart and nothing else. David did not chide at Saul, nor chide at Absalom; but he chides and checks his own heart. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Though the devil and wicked men, the one do tempt, the other do oppress as instruments of punishment for sin; yet we with David are to chide our own hearts.

Consider, what though in our translations the words are translated and rendered passively, "Why art thou cast down?" yet, in the original, they are rendered actively; we read it, "Why art thou cast down?" etc.; but in the original it is read, יהייתך על נפשך כהתשתית נפשך "Why bowest (or pressest) thou down thyself, my soul? and why tumultest thou against me?" As Arias Montanus, *Cur humiliasti te? Cur deprimes te anima mea?* So Lorinus, Prov. xii. 25. And the words so read, they do intimate thus much, that God's own people may be cast down too much for the sense of sin, and they are most active in their own down-casting. It is not God nor the devil that cast thee down; but *Why dost thou cast thyself down?* to create more trouble on thy self than either God doth inflict or the devil tempt thee to.—Christopher Love, in "The Dejected Soul's Cure," 1657.

Verse 5.—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Consider but this, how much there is of God in the affliction. 1. Came it not without *God's privity*? Why art thou troubled, then? Thy Father knowing of it would have stopped its course if it had been best for thee. 2. Came it not *without his command*? Why art thou troubled? It is the cup that thy Father hath given thee, and wilt thou not drink it? 3. Is it thy Father's will that thou shouldest suffer, and shall it be thy humour to rebel? 4. Hath God done *no more than he might do*? Why dost thou murmur, as if he had done thee wrong? 5. Is it a piece of his *wise acting*? Why dost thou exalt thy foolish will above his infinite wisdom? 6. Is his way a *way of mercy*? Why does thy mutinous spirit stumble at it, as a rough way? 7. Is the thing *good* that is befallen thee? Why dost thou quarrel as if it were evil? 8. Is it *less than men suffer*, than his own people, yea, than his own Son hath suffered, and hast thou cause to complain? 9. Is it but *thy merit*? and less than that, too; and shall the living man complain for the punishment of his sin? 10. Is it *in measure*, ordered with care? (1) by the physician's hand; and (2) a little draught, and (3)

proportioned to thy strength; (4) measured out according to the proportion of strength and comfort he intends to measure thee out, to bear it withal? Why art thou cast down? Why art thou disquieted? Is the end and fruit of it but to make thee white, and purify thee? to purge thy sin past, and to prevent it for the time to come? and dost thou find a present fruit in it? Dost thou find that now thou art turned into a chalk-stone; thy groves and images—those corruptions which did attend thee while thou wert in prosperity, and which would attend thee if thou hadst these good things which thou wantest, and art disquieted for; and if those evils which thou feelest or fearest were far from thy sense and fear, would still attend thee—that those do not now stand up? Lift up thy head, Christian! say to thy soul, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?*” Meditate what there is of God in the cause of thy disquietments.—*John Collinge* (1623—1690) in “*A Cordial for a Fainting Soule*,” 1652.

Verse 5.—“*Why art thou disquieted?*” more literally, *tumultuated*, a word frequently applied to the roaring and tumult and tossing of the sea. See Isaiah xvii. 12; Jer. v. 22; vi. 23; li. 55.—*Henry March*.

Verse 5.—“*Hope thou in God.*” I shall show what powerful influence *hope* hath on the Christian in affliction, and how. First, it stills and silenceth him under affliction. It keeps the king’s peace in the heart, which else would soon be in an uproar. A hopeless soul is clamorous: one while it chargeth God, another while it reviles his instruments. It cannot long rest, and no wonder, when hope is not there. Hope hath a rare art in stilling a froward spirit, when nothing else can; as the mother can make the crying child quiet by laying it to the breast, when the rod makes it cry worse. This way David took, and found it effectual; when his soul was unquiet by reason of his present affliction, he lays it to the breast of the promise: “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God.*” And here his soul sweetly sleeps, as the child with the breast in his mouth; and that this was his usual way, we may think by the frequent instances we find; thrice we find him taking this course in two Psalms, xlii. and xliii. . . . Secondly, this hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called “the rejoicing of hope,” Heb. iii. 6. And hope never affords more joy than in affliction. It is on a watery cloud that the sun paints those curious colours in the rainbow. . . . There are two graces, which Christ useth above any other, to fill the soul with joy—faith and hope, because these two fetch all their wine of joy without door. Faith tells the soul what Christ hath done for it, and so comforts it; hope revives the soul with the news of what Christ will do: both draw at one tap—Christ and his promise.—*Condensed from William Gurnall*.

Verse 5.—“*Hope thou in God.*” The word which is here rendered “*hope*” denotes that *expectation* which is founded on faith in God, and which leads the soul to *wait* upon him. The idea is beautifully expressed in Psalm xxxix. 7. “*And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.*”—*Henry March*.

Verse 5.—“*I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.*” When it may be said, “*He whom God loveth is sick,*” then it may be said, “*This sickness is not unto death;*” and though it be to the first death, yet not to the second. Who would think when Jonah was in the sea (Jonah iii.), that he would preach at Ninevah? Who would think when Nebuchadnezzar was in the forest (Dan. iv.), that he should reign again in Babel? Who would think when Joseph was banished of his brethren, that his brethren should seek unto him like his servants? Who would think when Job scraped his sores upon the dunghill, all his houses were burned, all his cattle stolen, and all his children dead, that he should be richer than ever he was? These are the acts of mercy which make the righteous sing, “*The Lord hath triumphed valiantly.*” Exodus 15—21.—*Henry Smith*.

Verse 5.—“*I shall yet praise him.*” David’s mind is upon the *duty* more than upon the *mercy*; upon the *duty*, as it is a matter of *grace*, more than upon the *mercy*, as it is a matter of *sense*. And, therefore, by a happy mistake, his tongue slips, as men are wont to do in such cases, and he puts one for the other; when he should say, *I shall receive mercy from God*, he says, “*I shall give praise to him.*”—*Thomas Horton*.

Verse 5.—He is the skilful physician, who at the same time that he evacuates the disease, doth also comfort and strengthen nature; and he the true Christian, that doth not content himself with a bare laying aside evil customs and practices, but labours to walk in the exercise of the contrary graces. Art thou discomposed

with impatience, haunted with a discontented spirit under any affliction? Think it not enough to silence thy heart from quarrelling with God, but leave not till thou canst bring it sweetly to rely on God. Holy David drove it thus far; he did not only chide his soul for being disquieted, but he charges it to trust in God.—*William Gurnall.*

Verses 5.—There was one Alice Benden, who, among others, was imprisoned for religion in Canterbury Castle; but after awhile, by the bishop's order, she was let down into a deep dungeon, where none of her friends could come at her. There she was fed with an halfpenny bread, and a farthing beer a day, neither would they allow her any more for her money. Her lodging was upon a little straw, between a pair of stocks and a stone wall. This made her grievously to bewail and lament her estate, reasoning with herself, why her Lord God did in so heavy a wise afflict her, and suffered her thus to be sequestered from the sweet society of her loving prison-fellows. In this extremity of misery, and in the midst of these dolorous mournings she continued, till on a night, repeating that of the Psalmist: "*Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so cast down within me? Still trust in God,*" etc.; and, *God's right hand can change all this,* etc.; she received comfort in the midst of her sorrows, and so continued joyful to the time of her release.—*Samuel Clarke's "Mirrour."*

Verses 5, 11.—In case thou art at any time oppressed with sorrows, ask thy heart and soul that question which David did in the like case twice in one Psalm: "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?*" and certainly the soul would return answer, My distress of sadness springs from my unbelief. You may know the disease by the cure, in the very next words, "*Put thy trust in God; hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*" All sorrow of heart springs principally from our unbelief, not from the greatness of other evils; I mean, *destructive* sorrow, for godly sorrow is a friend to godly joy. It is not so much the weight of the burthen, as the soreness of the back, that troubles the poor beast: so it is not so much the weight of outward evils, as the inward soreness of a galled conscience, not purified nor healed by faith, that vexeth and troubleth the poor creature.—*Matthew Lawrence, in "The Use and Practice of Faith," 1657.*

Verses 5, 11.—As afflictions do proceed from ourselves, they may be called troubles, or perturbations; for the best man doth sometimes cause this bad liquor to boil out of his own bowels. David, not once, but often, hath cried out, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?*" And show me the man that annoyeth and troubleth not himself in vain, because with patience he doth not tarry the Lord's leisure? The foolish bird, who, being in a room whose door is locked, and the casements shut, beateth herself against the wall and windows, breaking her feathers and bruising her body, whereas, would she stay till the passages were by the keeper opened, she might depart, being not at all wounded; even so falleth it out with us: for when the Lord doth shut us up, and straiten our liberty for a time, we would fain make way for ourselves, having many devices in our hearts to break through the walls of his providence; whereas, if we would stay his leisure, depend on his promise, and submit ourselves to be disposed of by his hand, we might with more ease endure this prison, and with less hurt at the last be set at liberty. For God is in one mind, and who can change him? He will bring to pass that thing that he hath decreed upon us.—*John Barlow's Sermon, 1618.*

Verses 5, 11.—If you would get assurance, spend more time in strengthening your evidences for heaven, than in questioning of them. It is the great fault of many Christians they will spend much time in questioning, and not in strengthening their comforts. They will reason themselves into unbelief, and say, Lord, why should I believe? Why should I take hold of a promise that am so unholy and so unmortified a creature? And so by this they reason themselves to such a pass that they dare not lay hold upon Christ, whereas it should be your work to reason yourself into Christ as much as you can. Labour to strengthen your comforts, and reason thus, Why should I not believe in Christ? Thus David did. Psalm xlii. "*Why art thou troubled, O my soul, and why art thou cast down within me?*" Is not the mercy of God more than sin in the creature? Is not there free grace where there is guilt? Are not there pardoning mercies where condemnation is deserved? You should reason up your comforts rather than reason them down, and spend more time in strengthening than in questioning of them. You would count him a very unwise man that hath a lease of so much land, and he himself shall create scruples and doubts, and shall

use no means to make his title good. And truly many Christians are as unwise for heaven. They have, as I may say, good bond and seal that God will bring them to heaven, and yet they will question and cavil themselves into unbelief. Beloved, this should not be, but you ought rather to strengthen your comforts than question them.—*Christopher Love.*

Verse 6.—"O my God, my soul is cast down within me : therefore will I remember thee." "Because I am very low in spirit, am deeply sorrowful, therefore will I remember thee. I will remember how condescending thou art to thy 'poor and afflicted people;' how ready to receive them when deserted or cast out by men; how kind and patient to hear their complaint when they pour out the soul before thee. I will remember thy lovingkindness to me in seasons past; how thou hast looked on my distress, hast heard the voice of my supplications, hast delivered me from my trials, or helped me to bear their burden, strengthening me with strength in my soul. I will remember all that I have enjoyed of thy presence when waiting on thee in thy house, or when celebrating thy praises there in company with thy 'saints, the excellent of the earth.' I will remember what thou art; how meet an object for the trust of a desolate being like myself! For though I am poor, thou art rich; though I am weak, thou art mighty; though I am miserable, thou art happy. I will remember that thou art my God. That thou hast manifested thyself to my soul, that thou hast enabled me to choose thee for my portion, that I have trusted in thee, and have never been confounded. I will remember that word of promise on which thou hast caused me to hope, to which thou hast ever been faithful throughout all the past, and will be, as I truly believe, even unto the end." Oh, how happy, even in the midst of their unhappiness, are they, who in their trials, can thus take shelter in God!—*Henry March.*

Verse 6.—"My God." Astonishing expression! Who shall dare to say to the Creator of the ends of the earth, the Majesty in the heavens, "My God"? An exile, a wanderer, an outcast; a man forsaken, despised, reviled; a soul cast down and disquieted: he shall dare. By what right? Of covenant.—*Henry March.*

Verse 6.—"Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar." It is remarkable what course the Psalmist took to regain comfort; he would remember three experiments of his goodness—"the land of Jordan," the land "of the Hermonites," and "the hill Mizar." First will I remember the land Jordan; that is, I will remember the great goodness of God in drying up the river Jordan, that so the tribes of Israel might pass over to the promised land: why, God that hath been good, will be good. Then, I will remember the land of the Hermonites; in that land were Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, were defeated; that you read of in Joshua xii. 1, 2. "Now these are the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto Mount Hermon." Mizar, some think to be a little hill near Mount Sinai, where the law was given. I will remember God's goodness, in giving a law to his people. Here David would call to remembrance the goodness of God of old, to regain to him comfort and quietness in his mind.—*Christopher Love.*

Verse 6.—"The Hermons," or the peaks or ridges of Hermon, the plural being used either because of the two peaks of the mountain (Wilson, "Land of the Bible"), or as I think probably, of the whole range of its snowy heights.—*J. J. Stewart Peroune.*

Verse 6.—"The Hermons," i.e., as some suppose, Mount Hermon, and the other mountains upon that side of the river, just as Baalim means Baal, and other idols worshipped with him; or more probably Mount Hermon considered not as a single eminence, but a chain or range, like the Alps, the Alleghanies, etc.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 6.—"From the hill." He that has a rich life of past experience is thereby placed upon an eminence from which he may take a happy view of the path lying before him.—*J. P. Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 7.—"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts." Here he has conjoined two awful and terrific phenomena of nature. It is a fact well ascertained by the evidence of travellers, that the falling of waterspouts is not uncommon on the coast of Judea. It should seem that they are occasioned by the congregating of great masses of cloud, whose waters concentrating to a point, pour themselves down in a tremendous column, accompanied with a roaring noise. Now, the image

conceived in the mind of the Psalmist seems to be that of the rushing of this vast water-spout down into the sea, already agitated, and increasing the turbulence and disorder of its waves. An awful picture! Especially if there be added to it the ideas of a black tempestuous sky, and the deafening roar occasioned by the tumult. What would be the situation of a vessel in the midst of such a tempest, the deluge pouring down from above, and all around her the furious ocean heaving its tremendous surges—how ungovernable, how helpless, how next to impossible that she should escape foundering except by some almost miraculous interference. Yet to such a situation does David here compare the state of his soul when submersed, as it were, under a sea of afflictions; “all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.” How pungent must his sense of grief have been to occasion him to make use of such a comparison, so strongly expressive of the utmost danger and terror!—*Henry March.*

Verse 7.—“*Deep calleth unto deep,*” etc. The abyss above calls on the abyss below, in the voice of the droppings of thy waterspouts.—*Targum.*

Verse 7.—“*Deep calleth unto deep.*” So let prayer unto prayer, and faith unto faith, and one grace to the exercise of another. If we cannot prevail with God it may be the first time, yet we may the second; or if not then, the third.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 7.—“*Deep calleth unto deep.*” What’s that? Why, it is expressed in the verse before: “*O God,*” says he, “*my soul is cast down within me.*” “*Down,*” that is *deep* into the jaws of distrust and fear. And, Lord, my soul in this *depth* of sorrow, calls for help to thy *depth* of mercy. For though I am sinking and am going down, yet not so low but that thy mercy is yet underneath me. Do, of thy compassions, open those everlasting arms, and catch him that has no help or stay in himself. For so it is with one that is falling into a *well* or a *dungeon*.—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 7.—Here the Psalmist feels the spirit of bondage, which is wrath and fear; and he prays for the joy of God’s salvation, and to be upheld by God’s free spirit, which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love and power. He complains of “*deep calling unto deep.*” A soul in the horrible pit hears little else but the calls of law and justice for vengeance, which are always answered again by the accusations of Satan and conscience. The storms of Sinai, like a *water-spout* at sea, threaten the earthen vessel with a deluge of wrath, which would soon drown it in destruction and perdition. These waves of real, and some imaginary, displeasure (no less terrible than real), rolling over the poor creature, are ready to send the bark to the bottom. This is the terrible way in which some fallen and backsliding souls are purged and reclaimed, and especially such as have brought public scandal upon the gospel, and church of Christ.—*William Huntington* (1744—1813) in “*Contemplations of the God of Israel.*”

Verse 7.—“*Thy waterspouts,*” Dr. Boothroyd translates עַיִן עַיִן, “*thy cataracts.*” In justification of which translation, he observes that the situation of David suggested this forcible image. He saw the torrents falling from the precipices, and heard them resounding, and as if calling to one another for assistance; so, says he, all thy waves, that is, afflictions and troubles, come upon me and overwhelm me.—*John Morison.*

Verse 7.—“*Waterspouts.*” Look at those clouds which hang like a heavy pall of sackcloth over the sea, along the western horizon. From them, on such windy days as these, are formed *waterspouts*, and I have already noticed several incipient “*spouts*” lengthening downward from their lower edge. These remarkable phenomena occur most frequently in spring, but I have also seen them in autumn. They are not accompanied with much rain; and between the dark stratum above and the sea, the sky is clear and bright. Here and there fragments of black vapour, shaped like long funnels, are drawn down from the clouds towards the sea, and are seen to be in violent agitation, whirling round on themselves as they are driven along by the wind. Directly beneath them the surface of the sea is also in commotion by a whirlwind, which travels on in concert with the spout above. I have often seen the two actually unite in mid air, and rush toward the mountains, writhing, and twisting, and bending, like a huge serpent, with its head in the clouds and its tail on the deep.

They make a loud noise, of course, and appear very frightful. “*Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me,*” said David, when his soul was cast down within him. But, though formidable

in appearance, they do very little injury. I have never heard of more than one instance in which they proved destructive even to boats, though the sailors are extremely afraid of them. As soon as they approach the shore, they dissolve and disappear. That kind of waterspout which bursts on the mountains, generally in the dry months of summer, does immense mischief. In a few minutes the wadies along its track are swollen into furious rivers, which sweep away grain, olives, raisins, and every other produce of the farmer. I have frequently known them to carry off and drown flocks of sheep and goats, and even cows, horses, and their owners also.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 7.—"All thy waves and thy billows."

Deep to deep incessant calling,
Tossed by furious tempests' roll,
Endless waves and billows falling,
Overwhelm my fainting soul.
Yet I see a Power presiding
Mid the tumult of the storm,
Ever ruling, ever guiding,
Love's intentions to perform.
Yes, mid sorrows most distressing,
Faith contemplates thy design,
Humbly bowing, and confessing
All the waves and billows THINE.

Henry March.

Verse 7.—"All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."

Wide o'er misfortune's surging tide
Billows succeeding billows spread;
Should one, its fury spent, subside,
Another lifts its boisterous head.

Æschylus in "The Seven Chiefs against Thebes."

Verse 8.—"Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness." His expression is remarkable; he does not say simply that the Lord will bestow, but, "command his lovingkindness." As the gift bestowed is grace—free favour to the unworthy; so the manner of bestowing it is sovereign. It is given by decree; it is a royal donative. And if he commands the blessing, who shall hinder its reception?—*Henry March.*

Verse 8.—"Tis all one to a godly man, *night* or *day*. For what *night* can there be to him who hath God always with him, who is a *sun* to comfort him, as well as a shield to protect him (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); and the *light* of whose countenance, if it be but very little, is more comfortable than all things else whatsoever that the *day* can bring with it. He can say, "When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Mic. vii. 8); and "the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Ps. xviii. 28. To tell you the truth, I think the *night* is the merriest time that the godly man hath, and the saddest for the wicked man (who, though he make use of *darkness* to hide his sin, yet is he afraid, because of that very thing in which his safety consists). For if a man be merry in good company, he must needs be more merry when he enjoys it better, and there is less to disturb his mirth. So as it is with a godly man in the *night*, when the greatest part of his hindrances are removed, and he can "delight himself in the Almighty" without disturbance. Job. xxvii. 10. David says that the Lord would indeed "command his lovingkindness in the daytime," but "in the *night* (says he) his song shall be with me"—"his song," as I think, not of *thanksgiving*, but of *joy and exultation*, such as God uses to give at that time. Job. xxxv. 10. In the *daytime* the soul is so taken up with base employments, so distracted with variety of sensible objects, and so busied with work for the body, that either she hath no leisure at all to do her own work (such as this joy is as much as anything), or she cannot do it so well as she would, or so well as she could *in the night*, when she hath less to do. I doubt not but the worldly and carnal man, now that I am talking so much of *night* and sleep, will be ready to say that I do but *dream*, and to answer me as the fellow did the hunter, when he bade him hear "what heavenly music his dogs made." For I know he counts the music and songs that we speak of, nothing but a frenzy, or a fancy at the least, such as mad and diseased people have in their brain, while they imagine it to be in the air. But, as Peter said of those upon whom the Holy Ghost fell, "These men are not drunk, as ye suppose;" so may I reply to such men, No

such matter, the godly are not mad, as ye suppose, for their songs are not works of their own fancy, not made of their own head, but set for them by God himself, "who giveth songs in the night." Job. xxxv. 10.—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 8.—"And my prayer unto the God of my life." Here may be seen that David's religion was a religion of prayer *after* deliverance, as well as before. The selfish who cry out in trouble will have done with their prayers, when the trouble is over. With David it was the very reverse. Deliverance from trouble would strengthen his confidence in God, embolden his addresses to him, and furnish him with new arguments. . . . There is great *need* of prayer after deliverance; for the time of deliverance is often a time of temptation, the soul being elated, and thrown off its guard. At such seasons much of the joy that is felt may be merely natural, as David's would probably be when rescued from that corroding care which injures the body as well as distresses the soul. There is danger of mistaking; of supposing it to be all spiritual, and hence of imagining the soul to be in a higher state of grace than it really is, and so, of being imperceptibly drawn into a state of false security. There is then especial need of that prayer. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." And with some peculiarly, who being of a sanguine constitution of mind, are in times of enjoyment, soon puffed up and brought into danger.—*Henry March.*

Verse 8 (last clause).—Your song and your prayer must be directed to God as "*the God of your life.*" You do not own him as God, except you own and adore him as your all sufficient good, and that "fulness which filleth all in all." You detract from the glory of his Godhead, if you attribute not this to him; and if, accordingly, as one that cannot live without him, you do not seek union with him, and join yourself to him, and then rejoice and solace yourself in that blessed conjunction.—*John Howe.*

Verse 9.—"God my rock." David was a fugitive, with little means of defence, and continually pursued by enemies who were powerful and numerous. The country in which he wandered was mountainous, and he often sought and found shelter on the tops of precipitous rocks, or in their natural hollows or excavated caves. Thus the idea of shelter and defence being associated in his mind with that of a rock, how natural that he should apply the term to God, and when seeking him as his refuge and helper, should address him by that appellation. . . . "*Why hast thou forgotten me?*" Not that he supposed he was literally forgotten of God, so as to be given up and abandoned by him; because he had still sufficient trust in his faithfulness to seek him for a refuge, and to hope in his mercy. His expression is to be regarded as the language of feeling, not of judgment. He felt, he seemed, as one forgotten by God. Those visits of love, those manifestations of favour with which he had formerly been indulged, and which then seemed to him to be so many tokens of the divine remembrance, were now withheld, now when, on account of his distress, they appeared so unspeakably more needful and desirable; whence it was that he felt as one forgotten.—*Henry March.*

Verse 10.—"Mine enemies." It is strange that *he* should have enemies, that was so harmless a man that when they were sick and distressed, he prayed for them, and put on sackcloth for them, as it is, Psalm xxxv. This compassionate, sweet-natured man, yet, notwithstanding, you see he had enemies, and enemies that would discover themselves to reproach him, and that bitterly; in the bitterest manner, they reproach him in his religion. We may be armed by this observation against the scandal of opposition—that if we meet with enemies in the world, we should not be much offended at it; grieve we may, but wonder we need not. Was there ever any that did more good than our Saviour Christ? "He went about doing good." Acts x. 38. He did never a miracle that was harmful (but only of the swine that were drowned in the sea, and that was their own fault), but he went about doing all the good he could; yet, notwithstanding, we see what malicious opposites he had. That that is true of the head must be true in the members. Therefore we should rejoice in our conformity to Christ, if it be in a good cause, that we find enemies and opposition. The devil is not made a Christian yet, and he will never be made good, for he is *in termino*, as we say, he is in his bounds, his nature is immovable; he is in hell in regard of his estate, though he be loose to do mischief. Now, until the devil be good, God's children shall never want enemies; and he will never be good; therefore, though there were good kings and good governors over all the

world, yet good men shall never want enemies as long as the devil is alive, as long as he hath anything to do in the world. Enemies, therefore, we must look for, and such enemies as will not conceal their malice neither; for that were something, if they would suffer their malice to boil and concoct in their own hearts, but that will not be, but "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak."—*Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 10.—"They say daily unto me." Here's their constancy and perseverance in this their carriage and language, it is *daily*, or *all the day*, יומ־לֵילָה. It is not only for a fit and away, but it is their frequent and continual practice; it's every, and it's all the day; they begin in the morning, and they hold out still till night as unquiet persons use to do; and they begin the week with it, and so they continue till the end; he could never come into their company or near them, but he had such language from them.—*Thomas Horton*.

Verse 10.—"Where is thy God?" David might rather have said to them, Where are your eyes? where is your sight? for God is not only in heaven, but in me. Though David was shut out from the sanctuary, yet David's soul was a sanctuary for God; for God is not tied to a sanctuary made with hands. God hath two sanctuaries, he hath two heavens—the heaven of heavens and a broken spirit. God dwelt in David as in his temple. God was with David and in him; and he was never more with him, nor never more in him than in his greatest afflictions. They wanted eyes, he wanted not God. Though sometimes God hide himself, not only from the world but from his own children, yet he is there; howsoever their sorrow is such that it dims their sight (as we see in Hagar), so that they cannot see him for the present, he sometimes looks in their face, as we see in Mary's case. She could not see Christ distinctly, but thought him to be the gardener. There is a kind of concealment awhile in heavenly wisdom, yet notwithstanding, God is with his children always, and they know it by faith though not by feeling always. . . . Therefore, it was an ignorant question of them to ask, *Where is thy God?* It showed that they were ignorant of the passages of God's dealing with his children, as indeed none are greater atheists than your scoffers. *Where is thy God?* as if God had been only a God of observation, to be observed outwardly in all his passages towards his children; whereas, as I said, he is a God hiding himself oftentimes; and he shows himself in contrary conditions most of all, most comfortably. His work is by contraries. But these carnal men were ignorant of the mysteries of religion, and the mysteries of divine providence towards God's children. Therefore, their question savours of their disposition, *Where is now thy God?*—*Richard Sibbes*.

Verse 10.—"Where is thy God?" It is the deriding question which persecutors put to the saints in the time of their trials and troubles, *Ubi Deus?* "Where is now your God?" But they may return a bold and confident answer, *Hic Deus*, "Our God is here," our God is nigh unto us, our God is round about us, our God is in the midst of us, our God has given us his promise "that he will never leave us nor forsake us." Heb. xiii. 5. In every trouble, in every danger, in every death, the Lord will be sure to keep us company. God will bear his children company, not only whilst they are in a delightful paradise, but also when they are in a howling wilderness. Hosea ii. 14. When a company of poor Christians were going into banishment, one standing by to see them pass along said, that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions of the beasts of the fields. True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go, his presence is infinite, and filleth all places. The Rabbins put *Makom*, which signifies *place*, among the names of God; Bythner brings them in expounding that text (Esther iv. 14), thus: "Deliverance shall arise from another place," that is, from God. Now, they called God *place*, because he is in every place, filling heaven and earth with his presence.—*Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 10.—Forest-flies, small as they are, drive the noble war-horse mad; therefore David says, "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, *Where is thy God?*"—*Frederick William Robertson*, 1851.

Verse 11.—Imitate here the example of David, instead of yielding to a vague grief; cite your soul; enquire of it the particular cause of your sorrow: different

remedies will be requisite according to the different sources of your distress ; and be careful that you trifle not with God, and your comfort, and your salvation, while you enquire of your soul, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" Be impartial, there is another and more solemn judgment to succeed : be persevering, like the Psalmist, return, again and again to the investigation : be prayerful ; self-love, or the delusions of your heart, may otherwise deceive you. Pray then to God, to "search you, and see if there be any wicked way in you."—*Henry Kollock, D.D., in "Sermons,"* etc. 1822.

Verse 11.—"Hope." Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.—*Samuel Smiles, LL.D.*

Verse 11.—"God . . . is the health of my countenance." The health of David's countenance was not in his countenance, but *in his God*, and this makes his faith silence his fears, and so pre-emptorily resolve upon it, that there is a time coming (how near soever he now lies to the grave's mouth) when he "*shall yet praise him.*" The health and life of thy grace lie both of them, not in thy grace, saith faith, but *in God*, who is thy God, therefore I shall yet live and praise him. I do not wonder that the weak Christian is melancholy and sad, when he sees his sickly face in any other glass than this.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 11.—"The health of my countenance." The countenance is often a true index to the mind. In the present awakening in religion, nothing is more remarkable than the sad or joyous looks of those whom God has spiritually exercised. It is easy to see who are sad, and who happy. There is nothing new in this : the Psalmist says, "My soul is cast down within me." Therefore had he a dejected countenance ; but said he, "Send thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me ; then will I go unto God, my exceeding joy. . . . And he shall be *the health of my countenance.*" In his sorrow, the face of Jesus was marred more than any man's, and his visage more than the sons of men. The martyr Stephen was so filled with the sight of Jesus, that in the midst of his persecutors, with death in prospect, he had a face which "shone as the face of an angel." My friend, how is it with thee ? Is thy countenance sad ? or doth it shine with the joy of the Lord, telling the true tale of thy life and lot ?—*J. Denham Smith.* 1860.

Verse 11.—Hast thou seen the sun shine forth in February, and the sky blue, and the hedgerows bursting into bud, and the primrose peeping beneath the bank, and the birds singing in the bushes ? Thou hast thought that spring was already come in its beauty and sweet odours. But a few days, and the clouds returned, and the atmosphere was chilled, and the birds were mute, and snow was on the ground, and thou hast said that spring would never come. And thus sometimes the young convert finds his fears removed and the comforts of the gospel shed abroad in his heart, and praise and thanksgiving, and a new song put in his mouth. And he deems unadvisedly that his troubles are past for ever. But awhile, and his doubts return, and his comforts die away, and his light is taken from him, and his spirit is overwhelmed, and he is fain to conclude that salvation and all its blessings are not for him. But the spring, though late, shall break at last. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ?*"—*H. G. Saller's "Book of Illustrations,"* 1840.

Verse 11.—His arguments and motives hereunto are impregnated with very great sense and strength ; and urged upon himself as the just rate thereof. "*Hope thou in God.*" For he is 1. "*God.*" 2. "*Thy God.*" 3. "*The health of thy countenance,*" and 4. *One whom thou shalt* (certainly and for ever) *praise as such.* And 5. Do it *yet*, as lamentable and hopeless as thy case appears at present through seeming difficulties or unlikelihoods. God and ourselves well understood, deeply considered, and skilfully urged and improved, give gracious hearts the best encouragements and supports under the severest accidents of time. And they will very strangely animate our hopes in God under our sorest troubles and dejections. David had (1) confidence in God ; and (2) reasons for it ; and (3) skill and a heart to urge them. When he reviewed himself, he saw that his soul was gracious ; and so he knew God valued it. It was bent for praising God ; and so he knew that he should have an opportunity and cause to do it, through some signal favours from him. He had an interest in God ; and he would neither lose it nor neglect it, and he had great experience of God's former mercies, and he would not forget them. And when he thinks on God, then praises must be thought on too, and everything relating to it, and all the divine perfections, within the circumference of his knowledge, must

have their fresh remembrances and powerful sense revived upon his own heart.—*Matthew Sylvester* (1636—1708), in "*Morning Exercises*."

Verse 11.—The soul, when once greatly disturbed, is often not soon calmed, on account of infirmities and remaining corruptions.—*Henry March*.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—The longing heart and the panting hart compared.

Verses 1, 2.—Those who have enjoyed the presence of God in the public ordinances of religion will greatly desire, if deprived of them, to be favoured with them again. . . . Prevention from attending the public ordinances of God's house may be made the means of great benefit to the soul. I. By renewing our relish for the provisions of the Lord's house, which so soon and so often palls. II. By making us to prize the means of grace more highly. There is, through human degeneracy, a proneness to value things less, however excellent in themselves, because of their being common, or plentiful, or of easy attainment. III. By driving us more directly from God.—*H. March*.

Verses 1—3.—The home-sickness of the soul. What awakens it in the soul? To what is it directed, or does it point or tend? Wherewith can it be satisfied? By the bitter, but oftentimes wholesome food of tears.—*J. P. Lange*.

Verse 2.—I. What thirsts? "my soul." II. For what? "for God." III. In what way? "when shall I come." Or, the cause, incentives, excellences, and privileges of spiritual thirst.

Verse 2 (last clause).—The true view of public worship.

Verse 2 (last clause).—Appearance before God here and hereafter.—*Isaac Watts, D.D., Two Sermons*.

Verse 3.—The believer's Lent, and its salt meats. I. What causes the sorrow? II. What will remove it? III. What benefit will come of it?

Verses 3, 10.—The carriage of David's enemies. I. The nature of it, and that was "reproach." II. The expression of it, "They say unto me." III. The constancy of it: "daily," or, *all the day long*. IV. The specification of it, in a scornful and opprobrious question: "Where is (now) thy God?"—*Thomas Horton*.

Verse 4.—I. It is common for the mind, in seasons of sorrow, to seek relief from the present in recollections of the past. II. In recollections of past enjoyments, those that relate to social worship will be peculiarly dear to the servant of God. III. Man is a social being, hence he derives help from united worship.—*H. March*.

Verse 4.—"I pour out my soul in me." The uselessness of mistrustful introspection.

Verse 4.—"I had gone with the multitude," etc. Company, if it be that which is good, is a very blessed and comfortable accommodation in sundry respects. I. It is an exercise of men's faculties, and the powers and abilities of the mind. II. It is a fence against danger, and a preservative against sadness and various temptations. III. An opportunity of doing more good.—*Thomas Horton*.

Verse 4.—"I had gone," etc. Sunny memories, their lessons of gratitude and hope.

Verse 4 (last clause).—Not Chaucer's tales of the Canterbury pilgrims, but David's tales of the Jerusalem pilgrims.

Verse 4.—"With the voice," etc. Congregational singing defended, extolled, discriminated, and urged.

Verse 5.—Sorrow put to the question, or the Consolatory Catechism.

Verse 5.—The sweetness, safety, and rightness of hope in God. Good grip for the anchor.

Verse 5.—The music of the future, "I shall yet praise him."

Verse 5.—"The help of his countenance," or the sustaining power of God's presence.

Verse 5.—"Why art thou cast down?" 1. The mind, even of a holy man may be unduly cast down and disquieted. II. In cases of undue dejection and disquietude the proper remedy is to expostulate with the soul, and to direct it to the *only true source* of relief. III. Expostulation with the soul in times of distress, is then

productive of its proper end, when it leads to an immediate application to God.—*H. March.*

Verse 5.—An emphasis of *enquiry or examination* ; David calls himself to account for his present passion and trouble of mind. An emphasis of *reproof or objurgation* ; David chides and rebukes himself for his present distemper. “*Why art thou thus ?*” —*Thomas Horton.*

Verses 5 with 11, or help and health.

Verse 6.—“*Remember thee.*” The consolation derivable from thoughts of God.

Verse 6.—“*Therefore will I remember thee.*” There are two ways of understanding this ; each of them instructive and profitable. . . . I. It may be considered as an expression of *determined remembrance of God* should he ever be found in such places and conditions. Believers can suppose the worst, and yet hope for the best. II. The language may be considered as an expression of *encouragement derived from reflection.* He had been in these situations and circumstances, and had experienced in them displays of divine providence and grace.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 6.—Ebenezers many, varied, remembered, helpful.

Verse 7.—“*Deep calleth unto deep.*” See Spurgeon’s Sermons, No. 865.

Verse 7.—“*Deep calleth unto deep.*” One evil inviting another. I. The *variety of evils*—one evil to another. II. The *conjunction of evils*—one evil with another. III. The *connexion of evils*, or dependence and mutual reference—one evil upon another.—*T. Horton.*

Verse 7.—The threefold depth which the saints and servants of God are subject to here in this life. I. The depth of *temptation.* II. The depth of *desertion.* III. The depth of *affliction and human calamities.*—*T. Horton.*

Verses 7, 8.—In seasons of affliction the servants of God will be distinguished from others by their ready perception and acknowledgment of the hand of God in their trials.—*H. March.*

Verse 8.—Daily mercy and nightly song ; the mercies of sunshine and shade.

Verse 8 (last clause).—The blessed alternation between praise and prayer.

Verse 8.—“*God of my life.*” Author, sustainer, comforter, object, crown, consummation.

Verse 8.—“*The God of my life.*” There is a threefold life whereof we partake, and God is the God of each unto us. First, the life of *nature* ; secondly, the life of *grace* ; thirdly, the life of *glory.*—*T. Horton.*

Verse 9.—“*God my rock.*” Appellations of God, suited to circumstances.—*H. March.*

Verse 9.—“*My rock.*” See Keach in his metaphors.

Verse 9.—I. *Why thou ?* II. *Why I ?* III. *Why he ?* It is a *why* to all three, To God, “*Why hast thou forgotten me ?*” To David himself, “*Why do I go mourning ?*” To David’s adversary, whoever he was, “*Why does the enemy oppress me ?*”—*T. Horton.*

Verse 10.—The most grievous of taunts.

Verse 11.—“*My God.*” I. It’s a word of *interest*—“*My God,*” as in covenant with him. II. A word of *compliance*—“*My God,*” as submitting to him. III. A word of affection—“*My God,*” as taking delight and rejoicing in him.—*T. Horton.*

Verse 11.—A catechism, a consolation, a commendation.

Verse 11.—I. David’s *experience of God.* “*He is the health, or help of my countenance.*” II. His *relation to God, and interest in him*—“*And my God.*”—*T. Horton.*