

PSALM XLIX.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician, a Psalm for the sons of Korah. *This is precisely the same as on former occasions, and no remark is needed.*

DIVISION.—*The poet musician sings, to the accompaniment of his harp, the despicable character of those who trust in their wealth, and so he consoles the oppressed believer. The first four verses are a preface; from 5 to 12 all fear of great oppressors is removed by the remembrance of their end and their folly; 13 contains an expression of wonder at the perpetuity of folly; 14 and 15 contrast the ungodly and the righteous in their future; and from 16 to 20 the lesson from the whole is given in an admonitory form. Note the chorus in verses 12 and 20, and also the two Selahs.*

EXPOSITION.

HEAR this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:

2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

In these four verses the poet-prophet calls universal humanity to listen to his didactic hymn.

1. "*Hear this, all ye people.*" All men are concerned in the subject, it is of them, and therefore to them that the Psalmist would speak. It is not a topic which men delight to consider, and therefore he who would instruct them must press them to give ear. Where, as in this case, the theme claims to be wisdom and understanding, attention is very properly demanded; and when the style combines the sententiousness of the proverb with the sweetness of poesy, interest is readily excited. "*Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.*" "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Men dwelling in all climes are equally concerned in the subject, for the laws of providence are the same in all lands. It is wise for each one to feel I am a man, and therefore everything which concerns mortals has a personal interest to me. We must all appear before the judgment-seat, and therefore we all should give earnest heed to holy admonition which may help us to prepare for that dread event. He who refuses to receive instruction by the ear, will not be able to escape receiving destruction by it when the Judge shall say, "Depart, ye cursed."

2. "*Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*" Sons of great men, and children of mean men, men of large estate, and ye who pine in poverty, ye are all bidden to hear the inspired minstrel as he touches his harp to a mournful but instructive lay. The low will be encouraged, the high will be warned, the rich will be sobered, the poor consoled, there will be a useful lesson for each if they are willing to learn it. Our preaching ought to have a voice for all classes, and all should have an ear for it. To suit our word to the rich alone is wicked sycophancy, and to aim only at pleasing the poor is to act the part of a demagogue. Truth may be so spoken as to command the ear of all, and wise men seek to learn that acceptable style. Rich and poor must soon meet together in the grave, they may well be content to meet together now. In the congregation of the dead all differences of rank will be obliterated, they ought not now to be obstructions to united instructions.

3. "*My mouth shall speak of wisdom.*" Inspired and therefore lifted beyond himself, the prophet is not praising his own attainments, but extolling the divine Spirit which spoke in him. He knew that the Spirit of truth and wisdom spoke through him. He who is not sure that his matter is good has no right to ask a hearing. "*And the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*" The same Spirit who made the ancient seers eloquent, also made them thoughtful. The help of the Holy Ghost was never meant to supersede the use of our own mental powers.

The Holy Spirit does not make us speak as Balaam's ass, which merely uttered sounds, but never meditated; but he first leads us to consider and reflect, and then he gives us the tongue of fire to speak with power.

4. "*I will incline mine ear to a parable.*" He who would have others hear, begins by hearing himself. As the minstrel leans his ear to his harp, so must the preacher give his whole soul to his ministry. The truth came to the Psalmist as a parable, and he endeavoured to unriddle it for popular use; he would not leave the truth in obscurity, but he listened to its voice till he so well understood it as to be able to interpret and translate it into the common language of the multitude. Still of necessity it would remain a problem, and a dark saying to the unenlightened many, but this would not be the songster's fault, for, saith he, "*I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*" The writer was no mystic, delighting in deep and cloudy things, yet he was not afraid of the most profound topics; he tried to open the treasures of darkness, and to uplift pearls from the deep. To win attention he cast his proverbial philosophy into the form of song, and tuned his harp to the solemn tone of his subject. Let us gather round the minstrel of the King of kings, and hear the Psalm which erst was led by the chief musician, as the chorus of the sons of Korah lifted up their voices in the temple.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

7 None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

9 That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

10 For he seeth *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish.

5. "*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" The man of God looks calmly forward to dark times when those evils which have dogged his heels shall gain a temporary advantage over him. Iniquitous men, here called in the abstract *iniquity*, lie in wait for the righteous, as serpents that aim at the heels of travellers: the iniquity of our heels is that evil which aims to trip us up or impede us. It was an old prophecy that the serpent should wound the heel of the woman's seed, and the enemy of our souls is diligent to fulfil that premonition. In some dreary part of our road it may be that evil will wax stronger and bolder, and gaining upon us will openly assail us; those who followed at our heels like a pack of wolves, may perhaps overtake us, and compass us about. What then? Shall we yield to cowardice? Shall we be a prey to their teeth? God forbid. Nay, we will not even fear, for what are these foes? What indeed, but mortal men who shall perish and pass away? There can be no real ground of alarm to the faithful. Their enemies are too insignificant to be worthy of one thrill of fear. Doth not the Lord say to us, "I, even I, am he that comforteth thee: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?"

Scholars have given other renderings of this verse, but we prefer to keep to the authorised version when we can, and in this case we find in it precisely the same meaning which those would give to it who translate "*my heels*," by the words, "*my supplanters.*"

6. What if the good man's foes be among the great ones of the earth! yet he need not fear them. "*They that trust in their wealth.*" Poor fools, to be content with such a rotten confidence. When we set our rock in contrast with theirs, it would be folly to be afraid of them. Even though they are loud in their brags,

we can afford to smile. What if they glory "*and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches*"? yet while we glory in our God we are not dismayed by their proud threatenings. Great strength, position, and estate, make wicked men very lofty in their own esteem, and tyrannical towards others; but the heir of heaven is not overawed by their dignity, nor cowed by their haughtiness. He sees the small value of riches, and the helplessness of their owners in the hour of death, and therefore he is not so mean as to be afraid of an ephemera, a moth, a bubble.

7. "*None of them can by any means redeem his brother.*" With all their riches, the whole of them put together could not rescue a comrade from the chill grasp of death. They boast of what they will do with us, let them see to themselves. Let them weigh their gold in the scales of death, and see how much they can buy therewith from the worm and the grave. The poor are their equals in this respect; let them love their friend ever so dearly, they cannot "*give to God a reason for him.*" A king's ransom would be of no avail, a Monte Rosa of rubies, an America of silver, a world of gold, a sun of diamonds, would all be utterly contemned. O ye boasters, think not to terrify us with your worthless wealth, go ye and intimidate death before ye threaten men in whom is immortality and life.

8. "*For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*" Too great is the price, the purchase is hopeless. For ever must the attempt to redeem a soul with money remain a failure. Death comes and wealth cannot bribe him; hell follows, and no golden key can unlock its dungeons. Vain, then, are your threatenings, ye possessors of the yellow clay; your childish toys are despised by men who estimate the value of possessions by the shekel of the sanctuary.

9. No price could secure for any man "*That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*" Mad are men now after gold, what would they be if it could buy the elixir of immortality? Gold is lavished out of the bag to cheat the worm of the poor body by embalming it, or enshrining it in a coffin of lead, but it is a miserable business, a very burlesque and comedy. As for the soul, it is too subtle a thing to be detained when it hears the divine command to soar through tracks unknown. Never, therefore, will we fear, those base nibblers at our heels, whose boasted treasure proves to be so powerless to save.

10. "*For he seeth that wise men die.*" Every one sees this. The proud, persecuting rich man cannot help seeing it. He cannot shut his eyes to the fact that wiser men than he are dying, and that he also, with all his craft, must die. "*Like-wise the fool and the brutish person perish.*" Folly has no immunity from death. Off goes the jester's cap, as well as the student's gown. Jollity cannot laugh off the dying hour; death who visits the university, does not spare the tavern. Thoughtlessness and brutishness meet their end as surely as much care and wasting study. In fact, while the truly wise, so far as this world is concerned, *die*, the fool has a worse lot, for he *perishes*, is blotted out of remembrance, bewailed by none, remembered no more. "*And leave their wealth to others.*" Not a farthing can they carry with them. Whether heirs male of their own body, lawfully begotten, inherit their estates, or they remain unclaimed, it matters not, their hoardings are no longer theirs; friends may quarrel over their property, or strangers divide it as spoil, they cannot interfere. Ye boasters, hold ye your own, before ye dream of despoiling the sons of the living God. Keep shoes to your own feet in death's dark pilgrimage, ere ye seek to bite our heels.

11. "*Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations.*" He is very foolish who is more a fool in his inmost thought than he dare be in his speech. Such rotten fruit, rotten at the core, are worldlings. Down deep in their hearts, though they dare not say so, they fancy that earthly goods are real and enduring. Foolish dreamers! The frequent dilapidations of their castles and manor-houses should teach them better, but still they cherish the delusion. They cannot tell the mirage from the true streams of water; they fancy rainbows to be stable, and clouds to be the everlasting hills. "*They call their lands after their own names.*" Common enough is this practice. His grounds are made to bear the groundling's name, he might as well write it on the water. Men have even called countries by their own names, but what are they better for the idle compliment, even if men perpetuate their nomenclature?

12. "*Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not.*" He is but a lodger for the hour, and does not stay a night: even when he dwells in marble halls his notice to quit is written out. Eminence is evermore in imminence of peril. The hero of the hour lasts but for an hour. Sceptres fall from the paralysed hands which

once grasped them, and coronets slip away from skulls when the life is departed. "*He is like the beasts that perish.*" He is not like the sheep which are preserved of the Great Shepherd, but like the hunted beast which is doomed to die. He lives a brutish life and dies a brutish death. Wallowing in riches, surfeited with pleasure, he is fatted for the slaughter, and dies like the ox in the shambles. Alas! that so noble a creature should use his life so unworthily, and end it so disgracefully. So far as this world is concerned, wherein does the death of many men differ from the death of a dog? They go down—

"To the vile dust from whence they sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung."

What room is there, then, for fear to the godly when such natural brute beasts assail them? Should they not in patience possess their souls?

We make a break here, because this stanza appears to be the refrain of the song, and as such is repeated in the twentieth verse.

13 This their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

13. Their vain confidences are not casual aberrations from the path of wisdom but *their way*, their usual and regular course; their whole life is regulated by such principles. Their life-path is essential *folly*. They are fools ingrain. From first to last brutishness is their characteristic, grovelling stupidity the leading trait of their conduct. "*Yet their posterity approve their sayings.*" Those who follow them in descent follow them in folly, quote their worldly maxims, and accept their mad career as the most prudent mode of life. Why do they not see by their fathers' failure their fathers' folly? No, the race transmits its weakness. Grace is not hereditary, but sordid worldliness goes from generation to generation. The race of fools never dies out. No need of missionaries to teach men to be earthworms, they crawl naturally to the dust. "*Selah.*" Well may the minstrel pause, and bid us muse upon the deep-seated madness of the sons of Adam. Take occasion, reader, to reflect upon thine own.

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me. Selah.

14. "*Like sheep they are laid in the grave.*" As dumb, driven cattle, they are hurried to their doom, and are penned in within the gates of destruction. As sheep that go whither they are driven, and follow their leader without thought, so these men who have chosen to make this world their all, are urged on by their passions, till they find themselves at their journey's end, that end the depths of Hades. Or if we keep to our own translation, we have the idea of their dying peaceably, and being buried in quiet, only that they may wake up to be ashamed at the last great day. "*Death shall feed on them.*" Death like a grim shepherd leads them on, and conducts them to the place of their eternal pasturage, where all is barrenness and misery. The righteous are led by the Good Shepherd, but the ungodly have death for their shepherd, and he drives them onward to hell. As the power of death rules them in this world, for they have not passed from death unto life, so the terrors of death shall devour them in the world to come. As grim giants, in old stories, are said to feed on men whom they entice to their caves, so death, the monster, feeds on the flesh and blood of the mighty. "*The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*" The poor saints were once the tail, but at the day-break they shall be the head. Sinners rule till night-fall; their honours wither in the evening, and in the morning they find their position utterly reversed. The sweetest reflection to the upright is that "*the morning*" here intended begins an endless, changeless, day. What a vexation of spirit to the proud worldling, when the Judge of all the earth holds his morning session, to see the man whom he despised, exalted high in heaven, while he himself is cast away! "*And their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*" Whatever of glory the ungodly had shall disappear in the tomb. Form and comeliness shall vanish from them, the worm shall make

sad havoc of all their beauty. Even their last dwelling place, the grave, shall not be able to protect the relics committed to it; their bodies shall dissolve, no trace shall remain of all their strong limbs and lofty heads, no vestige of remaining beauty shall be discoverable. The beauty of the righteous is not yet revealed, it waits its manifestations; but all the beauty the wicked will ever have is in full bloom in this life; it will wither, fade, decay, rot, and utterly pass away. Who, then, would envy or fear the proud sinner?

15. "*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.*" Forth from that temporary resting-place we shall come in due time, quickened by divine energy. Like our risen Head we cannot be holden by the bands of the grave; redemption has emancipated us from the slavery of death. No redemption could man find in riches, but God has found it in the blood of his dear Son. Our Elder Brother has given to God a ransom, and we are the redeemed of the Lord: because of this redemption by price we shall assuredly be redeemed by power out of the hand of the last enemy. "*For he shall receive me.*" He shall take me out of the tomb, take me up to heaven. If it is not said of me as of Enoch, "He was not, for God took him," yet shall I reach the same glorious state. My spirit God will receive, and my body shall sleep in Jesus till, being raised in his image, it shall also be received into glory. How infinitely superior is such a hope to anything which our oppressors can boast! Here is something which will bear meditation, and therefore again let us pause, at the bidding of the musician, who inserts a "*Selah.*"

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

20 Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

16. In these last verses the Psalmist becomes a preacher, and gives admonitory lessons which he has himself gathered from experience. "*Be not thou afraid when one is made rich.*" Let it not give thee any concern to see the godless prosper. Raise no questions as to divine justice; suffer no foreboding to cloud thy mind. Temporal prosperity is too small a matter to be worth fretting about; let the dogs have their bones, and the swine their draff. "*When the glory of his house is increased.*" Though the sinner and his family are in great esteem, and stand exceedingly high, never mind; all things will be righted in due time. Only those whose judgment is worthless will esteem men the more because their lands are broader; those who are highly estimated for such unreasonable reasons will find their level ere long, when truth and righteousness come to the fore.

17. "*For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away.*" He has but a leasehold of his acres, and death ends his tenure. Through the river of death man must pass naked. Not a rag of all his raiment, not a coin of all his treasure, not a jot of all his honour, can the dying worldling carry with him. Why then fret ourselves about so fleeting a prosperity? "*His glory shall not descend after him.*" As he goes down, down, down for ever, none of his honours or possessions will follow him. Patents of nobility are invalid in the sepulchre. His worship, his honour, his lordship, and his grace, will alike find their titles ridiculous in the tomb. Hell knows no aristocracy. Your dainty and delicate sinners shall find that eternal burnings have no respect for their affectations and refinements.

18. "*Though while he lived he blessed his soul.*" He pronounced himself happy. He had his good things in this life. His chief end and aim were to bless himself. He was charmed with the adulations of flatterers. "*Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*" The generality of men worship success, however it may be gained. The colour of the winning horse is no matter; it is the winner, and that is enough. "*Take care of Number One,*" is the world's proverbial philosophy, and he who gives good heed to it is "a clever fellow," "a fine man of business," "a shrewd common-sense tradesman," "a man with his head put on the right way," Get money, and you will be "respectable," "a substantial man," and your

house will be "an eminent firm in the city," or "one of our best county families." To do good wins fame in heaven, but to do good to *yourself* is the prudent thing among men of the world. Yet not a whisper of worldly congratulation can follow the departing millionaire; they say he died worth a mint of money, but what charm has that fact to the dull cold ear of death? The banker rots as fast as the shoe-black, and the peer becomes as putrid as the pauper. Alas! poor wealth, thou art but the rainbow colouring of the bubble, the tint which yellows the morning mist, but adds no substance to it.

19. "*He shall go to the generation of his fathers.*" Where the former generations lie, the present shall also slumber. The sires beckon to their sons to come to the land of forgetfulness. Mortal fathers beget not immortal children. As our ancestors have departed, so also must we. "*They shall never see light.*" To this upper region the dead worldling shall never return again to possess his estates, and enjoy his dignities. Among the dead he must lie in the thick darkness, where no joy or hope can come to him. Of all his treasures there remains not enough to furnish him one poor candle; the blaze of his glory is out for ever, and not a spark remains to cheer him. How then can we look with fear or envy upon a wretch doomed to such unhappiness?

20. The song ends with the refrain, "*Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*" Understanding differences men from animals, but if they will not follow the highest wisdom, and like beasts find their all in this life, then their end shall be as mean and dishonourable as that of beasts slain in the chase, or killed in the shambles. From the loftiest elevation of worldly honour to the uttermost depth of death is but a step. Saddest of all is the reflection, that though men are like beasts in all the degradation of perishing, yet not in the rest which animal perishing secures, for, alas! it is written, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

So ends the minstrel's lay. Comforting as the theme is to the righteous, it is full of warning to the worldly. Hear ye it, O ye rich and poor. Give ear to it, ye nations of the earth.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Strange it is that two Psalms so near together, as this and the forty-fifth should, and should alone imitate, or be the forerunners of, two works of David's son; this Ecclesiastes, the former—the Canticles.—*J. M. Neale.*

Verse 2.—In this Psalm David, as it were, summons and divides mankind. In the first verse he summons: "*Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.*" In the second verse he divides: "*Both low and high, rich and poor, together.*" The word in the Hebrew for "*high*" is *בְּנֵי אִשׁ*, *bene ish*, sons of *Ish*, and the word for "*low*" is *בְּנֵי אָדָם*, *bene Adam*, sons of *Adam*. If we should translate the text directly, according to the letter, the words must run, *sons of men and sons of men*; for, sons of *Adam* and sons of *Ish* are both translated *sons of men*. Yet when they are set together in a way of opposition, the one signifieth "*low*" and the other "*high*," and so our translators render it according to the sense, not sons of men and sons of men, but "*low*" and "*high*." Junius translates to this sense, though in more words, as well they who are born of mean men, as they who are born of honourable.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"I will incline mine ear to a parable," i.e., I will diligently attend, that I may not sing anything ungracefully; a metaphor taken from musicians who bring their ear close to the harp, that they may ascertain the harmony of the sound.—*Victorinus Bythner.*

Verse 5.—"Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?" Those that are full of years are approaching the nearer to their happiness. They have finished their voyage, and now are in sight of the haven. Nature's provision is spent, her stock is exhausted, and now the

good man doth not so much descend as fall into the grave, and from thence he rises to heaven and eternal bliss. And shall he be disturbed at this? shall he be afraid to be made happy? If I mistake not, this is the meaning of the Psalmist's words. They are generally interpreted concerning *his ways* in general, but they seem to me to refer particularly to the calamity which his old age was incident to: for "*the days of evil*" are old age, and are so called by the wise man (Eccl. xii. 1); and as the "*heel*" is the extreme part of the body, so it is here applied to the last part of man's life, his declining age; and "*iniquity*" (as the word is sometimes used among the Hebrews) signifies here penal evil, and denotes the infirmities and decays of the concluding part of a man's life. So that the true meaning of the Psalmist's words, is this, I will not now in my last days be dejected with fear and trouble of mind, for I am coming towards my happiness, my declining years shall deliver me up to earth, and that shall consign me to everlasting life. This certainly is matter of joy rather than of fear. For this reason I account my last days to be the most eligible part of my whole life.—*John Edwards, D.D.* (1637—1716), in "*Theologia Reformata.*"

Verse 5.—"*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" That is, when my sins or failings in what I have done, come to my remembrance, or are chastened upon me. Every man's heel hath some iniquity: as we shall have some dirt cleaving to our heels while we walk in a dirty world, so there is some dirt, some defilement, upon all our actions, which we may call, *the iniquity of our heel.*—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 5.—"*When the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*" With Bishop Lowth, the celebrated Michaelis, Bishop Hare, and a host of other critics, I decidedly incline to the idea, that עָקַבְתִּי, rendered "*my heels*" is to be regarded as the present participle of the verb עָקַב, *to supplant, to act deceitfully, to deceive, to hold one by the heel, etc., etc.* If this be correct then the proper translation will be:—

Wherefore should I fear in the days of adversity,
The iniquity of my supplanters who surround me?

The Syriac and Arabic read, as does also Dr. Kennicott:—

Why should I fear in the evil day,
When the iniquity of my enemies compasses me about?

John Morison.

Verses 5—9.

Why should I fear the evil hour,
When ruthless foes in ambush lie,
Who revel in their pride of power,
And on their hoarded wealth rely?

A brother's ransom who can pay,
Or alter God's eternal doom?
What hand can wrest from death his prey,
Its banquet from the rotting tomb?

From "*The Psalter, or Psalms of David, in English verse.* By a Member of the University of Cambridge." [*Benjamin Hall Kennedy, D.D.*] 1860.

Verse 6.—"*They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.*" Here we have the rich man trusting and boasting; surely that is very confident trusting which issues itself into boasting! That man is ascended to the highest step of faith in God, who makes his boast of God; such faith have they in fine gold who boast in it.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 6.—"*They that trust in their wealth.*" "*THE COVETOUS MAN'S SOLILOQUY.*" Believe me, the times are hard and dangerous; charity is grown cold, and friends uncomfortable; an empty purse is full of sorrow, and hollow bags make a heavy heart. Poverty is a civil pestilence, which frights away both friends and kindred and leaves us to a "*Lord have mercy upon us.*" It is a sickness very catching and infectious, and more commonly abhorred than cured. The best antidote against it is Angelica and providence, and the best cordial is *aurum potable*. Gold-taking fasting is an approved sovereign. Debts are ill humours, and turn at last to dangerous obstructions. Lending is a mere consumption of the radical humour, which, if consumed, brings a patient to nothing. Let others trust to courtiers' promises, to friends' performances, to princes' favours; give me a toy

called gold, give me a thing called money. O blessed Mammon, how extremely sweet is thy all-commanding presence to my thriving soul! In banishment thou art my dear companion; in captivity thou art my precious ransom; in trouble and vexation thou art my dainty rest; in sickness thou art my health; in grief my only joy; in all extremity my only trust. Virtue must veil to thee; nay, grace itself, not relished with thy sweetness, would even displease the righteous palates of the sons of men. Come, then, my soul, advise, contrive, project; go, compass sea and land; leave no exploit untried, no path untrod, no time unspent; afford thine eyes no sleep, thy head no rest; neglect thy ravenous belly, unclot the thy back; deceive, betray, swear, and forswear, to compass such a friend. If thou be base in birth, it will make thee honourable; if weak in power, it will make thee formidable. Are thy friends few? It will make them numerous. Is thy cause bad? It will gain thee advocates. True, wisdom is an excellent help, in case it bend this way; and learning is a genteel ornament, if not too chargeable: yet, by your leave, they are but estates for the term of life: but everlasting gold, if well advantaged, will not only bless thy days, but thy surviving children from generation to generation. Come, come, let others fill their brains with dear-bought wit, turn their pence into expensful charity, and store their bosoms with unprofitable piety; let them lose all to save their imaginary consciences, and beggar themselves at home to be thought honest abroad: fill thou thy bags and barns, and lay up for many years, and take thy rest.—*Francis Quarles, in "The Covetous Man's Care."*

Verse 6.—The form of money agreeth well with the condition of it; for it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run from a man. Fire, thieves, waters, and infinite causes there are of consuming riches, and impoverishing their possessors, though they have even millions and mountains of gold; but suppose that contrary to their nature they stay by a man, yet cannot *he* stay by them, but must leave them in spite of his teeth, as the Psalmist saith (xlix. 17), "The rich man shall take away nothing when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow after him." Thus death makes a violent divorce between the rich man and his goods, when it is said unto him, "Thou fool, this night shall they take away thy soul." The rich man sleeps (saith Job very elegantly), and when he openeth his eyes there is nothing. It fares with a rich man at his death, as it doth with a sleeping man when he wakes out of his dream. A man that dreams of the finding or fruition of some rich booty is wonderful glad, yet when he awaketh he findeth nothing, but seeth it was only a dream, and he is sorry; so the rich man seemed in the time of his life to have somewhat, but at the day of his death all vanisheth like the idea of a dream, and it vexeth him.—*J. D., in "The Threefold Resolutions," 1608.*

Verse 6.—Who knocks more boldly at heaven-gate to be let in than they whom Christ will reject as workers of iniquity? Oh, what delusion is this! Caligula never made himself more ridiculous than when he would be honoured as a god, while he lived more like a devil. Before you would have others take you for Christians, for God's sake prove yourselves men and not beasts, as you do by your brutish lives. Talk not of your hopes of salvation so long as the marks of damnation are seen upon your flagitious lives. If the way to heaven were thus easy, I promise you the saints in all ages have been much overseen, to take so great pains in mortifying their lusts, in denying to satisfy their sensual appetite. To what purpose did they make so much waste of their sweat in their zealous serving God? and of their tears that they could serve him no better, if they might have gone to heaven as these men hope to do? That friar was far more sound in his judgment in this point, who, preaching at Rome one Lent, when some cardinals and many other great ones were present, began his sermon thus abruptly and ironically. Saint Peter was a fool, Saint Paul was a fool, and all the primitive Christians were fools; for they thought the way to heaven was by prayers and tears, watchings and fastings, severities of mortification, and denying the pomp and glory of this world; whereas you here in Rome spend your time in balls and masks, live in pomp, and pride, lust and luxury, and yet count yourselves good Christians, and hope to be saved; but at last you will prove the fools, and they will be found to have been the wise men.—*William Gurnall's Funeral Sermon for Lady Mary Vere, 1671.*

Verses 6—10.—David speaks of some "that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches." Rich men can do great things, but here is a thing that they cannot do: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." From what cannot a rich man redeem his brother? It is true of spiritual redemption; yea, that is furthest out of the rich man's reach

money will not do it: "We are not redeemed with corrupt things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God." 1 Peter i. 18, 19. But the Psalmist speaks of a lower redemption, to which all the riches of man cannot reach: "*None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:*" "*for the redemption of their soul* (that is, of their person from the grave), *is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*" And that he speaks of their redemption from the grave is more clearly expressed at the ninth verse: "*That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.*" Jesus Christ did not so redeem us that we should live for ever, and not see corruption. It was the privilege of Jesus Christ the Redeemer not to see corruption; but Jesus Christ hath not redeemed us that we should not see corruption. He hath redeemed us that we should live for ever in heaven, but he hath not redeemed us from corruption, that we should live for ever on earth, or not see corruption in the grave; for, as it is said in the tenth verse of the Psalm, we see "*that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish and leave their wealth to others;*" as if he had said, Neither the one nor the other sort of men could make this use or improvement of their wealth, to deliver themselves from going to the grave, for if they could they would have laid all out on that purchase; but they could not do it, therefore, "*they leave their wealth to others.*"—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 7.—"*Note of them can by any means redeem his brother,*" etc. Some animals devoted to God could be redeemed at a price, but no price could be assigned to the ransom of a soul. That such a ransom was to be provided, the faith of the church had always anticipated: "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Psalm cxxx. 8.—W. Wilson, D.D.

Verse 8.—"*For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*" In this judgment tears will not prevail, prayers will not be heard, promises will not be admitted, repentance will be too late, and as for riches, honourable titles, sceptres and diadems, these will profit much less, and the inquisition shall be so curious and diligent, that not one light thought, not one idle word (not repented of in thy life past) shall be forgotten, for truth itself hath said, not in jest, but in earnest, of every idle word which men have spoken, they shall give an account in the day of judgment. Oh, how many which now sin with great delight, yea, even with greediness (as if we served a god of wood or of stone which seeth nothing nor can do nothing) will be then astonished, ashamed, and silent. Then shall the days of thy mirth be ended, and thou shalt be overwhelmed with everlasting darkness, and in stead of thy pleasures thou shalt have everlasting torments.—Thomas Tymme.

Verse 8.—"*For it cost more to redeem their souls: so that he must let that alone for ever.*"—Prayer-book Version.

Verse 8.—"*It ceaseth for ever.*" That is, wealth for ever comes short of the power necessary to accomplish this. It has always been insufficient; it always will be. There is no hope that it ever will be sufficient, that by any increase in the amount, or by any change in the conditions of the bargain, property or riches can avail for this. The whole matter is perfectly *hopeless* as to the power of wealth in saving one human being from the grave. It must always *fail* in saving a man from death. The word rendered *ceaseth*—*כָּחַל*, *khadal*, means to leave off, to desist, to fail. Gen. xi. 8; Ex. ix. 34; Isa. ii. 22.—Albert Barnes.

Verse 11.—"*Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever.*" This is the interpretation of our actions, when we do not make God our portion, but trust in the abundance of our riches; this is our "*inward thought,*" the saying of our heart, Ye are my god. We do in effect say, Thou art my confidence, my hope, and my joy, and will stand by me when all things cease and fail, and wilt not suffer me to want, or to be wrong, as long as thou lastest: these are the secret speeches of our hearts. Christians! many may (orator like), declaim against the vanity of the creature, and speak as basely of money as others do, and say, We know it is but a little refined earth; but their hearts close with it, they are loth to part with it for God's sake, or upon God's declared will. As he that speaketh good words of God, is not said to trust in God; so speaking bad words of worldly riches doth not exempt us from trusting them. There is a difference between declaiming as an orator, and acting like a Christian.—Thomas Manton.

Verse 11.—"*Their inward thought.*" If good thoughts be thy deep thoughts,

if, as we say, the best at the bottom, thy thoughts are then right, and thou art righteous; for as the deep thoughts of worldlings are worldly thoughts, and the deep thoughts of wicked men are wicked thoughts, so the deep thoughts of good men are good thoughts. 'Tis a notable observation of the Holy Ghost's concerning worldly men, that "*their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever,*" etc. Why? is there any thought that is not an *inward* thought? No, but the meaning is, though they have some floating thoughts of their mortality, and the vanity and transitoriness of all worldly things, swimming, as it were, on the top; yet they do not suffer such thoughts *to sink into their hearts*, or to go to the bottom; but the thoughts that lodge there are such as his, who is said by our Saviour to have thought within himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Luke xii. 19. Note the phrase, "he thought within himself." There are other kinds of thoughts that sometimes knock at the door of the worldling's heart, nay, sometimes look in at his windows, as Paul's sermon began to press in upon Felix his heart, and to set him a-trembling; but there are other *thoughts within*, which if they cannot keep good thoughts quite out, they will keep them off from making any due or deep impression upon the heart. Now, these thoughts that nestle themselves as it were at the very heart-roots, to keep others out from reaching thither, these *deep thoughts* are they which the Scriptures call the "*inward thoughts,*" according to that of the Psalmist (Psalm lxi. 6), "The inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep."—*Faithful Test in "Right Thoughts the Righteous man's Evidence,"* 1666.

Verse 11.—"*They call their lands after their own names.*" God makes fools of them, for how few have you that go beyond the third generation? How few houses have you that the child or the grandchild can say, "This was my grandfather's, and my great grandfather's"? How few houses have you that those that are now in them can say, "My ancestor dwelt here, and these were his lands"? Go over a whole country, few can say so. Men when they build, together with building in the earth, they build castles in the air; they have conceits. Now I build for my child, and for my child's child. God crosses them. Either they have no posterity, or by a thousand things that fall out in the world, it falls out otherwise. The time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away; that is, the buildings pass away, the owning passeth away, all things here pass away; and, therefore, buy as if you possessed not, buy, so as we neglect not the best possession in heaven, and so possess these things, as being not possessed and commanded of them.—*Richard Sibbes.*

Verse 11.—Mr. A. was a wealthy farmer in Massachusetts, about sixty years of age, and it had been his ruling, and almost only passion in life to acquire property. His neighbour B. owned a small farm, which came too near the centre of A.'s extended domain, was quite a blot in his prospect, destroyed the regularity of his lands, and on the whole it was really necessary, in his opinion, that he should add it to his other property. B. became embarrassed, and was sued; judgments were obtained, and executions issued. A. now thought he should obtain the land, but one execution after another was arranged, and finally the debt was paid off without selling the land. When A. heard of the payment of the last execution, which put an end to his hopes of obtaining the land, he exclaimed, "Well, B. is an old man, and cannot live long, and when he dies I can buy the lot." B. was fifty-eight, A. was sixty! Reader, do you ever expect to die?—*K. Arvine's Cyclopædia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes.*

Verse 11.—I have purchased, saith one, such lands, and I have got so good a title to them, that certainly they will remain mine and my heirs for ever; never considering how all things here below are subject to ebbings and flowings, to turns and vicissitudes every day.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 11.—The fleeting nature of all earthly possessions is well illustrated in the life of William Beckford, and the unenduring character of gorgeous fabrics in the ruin of his famous Babel, Fonthill Abbey. Byron sang of Beckford's palace in Spain, in language most applicable to Fonthill:—

"There, too, thou Vathek! England's wealthiest son—
Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.
Here didst thou dwell; here schemes of pleasure plan,
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow.

But now, as if a thing unblest by man,
 Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou !
 Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow,
 To halls deserted, portals gaping wide ;
 Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
 Vain are the pleasures on earth supplied,
 Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide !”

C. H. S.

Verses 11, 12.—“ *They call their GROUNDS after their names. But the GROUNDLING, in the midst of splendour, endureth not.*” In verse 11, we have אַרְצוֹת, “*grounds.*” In verse 12, it is אַרְצוֹל, “*groundling,*” with a designed iteration and play upon the word ; for want of an attention to which the passage has not been fully understood.—*John Mason Good.*

Verse 12.—“ *Man being in honour abideth not.*” The rabbins read it thus : “*Adam being in honour, lodged not one night.*” The Hebrew word for *abide* signifies “*to stay or lodge all night.*” Adam, then, it seems, did not take up one night’s lodging in Paradise.—*Thomas Watson’s Body of Divinity.*

Verse 13.—“ *This their way is their folly : yet their posterity approve their sayings.*” Master Baxter speaks very well of this in his “*Saints’ Everlasting Rest,*” which is a very choice book. The gentry teach their children to follow pleasure, and the commonalty their children to follow profit, and young ones are ready to follow old ones. “*This their way is their folly.*” The very heathen condemn this, and yet Christians mind it not. Crates the philosopher said, that if possibly he might, he would willingly mount to the highest place of the city, and there cry aloud in this manner, “*What mean you, my masters, and whither run you headlong ? carking and caring all that ever you can, to gather goods and make riches as you do, whiles in the meantime you make little or no reckoning at all of your children, unto whom you are to leave all your riches ? Do not most care more for the wealth of their children’s outward man, than for the health of their inward man ?*”—*J. Volier’s Survey of Effectual Calling, 1652.*

Verse 13.—“ *This their way is their folly.*” The folly of man seldom appears more than in being very busy about nothing, in making a great cry where there is little wool ; like that empty fellow that showed himself to Alexander—having spent much time, and taken much pains at it beforehand—and boasted that he could throw a pea through a little hole, expecting a great reward ; but the king gave him only a bushel of peas, for a recompense suitable to his diligent negligence, or his busy idleness. Things that are vain and empty are unworthy of our care and industry. The man that by hard labour and hazard of his life did climb up to the top of the steeple to set an egg on end, was deservedly the object of pity and laughter. We shall think him little better than mad that should make as great a fire for the roasting of an egg as for the roasting of an ox.—*George Swinnoek.*

Verse 13.—“ *Their folly : yet their posterity approve.*” Dr. Leifchild, in his ‘*Remarkable Facts,*’ records the following incident, of a person of property, who had been accustomed regularly to attend his ministry, but who had always manifested a covetous disposition : “*I was sent for to offer to him the consolation of religion as he lay upon his dying bed. What was my surprise, after having conversed and prayed with him, to find that he was unwilling to take my hand, muttering that he knew that he had not done what was right in reference to the support and furtherance of religion, but intended to amend in that respect. He then requested me to say what I thought would become of him. How could I reply, but by exhorting him to repent, and reinquishing all further thoughts of a worldly nature, to betake himself to the sacrifice and mediation of the Son of God for pardon, safety, and salvation in that world which he was to all appearance soon about to enter ? He gazed at me with a look of disappointment. Upon a hint being given me to inquire into his thoughts at that moment, I questioned him very pointedly, and to my astonishment and horror, he reluctantly disclosed to me the fact that, while thus seemingly about to breathe his last, his hands were under the bed clothes grasping the keys of his cabinet and treasures, lest they should be taken from him ! Soon after, he departed this life, and there was, alas ! reason to fear that, together with his property, he had transmitted somewhat of his fatal passion to those who survived him. It was distressing to me to reflect that a hearer of mine should quit this world with his fingers stiffened in death around the keys of his treasures. How strong, how terrible, was the ruling passion in the death of this man !”*

Verse 13.—“*Setah.*” See “*Treasury of David,*” Vol. I., pp. 23, 26, 27; and Vol. II., pp. 224—227.

Verse 14.—“*Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling,*” or as we put in the margin, “*The grave being an habitation to every one of them, shall consume their beauty.*” Some may object, Is not this true of godly men too? are not they thus handled by death and the grave? doth not death feed on them? and doth not the grave consume their beauty? I answer, Though it doth, yet it hath not to feed upon, nor consume them, as it feeds upon and consumes wicked men. For the Psalmist speaks here of death as it were triumphing over the wicked, whereas the godly triumph over death. For, first, he saith, The wicked are *laid in the grave like sheep*: they lived like *wolves or lions*, but they are laid in the grave like *sheep*. If it be asked, Why like *sheep*? I answer, not for the innocency of their lives, but for their impotency in death; as if it had been said, when once death took them in hand to lay them in the grave, they could make no more resistance than a sheep can against a lion or a wolf. And when death hath thus laid them in the grave, then secondly, saith the Psalmist, “*Death shall feed on them,*” as a lion doth upon a sheep, or any wild beast upon his prey, which is a further degree of death’s triumph over the wicked. And, thirdly, “*Their beauty shall consume in the grave,*” that is, all their bodily and natural beauty (and this is all the beauty which they have) shall consume in the grave, whereas the godly have a beauty (and they count it their only beauty) which the grave cannot consume, and that is the beauty of their graces, the beauty of holiness, the spiritual beauty of the inner man, yea, and the spiritual beauty of their outward holy actions shall not consume in the grave; for, “*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*” Rev. xiv. 13.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 14.—“*Death shall feed on them:*” rather, “*Death shall be their shepherd.*” (*Sept.*) At the end of the foregoing Psalm, the Psalmist had said in the name of his people, that “*God is our God, for ever and ever; he will lead us as a shepherd over death,*” and here he takes up the same pastoral figure, and contrasts with their case the case of the proud and prosperous worldly men, who trust in their earthly riches and power. *They will not be led in safety, under the pastoral care of God, over death.* No; *death itself will be their Shepherd, and the grave will be their sheep-fold; where they will be laid together like asheep in a pen.* As Augustine says, “*Death is the shepherd of the infidel. Life (i.e., Christ) is the Shepherd of the faithful.*” “*In inferno sunt oves quibus pastor Mors est; in cælo sunt oves quibus pastor Vita est.*” And so Keble—

Even as a flock arrayed are they
For the dark grave; Death guides their way,
Death is their Shepherd now.

Christopher Wordsworth.

Verse 14.—“*In the morning,*” that is, saith Dathe, in the *time of judgment.* He thinks there is here an allusion to the usual time of holding courts of justice, which was in the morning. See Psalms lxxiii. 14, and ci. 8; and Jer. xxi. 12.—*Editorial note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 14.—“*Their beauty shall consume in the grave.*” And now if we do but consider a little of the tombs and sepulchres of princes and noblemen, whose glory and majesty we have seen when they lived here on earth, and do behold the horrible forms and shapes which they now have, shall we not cry out as men amazed, Is this that glory? Is this that highness and excellency? Whither now are the degrees of their waiting servants gone? Where are their ornaments and jewels? Where is their pomp, their delicacy and niceness? All these things are vanished away like the smoke, and there is now nothing left but dust, horror, and stink. The soul being dissolved, there lieth upon the ground not a human body, but a dead carcase without life, without sense, without strength, and so fearful to look upon, that the sight thereof may hardly be endured. To be sure, it is a little better (as touching the substance) than the body of a horse, or a dog, which lieth dead in the fields, and all that pass by stop their noses and make haste away, that they be not annoyed with the sight and stink thereof. Such is man’s body now become; yea, and though it were the body of a monarch, emperor, or a king. Where is

that majesty, that excellency, that authority which he had aforetime when all men trembled to behold it, and might not come in presence thereof without all reverence and obeisance? what are all those things become? were they a dream or shadow? After those things the funeral is prepared, the which is all that men can carry with them, of all their riches and kingdom, and this also they should not have, if in their lifetime they did not appoint it for their dignity and honour. For the prophet David saith truly (verse 16), "*Be not thou afraid though one be made rich, or, if the glory of his house be increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away with him, neither shall his pomp follow him.*"—*Thomas Tymme.*

Verse 14.—When we look to a charnel-house, and take a view of the grave, what amazing and dismal scenes present themselves! How many great and important images appear! Distracting horrors strike our imagination, and hideous sounds of diseases, destruction, and death, with all their woful and black train, terrify us. Ah! the melancholy confused heap of the ruins of mankind, what a terrible carnage is made of the human race! and what a solemn and awful theatre of mortality, covered with the disordered remains of our fellow creatures, presents itself to our minds! There lie the bones of a proud monarch, who fancied himself a little god, mingled with the ashes of his poorest subjects! Death seized him in the height of his vanity, he was just returning from a conquest, and his haughty mind was swelled with his power and greatness, when one of these fatal arrows pierced his heart, and at once finished all his perishing thoughts and contrivances, then the dream of glory vanished, and all his empire was confined to the grave. Look how pale that victorious general appears, how dead, and cold, and lifeless these arms that were once accustomed to war; see if you can discern any difference betwixt his dust and that of the most despicable slave. Yonder, a numerous army, once fierce and resolute, whose conquests were rapid as lightning, and made all the nations to shake for fear of them, are now so weak that they lie a prey, exposed to the meanest animals, the loathsome worms, who crawl in triumph over them, and insult their decayed ruins. There a body that was so much doted on, and solicitously cared for, and the beauty and shape whereof were so foolishly admired, now noisome and rotten, nothing but vermin are now fond of it, so affecting a change hath death made upon it. Look, next to this, upon the inglorious ashes of a rich, covetous wretch, whose soul was glued to this world, and hugged itself in its treasures; with what mighty throes and convulsions did death tear him from this earth? How did his hands cling to his gold! with what vehement desires did he fasten on his silver, all of them weak and fruitless! Look now if riches saved him in that day, if you can perceive any of his useless treasures lying beside him in the grave, or if the glory of his house have descended after him! Yonder, an ambitious statesman, his rotten bones are scarce to be discerned: how did he applaud his artful schemes! how securely did he think them laid, and flattered himself with the hopes of an established greatness! but death stepped in, blew them all up at once; this grave is the whole result of his counsels. And lo, there, what horrid and suffocating stink ascends from these many hellish sacrifices of lust and impurity, who wasted their strength in debauch, and carried down with them nothing but the shame of beastly pleasures to the grave. But there is no end to the corpses, nor can we survey this terrible field of death's conquests.—*William Dunlop.*

Verse 15 (last clause).—"For he shall take me." This short half-verse is, as Böttcher remarks, the more weighty, from its very shortness. The same expression occurs again, lxxiii. 24, "Thou shalt take me," the original of both being Gen. v. 24, where it is used of the translation of Enoch, "He was not, for God took him."—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 17.—"*For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away.*" The form of money agrees well with the condition of it; it is stamped round, because it is so apt to run away. Could we be rich so long as we live, yet that were uncertain enough, for life itself is but a dream, a shadow, but a dream of a shadow. (Augustine.) Rich men are but like hailstones; they make a noise in the world, as the other rattle on the tiles of a house; down they fall, lie still, and melt away. So that if riches could stay by a man, yet he cannot stay by them. Spite of his teeth, *he shall carry away nothing when he dies.* Life and goods are both in a vessel, both cast away at once; yea, of the two, life hath the more likelihood of continuance. Let it fly never so fast away, riches have eagles' wings, and will outfly it. There

be thieves in the highways, that will take our moneys and spare our lives. In our penal laws, there be not so many ways to forfeit our lives as our goods. Rich Job lived to see himself poor to a proverb. How many in this city reputed rich, yet have broken for thousands ! There are innumerable ways to be poor ; a fire, a thief, a false servant, suretyship, trusting of bad customers, an unfaithful factor, a pirate, an unskilful pilot, hath brought rich men to poverty. One gale of wind is able to make merchants rich or beggars. Man's life is like the banks of a river, his temporal estate is the stream : time will moulder away the banks, but the stream stays not for that, it glides away continually. Life is the tree, riches are the fruit, or rather the leaves ; the leaves will fall, the fruit is plucked, and yet the tree stands. Some write of the pine tree, that if the bark be pulled off, it lasts long ; being on, it rots. If the worldling's bark were stripped off, he might perhaps live the longer, there is great hope he would live the better,—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 17.—“ *He shall carry nothing away.*” It is with us in this world, as it was in the Jewish fields and vineyards : *pluck and eat* they might what they would while they were there ; but they might not pocket or put up ought to carry with them. Deut. xxiii. 24.—*Thomas Gataker.*

Verse 17.—“ *He shall carry nothing away.*” “ He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again : God shall cast them out of his belly.” Job xx. 15.

Verse 17.—“ *Descends.*” Death takes the sinner by the throat, and “ hauls him down stairs to the grave.” The indulgence in any sinful propensity has this downward, deathly tendency. Every lust, whether for riches or honours, for gambling, wine, or women, leads the deluded, wretched votary step by step to the chambers of death. There is no hope in the dread prospect ; trouble and anguish possess the spirit. Hast thou escaped, O my soul, from the net of the infernal fowler ? Never forget that it is as a brand *snatched* from the burning. Oh to grace how great a debtor !—*George Offor's note in “ The Works of John Bunyan.”*

Verse 17.—

You will carry none of your riches, fool, to the waters of Acheron.
You will be ferried over quite naked in the infernal boat.

Propertius.

Verse 18.—How foolish is it to account thyself a better man than another, only because thy dunghill is a little bigger than his ! These things are not at all to be reckoned into the value and worth of a man : they are all without thee, and concern thee no more than fine clothes do the health or strength of the body. It is wealth indeed, that makes all the noise and bustle in the world, and challengeth all the respect and honour to itself ; and the ignorant vulgar, whose eyes are dazzled with pomp and bravery, pay it with a stupid and astonished reverence. Yet know, that it is but thy silks and velvet, thy lands, or thy retinue and servants, they venerate, not thee : and if thou thinkest otherwise, thou art as justly ridiculous as that ass in the apologue that grew very gravely proud, and took state, when the people fell prostrate before him, adoring, not him, but the idol he carried.—*Ezekiel Hopkins.*

Verse 20.—“ *Like the beasts that perish.*” My lords, it is no wonder at all, if men that affect beastly pleasures, and dote upon perishing honours, become “ *like the beasts that perish.*” It is no miracle if he that lives like a beast dies like a beast. Take a man that hath lived like the fool in the gospel, and tell me, what hath this man done for his immortal soul more than a beast doth for its perishing soul ? Soul, cease from care, eat, drink, and take thine ease : this is the constant ditty of most men in honour : they have studied clothes and victuals, titles and offices, ways of gain and pleasure. Am I not yet at highest ? They have, it may be, studied the black art of flattery and treachery ; they understand the humour of the times, the compliances and dependences of this and the other statesman, the projects of divers princes abroad, and the main design here at home. Is this all ? Why then, be it known unto you, that the men of this strain have made no better provision for their precious souls, than if they had the soul, the vanishing soul of a beast within them ; and certainly, if we were to judge of the substance of men's souls by their unworthy and sensual conversation, we might easily fall into that heresy, that dangerous dream of some who conceive that their souls are mortal.—*Francis Cheynell, in a Sermon entitled, “ The Man of Honour,” . . . preached before the Lords of Parliament, 1645.*

Verse 20.—"Like the beasts that perish." Sin is both *formaliter* and *effective* vile. As it is so in itself, so it has made man vile. No creature so debased as man, being in this respect become viler than any creature. There is no such depravation in the nature of any creature, except in the diabolical nature. No creature ever razed God's image out of its nature, but only man. There is no aversion to the will of God, no inclination to what offends him, in any creature on earth but man. Man, then, who was once the glory of the creation, is become the vilest of all creatures, for that is vilest which is most contrary to the infinite glory, but so is our nature, "Man being in honour, abideth not," is now "like the beasts that perish;" nay, worse than they, if the greatest evil can make him worse. Man was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory, advanced to be lord and governor of all the works of his hands; and all creatures in this world were put under his feet. Psalm viii. 5, 6. But by this natural corruption he that was but a little lower than angels is now something below the beasts. He was to have dominion, but is made baser than those over whom he rules. They were put under his feet, but now he is as low as they. This is the sad issue of natural corruption.—*David Clarkson.*

Verse 20.—"Like the beasts." Man is so much a beast, that he cannot know himself to be one till God teach him. And we never learn to be men till we have learned that we were beasts. . . . It is not said he is like this or that beast, but "he is like the beasts that perish." Take any beast, or all beasts, the worst of beasts, he is the picture of them all, and he daily exemplifies the vilest of their qualities in his own.—*Joseph Caryl.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 2.—I. The common needs of rich and poor men. II. The common privileges of rich and poor saints. III. Their common service. IV. Their common heaven.

Verse 3.—The deep things of God are intended, I. To exercise our minds to understand them. II. To try our faith by believing them—"incline" implies a submissive mind. III. To excite our joy as we grasp them—"upon the harp." IV. To employ our faculties in explaining them to others.

Verse 5.—I. The effects of our sin remain, 1. In ourselves. 2. In others. II. In a time of conviction they "*compass us about*:" better to do so in this life, than to haunt us as ghosts for ever. III. When they are pardoned we have nothing to fear.—*G. R.*

Verse 7.—1. *Implied.* The soul needs redeeming. 2. *Denied.* Wealth, power, learning, none can redeem. 3. *Supplied*—a ransom by Jesus. 4. *Applied*—by the Spirit to our actual deliverance.

Verse 12 (last clause).—Wherein the ungodly are like beasts, and wherein different.

Verse 12.—Here is a twofold thwarting or crossing of the purposes of the ungodly worldling. I. The first is, *he shall not be that which he ever wished to be*: he shall not continue in honour. II. The other is this, *he shall be that which he never desired to be*: he shall be like the beasts that die. He shall miss of that which he sought for, and he shall have that which he looked not for.—*S. Hieron.*

Verse 14.—In proportion to the prosperity of the ungodly here, will be their misery hereafter: as sheep from the fat pasture led to the slaughter-house. II. In proportion to their luxury here, will be their corruption hereafter—"Death shall feed on them:" they have become well fed for death to feed on them. III. In proportion to their dignity here, will be their degradation hereafter—"The upright shall have," etc. Oh, what a contrast between the rich man and Lazarus then! IV. In proportion to their beauty here, will be their deformity hereafter. "Art, thou become like one of us?"—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—Sheep, how far they image the wicked.

Verse 14.—"In the morning." See the various Biblical prophecies of what will happen "in the morning."

Verse 15.—1. *Return* to the dust I shall. 2. *Redeem* from the dust he will. 3. *Receive* into heaven he will. 4. *Rejoice* for ever I shall.

Verse 17.—The loaded and unloaded sinner.

Verse 20.—I. Men of spiritual understanding without worldly honour are higher than the angels of God in heaven. II. Men in worldly honour without the true wisdom are worse than the beasts that perish.—*G. R.*