

PSALM XLVII.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician.—*Many songs were dedicated to this leader of the chorus, but he was not overloaded thereby. God's service is such delight that it cannot weary us ; and that choicest part of it, the singing of his praises, is so pleasurable that we cannot have too much of it. Doubtless, the chief musician, as he was commissioned with so many sacred songs, felt that the more the merrier. A Psalm for the Sons of Korah. We cannot agree with those who think that the sons of Korah were the authors of these Psalms : they have all the indication of David's authorship that one could expect to see. Our ear has grown accustomed to the ring of David's compositions, and we are morally certain that we hear it in this Psalm. Every expert would detect here the autography of the Son of Jesse, or we are greatly mistaken. The sons of Korah sang these Psalms, but we believe they did not write them. Fit singers were they whose origin reminded them of sin, whose existence was a proof of sovereign grace, and whose name has a close connection with the name of Calvary.*

SUBJECT.—*Whether the immediate subject of this Psalm be the carrying up of the ark from the house of Obedom to Mount Zion, or the celebration of some memorable victory, it would be hard to decide. As even the doctors differ, who shall dogmatise ? But it is very clear that both the present sovereignty of Jehovah, and the final victories of our Lord, are here fitly hymned, while his ascension, as the prophecy of them, is sweetly gloried in.*

DIVISION.—*In so short a Psalm, there is no need of any other division than that indicated by the musical pause at the end of verse 4.*

EXPOSITION.

CLAP your hands, all ye people ; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

1. "*O clap your hands.*" The most natural and most enthusiastic tokens of exultation are to be used in view of the victories of the Lord, and his universal reign. Our joy in God may be demonstrative, and yet he will not censure it. "*All ye people.*" The joy is to extend to all nations ; Israel may lead the van, but all the Gentiles are to follow in the march of triumph, for they have an equal share in that Kingdom where there is neither Greek nor Jew, but Christ is all and in all. Even now if they did but know it, it is the best hope of all nations that Jehovah ruleth over them. If they cannot all speak the same tongue, the symbolic language of the hands they can all use. All people will be ruled by the Lord in the latter days, and will exult in that rule ; were they wise they would submit to it now, and rejoice to do so ; yea, they would clap their hands in rapture at the thought. "*Shout,*" let your voices keep tune with your hands. "*Unto God,*" let him have all the honours of the day, and let them be loud, joyous, universal, and undivided. "*With the voice of triumph,*" with gladsome sounds, consonant with such splendid victories, so great a King, so excellent a rule, and such gladsome subjects. Many are human languages, and yet the nations may triumph as with one voice. Faith's view of God's government is full of transport. The prospect of the universal reign of the Prince of Peace is enough to make the tongue of the dumb sing ; what will the reality be ? Well might the poet of the seasons bid mountains and valleys raise their joyous hymn—

" For the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns,
And his *unsuffering* kingdom yet will come."

2 For the LORD most high is terrible ; *he* is a great King over all the earth.

2. "*For the Lord,*" or JEHOVAH, the self-existent and only God ; "*Most high,*" most great in power, lofty in dominion, eminent in wisdom, elevated in glory. "*Is terrible,*" none can resist his power or stand before his vengeance ; yet as these

terrors are wielded on the behalf of his subjects, they are fit reasons for rejoicing. Omnipotence, which is terrible to crush, is almighty to protect. At a grand review of the troops of a great prince, all his loyal subjects are filled with triumph, because their liege lord is so able to defend his own, and so much dreaded by his foes. "*He is a great King over all the earth.*" Not over Judea only, but even to the utmost isles his reign extends. Our God is no local deity, no petty ruler of a tribe; in infinite majesty he rules the mightiest realms as absolute arbiter of destiny, sole monarch of all lands, King of kings and Lord of lords. Not a hamlet or an islet is excluded from his dominion. How glorious will that era be when this is seen and known of all; when in the person of Jesus all flesh shall behold the glory of the Lord!

3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

3. "*He,*" with whom is infinite power, "*shall subdue the people under us.*" The battle is not ours but the Lord's. He will take his own time, but he will certainly achieve victory for his church. Truth and righteousness shall through grace climb to the ascendant. We wage no doubtful warfare. Hearts the most rebellious, and wills the most stubborn, shall submit to all-conquering grace. All the Lord's people, whether Jews or Gentiles, may clap their hands at this, for God's victory will be theirs; but surely apostles, prophets, ministers, and those who suffer and labour most, may take the largest share in the joy. Idolatry, infidelity, superstition we shall yet tread upon, as men tread down the stones of the street. "*And the nations under our feet.*" The church of God shall be the greatest of monarchies, her victory shall be signal and decisive. Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign, and all the tribes of men shall own at once his glory and the glory of his people in him. How changed will be the position of affairs in coming ages! The people of God have been under the feet of men in long and cruel persecutions, and in daily contempt; but God will reverse the position, and the best in character shall be first in honour.

4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

While as yet we see not all things put under him, we are glad to put ourselves and our fortunes at his disposal. "*He shall choose our inheritance for us.*" We feel his reign to be so gracious that we even now ask to be in the fullest degree the subjects of it. We submit our will, our choice, our desire, wholly to him. Our heritage here and hereafter we leave to him, let him do with us as seemeth him good. "*The excellency of Jacob whom he loved.*" He gave his ancient people their portion, he will give us ours, and we ask nothing better; this is the most spiritual and real manner of clapping our hands because of his sovereignty, namely, to leave all our affairs in his hands, for then our hands are empty of all care for self, and free to be used in his honour. He was the boast and glory of Israel, he is and shall be ours. He loved his people and became their greatest glory; he loves us, and he shall be our exceeding joy. As for the latter days, we ask nothing better than to stand in our appointed lot, for if we have but a portion in our Lord Jesus, it is enough for our largest desires. Our beauty, our boast, our best treasure, lies in having such a God to trust in, such a God to love us.

Selah. Yes, pause, ye faithful songsters. Here is abundant room for holy meditation—

" Muse awhile, obedient thought,
Lo, the theme's with rapture fraught;
See thy King, whose realm extends
E'en to earth's remotest ends!
Gladly shall the nations own
Him their Lord and God alone;
Clap their hands with holy mirth,
Hail him MONARCH OF THE EARTH.
Come, my soul, before him bow,
Gladdest of his subjects thou;
Leave thy portion to his choice,
In his sovereign will rejoice,
This thy purest, deepest bliss,
He is thine and thou art his."

5 God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

5. "*God is gone up with a shout.*" Faith hears the people already shouting. The command of the first verse is here regarded as a fact. The fight is over, the conqueror ascends to his triumphal chariot, and rides up to the gates of the city which is made resplendent with the joy of his return. The words are fully applicable to the ascension of the Redeemer. We doubt not that angels and glorified spirits welcomed him with acclamations. He came not without song, shall we imagine that he returned in silence? "*The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*" Jesus is Jehovah. The joyful strain of the trumpet betokens the splendour of his triumph. It was meet to welcome one returning from the wars with martial music. Fresh from Bozrah, with his garments all red from the winepress, he ascended, leading captivity captive, and well might the clarion ring out the tidings of Immanuel's victorious return.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

"*Sing praises.*" What jubilation is here, when five times over the whole earth is called upon to sing to God! He is worthy, he is Creator, he is goodness itself. *Sing praises*, keep on with the glad work. Never let the music pause. He never ceases to be good, let us never cease to be grateful. Strange that we should need so much urging to attend to so heavenly an exercise. "*Sing praises unto our King.*" Let him have all our praise; no one ought to have even a particle of it. Jesus shall have it all. Let his sovereignty be the fount of gladness. It is a sublime attribute, but full of bliss to the faithful. Let our homage be paid not in groans but in songs. He asks not slaves to grace his throne; he is no despot; singing is fit homage for a monarch so blessed and gracious. Let all hearts that own his sceptre sing and sing on for ever, for there is everlasting reason for thanksgiving while we dwell under the shadow of such a throne.

7 For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

7. "*For God is the King of all the earth.*" The Jews of our Saviour's time resented this truth, but had their hearts been right they would have rejoiced in it. They would have kept their God to themselves, and not even have allowed the Gentile dogs to eat the crumbs from under his table. Alas! how selfishness turns honey into wormwood. Jehovah is not the God of the Jews only, all the nations of the earth are, through the Messiah, yet to own him Lord. Meanwhile his providential throne governs all events beneath the sky. "*Sing ye praises with understanding.*" Sing a didactic Psalm. Sound doctrine praises God. Even under the economy of types and ceremonies, it is clear that the Lord had regard to the spirituality of worship, and would be praised thoughtfully, intelligently, and with deep appreciation of the reason for song. It is to be feared from the slovenly way in which some make a noise in singing, that they fancy any sound will do. On the other hand, from the great attention paid by some to the mere music, we feel sadly sure that the sense has no effect upon them. Is it not a sin to be tickling men's ears with sounds when we profess to be adoring the Lord? What has a sensuous delight in organs, anthems, etc., to do with devotion? Do not men mistake physical effects for spiritual impulses? Do they not often offer to God strains far more calculated for human amusement than for divine acceptance? An understanding enlightened of the Holy Spirit is then and then only fully capable of offering worthy praise.

8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

Now at this moment, over the most debased idolaters, God holds a secret rule; here is work for faith. How we ought to long for the day when this truth shall be changed in its aspect, and the rule now unrecognised shall be delighted in! The great truth that *God reigneth* in providence is the guarantee that in a gracious gospel sense his promise shall be fulfilled, and his kingdom shall come. "*He sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.*" Unmoved he occupies an undisputed throne, whose decrees, acts, and commands are holiness itself. What other throne is like this? Never was it stained with injustice, or defiled with sin. Neither is he who sits

upon it dismayed, or in a dilemma. He sits in serenity, for he knows his own power, and sees that his purposes will not miscarry. Here is reason enough for holy song.

9 The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God: he is greatly exalted.

9. "*The princes of the people are gathered together.*" The prophetic eye of the Psalmist sees the willing subjects of the great King assembled to celebrate his glory. Not only the poor and the men of low estate are there, but nobles bow their willing necks to his sway. "All kings shall bow down before him." No people shall be unrepresented; their great men shall be good men, their royal ones regenerate ones. How august will be the parliament where the Lord Jesus shall open the court, and princes shall rise up to do him honour! "*Even the people of the God of Abraham.*" That same God, who was known only to here and there a patriarch like the father of the faithful, shall be adored by a seed as many as the stars of heaven. The covenant promise shall be fulfilled, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Shiloh shall come, and "to him shall the gathering of the people be." Babel's dispersion shall be obliterated by the gathering arm of the Great Shepherd King.

"*For the shields of the earth belong unto God.*" The insignia of pomp, the emblems of rank, the weapons of war, all must pay loyal homage to the King of all. Right honourables must honour Jesus, and majesties must own him to be far more majestic. Those who are earth's protectors, the shields of the commonwealth, derive their might from him, and are his. All principalities and powers must be subject unto Jehovah and his Christ, for "*He is greatly exalted.*" In nature, in power, in character, in glory, there is none to compare with him. Oh, glorious vision of a coming era! Make haste, ye wheels of time! Meanwhile, ye saints, "Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Some have applied this Psalm to Christ's ascension; but it speaks of his Second Coming. The Mighty One is seated peacefully on his throne. We are referred back to Psalm xlv.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—"O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph." This should be done, 1. Cheerfully: "Clap your hands," for this is a sign of inward joy, Nah. iii. 19. 2. Universally: "O clap your hands, all ye people." 3. Vocally: "Shout unto God with the voice of triumph." 4. Frequently: "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises," verse 6; and again "sing praises," verse 7. It cannot be done too frequently. 5. Knowingly and discreetly: "Sing ye praises with understanding;" know the reason why ye are to praise him.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—"O clap your hands," etc. Such expressions of pious and devout affection as to some may seem indecent and imprudent, yet ought not to be hastily censured and condemned, much less ridiculed; because if they come from an upright heart, God will accept the strength of the affection, and excuse the weakness of the expressions of it.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 1.—"O clap your hands." The *voice of melody* is not so much to be uttered with the tongue or with the hands; that is, it is our deeds not our words, by which God is here to be praised. Even as it was in him whose pattern we are to follow: "Jesus began both to do and to teach."—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 1.—"All ye people." *Peoples*, in the plural. Here it is used to call both Jews and Gentiles—all nations.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 1.—"Shout unto God." *Jubilate Deo*: in God, and concerning God, and in honour of God. He does not excite them to carnal joy.—*Martin Geier*.

Verse 2.—"For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth." The church celebrates the ascension of Christ, because then he was "highly exalted;" then he became "terrible" to his enemies, all power in heaven and in earth being committed to him; and then he began to display the excellent majesty of his universal kingdom, to which he was then inaugurated, being crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords."—*George Horne*.

Verse 2.—"The Lord most high is terrible." Christ is "terrible," that is, fearful, or meet to be feared, not of his children only for their good, but of the wicked also for their punishment; "terrible" to the devil, as being stronger than he, casting out the prince of darkness by the finger of God. Luke xi. 22; John xii. 31. And therefore so soon as an unclean spirit saw Jesus, he cried out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us?" Mark i. 24; or as other devils, Matt. viii. 29, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" for the devils in believing tremble. "Terrible" to hypocrites, and other impious agents of the devil, as having his fan in his hand to make clean his floor, and to gather his wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matt. iii. 12. Or Christ is *excelsus in potentia, terribilis in justitia*; high in power, and fearful in justice: high in exalting the good, and terrible in humbling the bad.—*John Boys*.

Verse 3.—"He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet." The consequence of our Lord's ascension was the going forth of the all-subduing Word, under the influence and direction of which the convinced and converted nations renounced their idols and their lusts, and bowed their willing necks to the yoke of Jesus. This is that great conquest, foreshowed by the victories of Joshua, David, and all the faithful heroes of old time, and foretold in language borrowed from their history.—*George Horne*.

Verse 3.—"He shall subdue the people under us," etc., or he shall lead like sheep; or bring unto the fold; as divers render the word, by comparing Isa. v. 17; Micah ii. 12. He seems to speak of such a subjugation of them, as was for the good of the people subdued, because this is matter of rejoicing to them, verse 1; which is true both of these people whom David subdued, who thereby had opportunities, obligations, and encouragements to own and worship the true God, which was the only way to their true and lasting happiness; and especially of those Gentiles who were subdued to Christ by the preaching of the gospel. The Gentile converts were in some sort brought under the Jews, because they were subjected to Christ and to his apostles, and to the primitive church, which were Jews.—*Matthew Pool*.

Verse 3.—"And the nations under our feet." By this manner of speech is meant, that the Gentiles should be *scholars*, and the Jews *schoolmasters*, as it were to them; for to sit under the feet, or at the feet, is used in Scripture for being a scholar, or learning, as Acts xxii. 3.—*Thomas Wilcocks*.

Verse 4.—"He shall choose." Futures are variously rendered; and accordingly the vulgar Latin, Syriac, and Arabic, render this word, *He hath chosen*.—*Matthew Pool*.

Verse 4.—"He shall choose our inheritance for us." It is reported of a woman who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, "Which God pleases." But, said one, if God should refer it to you, which would you choose? "Truly," replied she, "I would refer it to him again." Thus that man obtains his will of God, whose will is subjected to God. We are not to be troubled that we have no more from God, but we are to be troubled that we do no more for God. Christians, if the Lord be well pleased with your persons, should not you be well pleased with your conditions? There is more reason that you should be pleased with them, than that he should be pleased with you. Believers should be like sheep, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like vessels in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied at the pleasure of their owner. He that sails upon the sea of this world in his own bottom, will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own carvers, but they were sure to cut their own fingers.—*William Secker*.

Verse 4.—“*He shall choose our inheritance for us,*” means that he who knows what is better for us than ourselves, *hath chosen*, that is, hath appointed, and that of his own good will and mercy towards us, *our inheritance*; not only things meet for this life as lands, and houses, and possessions, etc., but even all other things concerning the hope of a better life, to wit, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an everlasting habitation, an inheritance which is immortal and undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved for us in heaven.—*John Boys.*

Verse 4.—“*The excellency (or glory) of Jacob whom he loved;*” that is, even all those excellent things that he gave and promised to Jacob, wherein he might glory and rejoice. The faithful mean, that they had as great, both abundance and assurance of God’s grace and goodness, as ever Jacob had.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 4.—It may be thou art godly and poor. ’Tis well; but canst thou tell whether, if thou wert not poor, thou wouldst be godly? Surely God knows us better than we ourselves do, and therefore can best fit the estate to the person.—*Giles Fletcher.*

Verse 5.—“*God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*” It is worthy (as Origen suggests) that this mention of the “*shout,*” and the *voice* of the “*trumpet,*” serves to connect together past and future events in the history of the church and of the world, and carry our thoughts forward to Christ’s coming to judgment.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5.—Thou hast great cause, O my soul, to praise him, and to rejoice before him, especially if thou considerest that Christ ascended not for himself, but also for thee: it is God in our nature that is gone up to heaven: whatever God acted on the person of Christ, that he did as in thy behalf, and he means to act the very same on thee. Christ as a public person ascended up to heaven; thy interest is in this very ascension of Jesus Christ; and therefore dost thou consider thy Head as soaring up? O let every member praise his name; let thy tongue (called thy *glory*), glory in this, and trumpet out his praise, that in respect of thy duty it may be verified: “*Christ is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*”—*Isaac Ambrose.*

Verse 7.—“*For God is the King of all the earth:*” as if he had said, “*Our King, said I? it is too little; he is King of all the earth.*”—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—“*Sing ye praises with understanding.*” How may we make melody in our hearts to God in singing of Psalms? We must sing “*with understanding.*” We must not be guided by the *time*, but the *words* of the Psalm; we must mind the matter more than the music, and consider what we sing, as well as how we sing; the tune may affect the fancy, but it is the matter affects the heart, and that God principally eyes. The Psalmist adviseth us in this particular, and so doth the apostle (1 Cor. xiv. 15). Otherwise this sweet duty would be more the work of a chorister than of a Christian, and we should be more delighted in an anthem of the musician’s making, than in a Psalm of the Spirit’s making. A Lapidè observes that in the text, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, the word *understanding* is *maschil*, מַשְׁכִּיל, profound judgment: we must sing *wisely*, if we will sing gratefully; we must relish what we sing. In a word, we must sing as we must pray; now the most rude petitioner will *understand* what he prays. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. If we do not understand what we sing, it argues carelessness of spirit, or hardness of heart; and this makes the service impertinent. Upon this the worthy Davenant cries out, “*Adieu to the bellowing of the Papists, who sing in an unknown tongue.*” God will not understand us in that service which we understand not ourselves. One of the first pieces of the creation was *light*, and this must break out in every duty.—*John Wells* (—1676), in “*Morning Exercises.*”

Verse 7.—“*Sing ye praises with understanding,*” sing an *instructive song*. Let *sense* and *sound* go together. Let your *hearts* and *heads* go with your *voices*. *Understand* what you *sing*, and *feel* what you *understand*.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7.—“*Sing ye praises with understanding;*” because in the full light of the new dispensation, the darkness of the patriarchal ages, the seeing as through a glass of the Levitical law, are turned into the vision of full and very reality.—*Hugo Victorinus.*

Verse 7.—“*Sing ye praises with understanding.*” Mark this, thou who daily reatest the Psalms, and yet dost not understand them.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verse 7.—“*With understanding.*” If they had sung “*with understanding,*” they had not adored stones. When a man sensible sang to a stone insensible, did he sing

"with understanding"? But now, brethren, we see not with our eyes whom we adore, and yet correctly we adore. Much more is God commended to us, that with our eyes we see him not.—Augustine.

Verse 9.—"The princes of the people are gathered together." I note from hence, 1. That it is not impossible for great men to be good men; for the heads of a country to be members of Christ; and for princes as well as the people to serve the God of Abraham. It is said by the prophet, "upon my peace came great bitterness; " a thousand fall on the left hand, but ten thousand at the right hand " (Psalm xci. 7): ten perish in their prosperity, for one that falleth in adversity. *Homo victus in paradiso, victor in stercore*: Adam in the garden of pleasure was overcome by the subtil serpent, whereas Job on the dunghill of misery was more than a conqueror. Woodmen say that deer are more circumspect in fat pastures; so the godly fear most in a rich estate: *nihil timendum video* (saith one), *timeo tamen*.* It is a sweet prayer of our church in the Litany. "Good Lord, deliver us in all time of our wealth," insinuating that our minds are not so wanton in want as in abundance: yet, as you see, such is Christ's unspeakable goodness towards all sorts of men, in preventing them even with the riches of his mercy, that not only the mean people, but also the mighty princes among the heathen are joined unto the church of the God of Abraham.—John Boys.

Verse 9.—"Gathered together." Christ's gathering of the saints together unto him will be at his second coming, his coming to judgment, the general and final judgment. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." 2. Thess. ii. 1.—James Scot (—1773), in "A Collection of Sermons," 1774.

Verse 9.—"The people of the God of Abraham." First, touching the God of Abraham, it is Christ, whose day Abraham desired to see, and in seeing whereof he did so much rejoice (John viii.); that is, not only the day of his birth, which he saw, as we learn by the oath which he caused his servant to take (Gen. xxiv.), but also the day of his passion, which he saw long ago, and rejoiced in seeing it, when he said to his son Isaac in the mount, "The Lord will provide a sacrifice." Gen. xxii. 8. Secondly, "The people of the God of Abraham," are his children and posterity: not only they that are the seed of Abraham, coming out of his loins, and are "the children of the flesh" (Rom. ix. 9); but "the children of the promise;" for if they that come out of Abraham's loins were only his children, then the Hagarins, the Turks, and Ishmaelites should be the people of God; "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." They that lay hold of the promise by faith, "They that are of the faith, are the children of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7), that have the same spirit of faith that Abraham had. As the apostle saith (Rom. ii. 28), "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, but a Jew inwardly is the true Jew." They that worship the Messiah by believing in him with the faith of Abraham, they are Abraham's children, and the people of Abraham's God, which thing John Baptist affirmeth (Matt. iii.), "God can of stones raise up children to Abraham." So the Gentiles, which worshipped stones, and therefore were "like unto them" (Psalm cxv.), were notwithstanding raised up to be children to Abraham.—Lancelot Andrews.

Verse 9.—"The shields of the earth belong unto God." There we have the rulers of the earth set forth by a double relation; the one upward, they are *scuta Deo*, they belong to God; the other downward, they are *scuta terræ*, "the shields of the earth;" and both these noting two things, their dignity and their duty. They belong to God, it is their honour that he hath sealed them: they belong to God, it is their duty to be subject to him. They are "shields of the earth," it is their honour that they are above others: they are "the shields of the earth," it is their duty to protect others.—Edward Reynolds (Bishop).

Verse 9.—"The shields of the earth are God's," is understood by many as spoken of princes. I admit that this metaphor is of frequent occurrence in Scripture, nor does this sense seem to be unsuitable to the scope of the passage. . . . Yet the sense will be more simple if we explain the words thus: That, as it is God alone who defends and preserves the world, the high and supreme majesty which is sufficient for so exalted and difficult a work as the preservation of the world, is justly looked upon with admiration. The sacred writer expressly uses the word *shields* in the plural number, for, considering the various and almost innumerable dangers which

* Seneca.

unceasingly threaten every part of the world, the providence of God must necessarily interpose in many ways, and make use as it were, of many bucklers.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—“*The shields of the earth.*” Magistrates are said to *bear the sword*, not to be swords; and they are said to *be shields*, not to bear shields, and all this to show that protection and perservation are more essential and intrinsical to their office than destruction and punishment are.—*Joseph Caryl.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—Unusual and enthusiastic expressions of joy when justifiable and ever desirable.

Verses 1—4.—Joy the true spirit of worship. 1. Joy in God’s character. 2. In his reign. 3. In the triumphs of his gospel. 4. In his favour to his saints.

Verse 2.—The terrors of the Lord viewed by faith as a subject of joy.

Verse 2 (second clause).—The universal reign of Christ as it is and is to be.

Verse 3.—The hope of victory to the church. What shall be subdued? By whose instrumentality? “*Us.*” By whose power? “*He.*” When it shall be accomplished? What is the token of it? The ascension, verse 5.

Verse 3.—I. The final triumph of the saints. All enemies subdued under them in earth and hell, within and without. 1. Gradually. 2. Completely. II. The power by which it is accomplished.—“*He shall,*” etc. 1. Not without means. 2. Not by means only. 3. But by appointed means made potent by divine energy.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—This comprehends time and eternity. It is a matter of fact, of holy acquiescence, of desire, of thankfulness.

Verse 4.—I. God is willing to choose our inheritance for us in time and eternity. II. His choice is better than ours—“*the excellency of Jacob.*” III. He will leave us to the consequences of our own choice. IV. He will help us in obtaining that which he chooses for us.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—The ascension. Its publicity, solemnity, triumph, joy. Who went up. Where he went up. To what he went up. For what purpose. With what result.

Verse 6.—The importance of holy song. The repetition rebukes our slackness, and implies that earnestness, frequency, delight, and universality should characterise the praises offered.

Verse 7 (last clause).—The Psalmody of the instructed, and instruction by Psalmody; praise should be both the fruit and the vehicle of teaching.

Verse 8 (last clause).—Divine sovereignty always connected with holiness.

Verse 8.—I. God has a throne of holiness, for which he is to be feared by all men. II. A throne of grace, for which he is to be loved by his redeemed. III. A throne of glory, for which he is to be praised by his whole creation.

Verse 9.—I. A shield is a *merciful* weapon, none more so. II. A shield is a *venturous* weapon, a kind of surety, which bears the blows and receives the injuries which were intended for another. III. A shield is a *strong* weapon, to repel the darts of wickedness and break them in pieces. IV. A shield is an honourable weapon, none more: taking away of shields was a sign of victory; preserving them a sign of glory. V. Remember, a shield must ever *have an eye to guide it*—you the shields, the law the eye.—*Bishop Reynolds.*