

## PSALM LXI.

**TITLE.**—To the Chief Musician upon Neginah, a Psalm of David.—The original indicates that both the hymns and the musical instrument were David's. He wrote the verses, and himself sang them to the stringed instrument whose sound he loved so well. We have left the Psalms entitled Michtam, but we shall still find much precious meaning though the golden name be wanting. We have met with the title of this Psalm before, in Psalms IV., VI., LIV., and LV., but with this difference, that in the present case the word is in the singular number: the Psalm itself is very personal, and well adapted for the private devotion of a single individual.

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.**—This Psalm is a pearl. It is little, but precious. To many a mourner it has furnished utterance when the mind could not have devised speech for itself. It was evidently composed by David after he had come to the throne—see verse 6. The second verse leads us to believe that it was written during the Psalmist's enforced exile from the tabernacle, which was the visible abode of God: if so, the period of Absalom's rebellion has been most suitably suggested as the date of its authorship, and Delitzsch is correct in entitling it, "Prayer and thanksgiving of an expelled King on his way back to his throne."

We might divide the verses according to the sense, but it is preferable to follow the author's own arrangement, and make a break at each SELAH.

### EXPOSITION.

**H**EAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.

3. For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

1. "Hear my cry, O God." He was in terrible earnest; he shouted, he lifted up his voice on high. He is not however content with the expression of his need: to give his sorrows vent is not enough for him, he wants actual audience of heaven, and manifest succour as the result. Pharisees may rest in their prayers; true believers are eager for an answer to them: ritualists may be satisfied when they have "said or sung" their litanies and collects, but living children of God will never rest till their supplications have entered the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. "Attend unto my prayer." Give it thy consideration, and such an answer as thy wisdom sees fit. When it comes to crying with us, we need not doubt but that it will come to attending with God. Our heavenly Father is not hardened against the cries of his own children. What a consoling thought it is that the Lord at all times hears his people's cries, and is never forgetful of their prayers; whatever else fails to move him, praying breath is never spent in vain!

2. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee." He was banished from the spot which was the centre of his delight, and at the same time his mind was in a depressed and melancholy condition; both actually and figuratively he was an outcast, yet he does not therefore restrain prayer, but rather finds therein a reason for the louder and more importunate cries. To be absent from the place of divine worship was a sore sorrow to saints in the olden times; they looked upon the tabernacle as the centre of the world, and they counted themselves to be at the fag-end of the universe when they could no longer resort to the sacred shrine; their heart was heavy as in a strange land when they were banished from its solemnities. Yet even they knew right well that no place is unsuitable for prayer. There may be an end of the earth, but there must not be an end to devotion. On creation's verge we may call upon God, for even there he is within call. No spot

is too dreary, no condition too deplorable; whether it be the world's end or life's end, prayer is equally available. To pray in some circumstances needs resolve, and the Psalmist here expresses it, "*I will cry.*" It was a wise resolution, for had he ceased to pray he would have become the victim of despair; there is an end to a man when he makes an end to prayer. Observe that David never dreamed of seeking any other God; he did not imagine the dominion of Jehovah to be local: he was at the end of the promised land, but he knew himself to be still in the territory of the Great King; to him only does he address his petitions. "*When my heart is overwhelmed:*"—when the huge waves of trouble wash over me, and I am completely submerged, not only as to my head, but also my heart. It is hard to pray when the very heart is drowning, yet gracious men plead best at such times. Tribulation brings us to God, and brings God to us. Faith's greatest triumphs are achieved in her heaviest trials. It is all over with me, affliction is all over me; it encompasses me as a cloud, it swallows me up like a sea, it shuts me in with thick darkness, yet God is near, near enough to hear my voice, and I will call him. Is not this brave talk? Mark how our Psalmist tells the Lord, as if he knew he were hearing him, that he intended to call upon him: our prayer by reason of our distress may be like to a call upon a far-off friend, but our inmost faith has its quiet heart-whispers to the Lord as to one who is assuredly our very present help.

"*Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*" I see thee to be my refuge, sure and strong; but alas! I am confused, and cannot find thee; I am weak, and cannot climb thee. Thou art so steadfast, guide me; thou art so high, uplift me. There is a mine of meaning in this brief prayer. Along the iron-bound coast of our northern shores, lives are lost because the rocks are inaccessible to the shipwrecked mariner. A clergyman of one of the coast villages has with immense labour cut steps up from the beach to a large chamber, which he has excavated in the chalk cliff: here many mariners have been saved; they have climbed the rock, which had else been too high for them, and they have escaped. We have heard of late, however, that the steps have been worn away by the storms, and that poor sailors have perished miserably within sight of the refuge which they could not reach, for it was too high for them: it is therefore proposed to drive in iron stanchions, and to hang up chain ladders that shipwrecked mariners may reach the chambers in the rock. The illustration is self-interpreting. Our experience leads us to understand this verse right well, for the time was with us when we were in such amazement of soul by reason of sin, that although we knew the Lord Jesus to be a sure salvation for sinners, yet we could not come at him, by reason of our many doubts and forebodings. A Saviour would have been of no use to us if the Holy Spirit had not gently led us to him, and enabled us to rest upon him. To this day we often feel that we not only want a rock, but to be led to it. With this in view we treat very leniently the half-unbelieving prayers of awakened souls; for in their bewildered state we cannot expect from them all at once a fully believing cry. A seeking soul should at once believe in Jesus, but it is legitimate for a man to ask to be led to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is able to effect such a leading, and he can do it even though the heart be on the borders of despair.

How infinitely higher than we are is the salvation of God. We are low and grovelling, but it towers like some tall cliff far above us. This is its glory, and is our delight when we have once climbed into the rock, and claimed an interest in it; but while we are as yet trembling seekers, the glory and sublimity of salvation appal us, and we feel that we are too unworthy even to be partakers of it; hence we are led to cry for grace upon grace, and to see how dependent we are for everything, not only for the Saviour, but for the power to believe on him.

3. "*For thou hast been a shelter for me.*" Observe how the Psalmist rings the changes on, "*Thou hast,*" and "*I will,*"—verses 3, 4, 5, and 6. Experience is the nurse of faith. From the past we gather arguments for present confidence. Many and many a time had the persecutions of Saul and the perils of battle imperilled David's life, and only by miracle had he escaped, yet was he still alive and unhurt; this he remembers, and he is full of hope. "*And a strong tower from the enemy.*" As in a fort impregnable, David had dwelt, because surrounded by omnipotence. Sweet is it beyond expression to remember the lovingkindnesses of the Lord in our former days, for he is unchangeable, and therefore will continue to guard us from all evil.

4. "*I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.*" Let me once get back to thy courts, and nothing shall again expel me from them: even now in my banishment my

heart is there ; and ever will I continue to worship thee in spirit wherever my lot may be cast. Perhaps by the word "*tabernacle*" is here meant the dwelling-place of God ; and if so, the sense is, I will dwell with the Lord, enjoying his sacred hospitality, and sure protection.

" There would I find a settled rest,  
While others go and come ;  
No more a stranger, or a guest,  
But like a child at home."

He who communes with God is always at home. The divine omnipresence surrounds such a one consciously ; his faith sees all around him the palace of the King, in which he walks with exulting security and overflowing delight. Happy are the indoor servants who go not out from his presence. Hewers of wood and drawers of water in the tents of Jehovah are more to be envied than the princes who riot in the pavilions of kings. The best of all is that our residence with God is not for a limited period of time, but for ages ; yea, for ages of ages, for time and for eternity : this is our highest and most heavenly privilege, "*I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever.*"

" *I will trust in the covert of thy wings.*" Often does our sweet singer use this figure ; and far better is it to repeat one apt and instructive image, than for the sake of novelty to ransack creation for poor, strained metaphors. The chicks beneath the hen how safe, how comfortable, how happy ! How warm the parent's bosom ! How soft the cherishing feathers ! Divine condescension allows us to appropriate the picture to ourselves, and how blessedly instructive and consoling it is ! O for more trust ; it cannot be too implicit : such a covert invites us to the most unbroken repose. SELAH. Rest we well may when we reach this point. Even the harp may be eloquently silent when deep, profound calm completely fills the bosom, and sorrow has sobbed itself into a peaceful slumber.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows : thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life : *and* his years as many generations.

7 He shall abide before God for ever : O prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

5. "*For thou, O God, hast heard my vows.*" Proofs of divine faithfulness are to be had in remembrance, and to be mentioned to the Lord's honour. The prayer of verse 1 is certain of an answer because of the experience of verse 5, since we deal with an immutable God. "*Vows*" may rightly be joined with prayers when they are lawful, well-considered, and truly for God's glory. It is great mercy on God's part to take any notice of the vows and promises of such faithless and deceitful creatures as we are. What we promise him is his due already, and yet he deigns to accept our vows as if we were not so much his servants as his free suitors who could give or withhold at pleasure. "*Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.*" We are made heirs, joint-heirs with all the saints, partakers of the same portion. With this we ought to be delighted. If we suffer, it is the heritage of the saints ; if we are persecuted, are in poverty, or in temptation, all this is contained in the title-deeds of the heritage of the chosen. Those we are to sup with we may well be content to dine with. We have the same inheritance as the First-born himself ; what better is conceivable ? Saints are described as fearing the name of God ; they are reverent worshippers ; they stand in awe of the Lord's authority ; they are afraid of offending him, they feel their own nothingness in the sight of the Infinite One. To share with such men, to be treated by God with the same favour as he metes out to them, is matter for endless thanksgiving. All the privileges of all the saints are also the privilege of each one.

6. "*Thou wilt prolong the king's life ;*" or, better, "*days to the days of the King thou wilt add.*" Death threatened, but God preserved his beloved. David, considering his many perils, enjoyed a long and prosperous reign. "*And his years as many generations.*" He lived to see generation after generation personally ; in his descendants he lived as king through a very long period ; his dynasty continued

for many generations; and in Christ Jesus, his seed and son, spiritually David reigns on evermore. Thus he who began at the foot of the rock, half drowned, and almost dead, is here led to the summit, and sings as a priest abiding in the tabernacle, a king ruling with God for ever, and a prophet foretelling good things to come. (Verse 7.) See the uplifting power of faith and prayer. None so low but they may yet be set on high.

7. "*He shall abide before God for ever.*" Though this is true of David in a modified sense, we prefer to view the Lord Jesus as here intended as the lineal descendant of David, and the representative of his royal race. Jesus is enthroned before God to eternity; here is our safety, dignity, and delight. We reign in him; in him we are made to sit together in the heavenlies. David's personal claim to sit enthroned for ever is but a foreshadowing of the revealed privilege of all true believers. "*O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.*" As men cry, "*Long live the king,*" so we hail with acclamation our enthroned Immanuel, and cry, "*Let mercy and truth preserve him.*" Eternal love and immutable faithfulness are the bodyguards of Jesus' throne, and they are both the providers and the preservers of all those who in him are made kings and priests unto God. We cannot keep ourselves, and nothing short of divine mercy and truth can do it; but these both can and will, nor shall the least of the people of God be suffered to perish.

8. "*So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever.*" Because my prayer is answered, my song shall be perpetual; because Jesus for ever sits at thy right hand, it shall be acceptable; because I am preserved in him, it shall be grateful. David had given vocal utterance to his prayer by a cry; he will now give expression to his praise by a song: there should be a parallel between our supplications and our thanksgivings. We ought not to leap in prayer, and limp in praise. The vow to celebrate the divine name "*for ever*" is no hyperbolical piece of extravagance, but such as grace and glory shall enable us to carry out to the letter. "*That I may daily perform my vows.*" To God who adds days to our days we will devote all our days. We vowed perpetual praise, and we desire to render it without intermission. We would worship God *de die in diem*, going right on as the days roll on. We ask no vacation from this heavenly vocation; we would make no pause in this sacred service. God daily performs his promises, let us daily perform our vows: he keeps his covenant let us not forget ours. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth, even for evermore.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Title.*—The word *Neginah* (the singular of *Neginoth*) may be understood to be synonymous with the *kinnor* or harp: that is to say, the instrument of eight strings, probably played with a bow or plectrum.—*John Jebb.*

*Verse 1.*—"Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer." Aquinas saith that some read the words thus, *Intende ad cantica mea*, attend unto my songs and so the words may be safely read, from the Hebrew word, נָגִינָה *ranah*, which signifies to shout or shrill out for joy—to note that the prayers of the saints are like pleasant songs and delightful ditties in the ears of God. No mirth, no music, can be so pleasing to us as the prayers of the saints are pleasing to God. Cant. ii. 14; Psalm cxli. 2.—*Thomas Brooks.*

*Verse 1.*—"My cry." There is a text in Job where the "hypocrites in heart" are spoken of condemning, because "they cry not when he bindeth them." I like to feel that no hard fortitude is required of the chastened child of God, but that it ought to feel, and may cry, under the rod, without a single rebellious thought.—*Mary B. M. Duncan.*

*Verses 1, 2.*—One ejaculation begetteth another. "*Hear my cry;*" "*attend unto my prayer*" (yet no words hereof mentioned); and verse 2. "*From the end of the earth will I cry:*" he had thus cried, and he will therefore cry again and again. As billows of temptation ever and anon stop his mouth and interrupt him, so as he now and then doth but peep above water, and get breathing space, he will thus

cry, "Lead me," or "guide me," or carry me to yonder "rock which is higher than I."—Thomas Cobbel (1608—1686), on *Prayer*.

Verse 2.—"From the end of the earth." This may be taken two ways: either naturally, and then it is an allusion to men that are far distant and remote from help, relief and comfort; or, as I may say, ecclesiastically, with reference to the temple of God, which was "in medio terræ," "in the midst and heart of the land," where God manifested and gave tokens of his gracious presence and favour: as if he had said, "I am at the end of the earth; far from any tokens, pledges, or manifestations of the love and favour of God, as well as from outward help and assistance.—John Owen.

Verse 2.—"The end of the earth." What place was this, "the end of the earth," referring the expression to the writer of the Psalm? We know that the centre of the affections and devotions of the pious Israelite was the "holy city, Jerusalem; whither the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, and to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." The country of which this city was the capital, was to the Jew the world; it was the world within the world; the earth within the earth; the whole globe beside was to him a waste, a place out of the world; an extra-terrestrial territory, beyond the limits set up by the Lord Almighty. Thus in Holy Writ what is called the world, or the earth, frequently signifieth only that part thereof which was the heritage of the chosen people. . . . "The end of the earth," then, as referred to the Psalmist, would signify any place of bodily absence from the temple where the Deity had taken up his special abode, or any place whence his spiritual affections were unable to reach that temple. As referred to us, the expression signifies any sensible distance from God: for as God is the centre of life, hope, love, and joy, distance from him, of whatsoever degree, is the antipodes of the soul, a region of sterility and darkness; the Iceland of man's spirit.—Alfred Bowen Evans, 1852.

Verse 2.—"I will cry unto thee." There is in this expression an endeavour to approach unto God; as you do when you "cry" after one whom you see at a distance, and are afraid he will go farther from you. It is the great work of faith to cry out after God, at a distance, when you are afraid lest at the next turn he should be quite out of sight. Crying to the Lord supposes him to be withdrawing or departing.—John Owen.

Verse 2.—"Cry." No matter how abrupt the prayer be, so it be the representation of our hearts. Thus did David. Where doth he pray? In banishment. When? When his spirit "is overwhelmed." How doth he pray? He "cried." Thus Hannah prayed herself into a composed state of mind. Remember, resignation is the work of the Spirit of God; and therefore you must plead for it before you have it.—John Singleton (—1706), in "The Morning Exercises."

Verse 2.—"Cry." Crying is a substitute for speech; and also the expression of earnestness.—William Jay.

Verse 2.—"When my heart is overwhelmed." Troubles are of various kinds; some are provoking, some are gnawing, some are perplexing, and some are overwhelming; but whatever form they assume, they are troubles, and are part of the wear and tear of life. . . . Overwhelming troubles are such as sweep over a man, just as the mighty billows of the ocean sweep over and submerge the sands. These are troubles which struggle with us, as it were, for life and death; troubles which would leave us helpless wrecks; troubles which enter into conflict with us in our prime, which grapple with us in our health and strength, and threaten to conquer us by sheer force, no matter how bravely we may contend. Such trouble the Psalmist knew.—Philip Bennett Power, in "The 'I wills' of the Psalms," 1861.

Verse 2.—"Heart." The heart is here represented to us as being overwhelmed, or, as it is otherwise translated, "covered over;" it is smothered in, unable to perform its functions with proper action, unable to throw out the blood to the extremities, to give them needed vitality and power for necessary effort. When the action of the heart is paralyzed, even temporarily, it will tell upon all the members, a chill there sends its cold vibration through every limb; Satan knows this well, and so all his dealings are heart dealings, efforts to paralyze the very spring of life itself. This is precisely what we ourselves have experienced; we have partially felt death within us, we have felt a gradual numbing of our heart; a gradual diminution in the quickness of its beat; a gradual closing in, and pressure of a weight upon it, and this was the "overwhelming" process.—Philip Bennett Power.

Verse 2.—“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” The tower, in Psalm xviii. 2, is “an high tower,” and the rock is here an high rock, the rock “higher than I;” and yet there is a way to get into the highest towers; by scaling ladders a man may get over the high walls of towers. This tower and rock were too high for David himself to get into, and therefore he sets to the scaling ladder. “Lead me to the rock, and into the tower that is higher than I. Hear my cry, attend unto my prayer.” So he makes prayer the scaling ladder to get upon that rock and into that tower that otherwise had been too high for him; he gets that safety and deliverance which otherwise but by prayer unto God had been impossible to have been obtained.—*Jeremiah Dyke.*

Verse 2.—“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” The language is very remarkable. It gives us the idea of a man suffering shipwreck. The vessel in which he has been sailing has sunk. He has been plunged into the mighty ocean; and there he is buffeting the waves, struggling for life, panting for breath, and just about to give up all for lost. Suddenly he discovers a rock towering above him. If he can but climb up to the top of it, and get sure footing upon it, the billows will not be able to reach him, and he will be safe. Now, the prayer in our text is the cry of that poor wretch for help. He is so spent and exhausted, that he cannot reach the rock *himself*. He shouts aloud for the friendly hand of some one stronger than himself, or for a rope that may be flung to him by those who are already safe on the rock, if by these helps he may gain it. “Lead me to the rock,” cries the poor perishing wretch. “O, lead me, guide me, direct me to it; for I am so worn and spent, that I cannot reach it otherwise. I am at the point to die; and I must sink, and be no more seen for ever, if there is none to help me.” Thus he calls for some one to rescue him from the deep, and to place him on the “rock.” But what rock? He knows that unless the rock be a high one, he will not be in safety, though he should be on it. “The rock,” he says, “must be higher than I, or the waves will reach me, and wash me off again.” It is not a rock, the top of which just shows itself above the sea, no higher than a man’s own body, that will save the life of a shipwrecked mariner. Such a rock may occasion the wreck, but it will not afford any help to the sufferers afterwards; it is a rock to split upon for destruction, not to stand upon for safety. “Lead me to the rock,” or as it is in the Prayer-book version, “Set me upon the rock, that is higher than I!” . . . . The text having shown us the danger of sin, does not leave us comfortless; it shows us the security of the refuge. We have before remarked, that the prayer of David, as a shipwrecked man, is, to be “led to,” and set upon, a “rock,” that is higher than himself. The expression seems to imply much. The rock that is higher than he, must be higher than any man; for David was a mighty monarch. He implies, therefore, that the refuge he seeks must be more than any “arm of flesh” can afford him; it must be therefore divine.—*Condensed from a Sermon by Fountain Elwin, 1842.*

Verse 2.—It is more the image of one overtaken by the tide, as he is hastening onwards to get beyond its reach, and yet with every step he sees it rolling nearer and nearer to him; he hears its angry roar, the loosening sand sinks beneath his tread—a few minutes more, and the waves will be around him; despair hath “overwhelmed his heart;” when in the very depths of his agony he sees a point of rock high above the waves. “O that I could reach it and be safe!” And then comes the cry, the agonising cry, to him that is mighty to save, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” It is the sinner’s cry to the sinner’s Saviour!—*Barton Bouchier, A.M., in “Manna in the Heart; or, Daily Comments on the Book of Psalms,” 1855.*

Verse 2.—“Lead me to the rock.” If we would find ourselves upon the rock, and enjoy the realisation of being so, we must be dependent upon another’s hand. And that hand can do everything for us, even in our worst of times. When we are so blinded by the salt waves that dash in our eyes, so reeling in brain that we cannot perhaps think, much less make continuous efforts, there is a hand which can lead us, which can draw us out of the waters, which can set our feet upon the rock. Surely we have already experienced the power and tenderness of that hand? and it may be that in the reader’s case, the waves, as they made sure of their prey, found it supernaturally drawn forth from them, that it might be set upon a rock, immovable amid all waters, and sufficient amid all storms!—*Philip Bennett Power.*

Verse 2.—“The rock that is higher than I.” The rock of our salvation, then, is “higher than we.” Here we have the Deity of Christ, the Rock, set forth; in this he is “higher than we.” And except as he is thus higher, as he is God, he

could not be a Saviour; for "He is a just God, as well as a Saviour." A being no higher than we, or but a little higher, as the angels (for we are but "a little lower than they"), though he might teach us, or warn us, or console us, could never save us. The prey is in the hands of the mighty, and the All-mighty alone is mightier. But a rock is not only high, but deep; it not only erects its front above the waves, but its base is fixed in the ocean's bed. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job. xi. 7. Here we have the humanity of him who is the rock; that humanity by which he was able to go down to the deeps, as well as ride triumphantly on the bosom of the waters—those deeps, whereof David speaking experimentally of himself, spake prophetically of him; the depths of our fall and degradation—that humanity in which he went down into the grave, into the recesses of the intermediate state, and "preached to the spirits in prison." This is our rock, both deep and high; the rock of our salvation; to which those whose sins have set them at "the end of the earth," desire to be brought, that they may find a place of safe standing. Let not those fear who feel the bitterness of distance from God, for they shall be brought nigh; desolate may be the coast to which they are driven, but over against it is the Paradise of God; clouds and darkness may gather at the base of this rock of safety, but "eternal sunshine settles on its head."—*Alfred Bowen Evans.*

*Verse 2.*—"Higher." A hiding place must be *locus excelssissimus*. Your low houses are soon sealed. Jesus Christ is a high place; he is as high as heaven. He is the Jacob's ladder that reacheth from earth to heaven. Gen. xxviii. 12. He is too high for men, too high for devils; no creature can scale these high walls.—*Ralph Robinson (1614—1655), in "Christ All and in All."*

*Verse 4.*—"I will abide in thy tabernacle." Some render it, *I shall dwell in thy tent or pavilion royal*, making it a metaphor from warfare, where those that are in the king's own tent must needs be in greatest safety. And this sense suiteth well with the following words: "I will trust in the covert of thy wings."—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 4.*—"Covert of thy wings." To a person who should penetrate the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, the most conspicuous object would be the outspread wings above the mercy-seat: under their shelter and upon the mercy-seat David would abide in quiet confidence.—*C. H. S.*

*Verse 5 (first clause).*—About this time I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer.—*John Newton, in his Journal.*

*Verse 5.*—"Thou, O God, hast heard my vows:" that is, his prayers, which are always to be put up with vows. Indeed, that prayer is a blank which hath not a vow in it. Is it a mercy thou prayest him to give? If sincere, thou wilt vow to praise him for it, and serve him with it. Is it a sin thou prayest against? Except thou jugglest with God, thou wilt vow as well as pray against it.—*William Gurnall.*

*Verse 5.*—"The heritage." Eternal life is called an inheritance. Theodoret remarks: "The true inheritance is eternal life, concerning which Christ saith to the sheep on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. This inheritance the Lord giveth to them that fear him." In Ephesians i. 14, the Spirit is called "the earnest of our inheritance." In Colossians i. 12, the apostle exhorts them "to give thanks unto the Father, who hath made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." On this verse we have the golden comment of Chrysostom, reiterated by Theophylact. He calls it an inheritance, to show that no man obtaineth the kingdom by his own good works; for no man hath so lived as to render himself worthy of the kingdom, but all is of the grace of God. Wherefore, he saith, "When ye have done all, say that we are unprofitable servants, for we have only done what we ought to have done."—*John Casper Suicer's "Thesaurus," 1728.*

*Verse 6.*—"Thou wilt prolong the king's life," etc. David cannot be considered as using these words of gratulation with an exclusive reference to himself. It is true that he lived to an extreme old age, and died full of days, leaving the kingdom in a settled condition, and in the hands of his son, who succeeded him; but he did not exceed the period of one man's life, and the greater part of it was spent in

continued dangers and anxieties. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the series of years, and even ages, of which he speaks, extends prospectively to the coming of Christ, it being the very condition of the kingdom, as I have often remarked, that God maintained them as one people under one head, or when scattered, united them again. The same succession still subsists in reference to ourselves. Christ must be viewed as living in his members to the end of the world. To this Isaiah alludes, when he says, "Who shall declare his generation or age?"—words in which he predicts that the church would survive through all ages, notwithstanding the incessant danger of destruction to which it is exposed through the attacks of its enemies, and the many storms assailing it. So here David foretells the uninterrupted succession of the kingdom down to the time of Christ.—*John Calvin.*

*Verse 6.*—"The king's life: and his years." David speaks designedly of the days of the "king" instead of his own days, as might have been expected from what had been said, for the purpose of showing that he considered the promise of eternal dominion as relating not to himself personally, but to his family—the royal family of David.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

*Verse 7.*—"O prepare mercy." David having declared in his own behalf the purpose of God towards him for everlasting salvation, "he," speaking of himself, "shall abide before God for ever." he withal considering what he was to run through in this life, and what it might require to keep him unto the end, and so "for ever," doth presently thereupon, in way of prayer, subjoin, "O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve me." As if he had said, I have yet a long journey to go, and through many hazards, and thy promise is, *I shall abide afore thee for ever.* Lord, thou hast need lay up and aforehand prepare an abundance of mercy and truth to preserve me for time to come.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

*Verse 8.*—They that are godly are oppressed and vexed in the church or congregation for this purpose: that when they are pressed, they should cry; and when they cry, that they should be heard; and when they are heard, that they should laud and praise God.—*Augustine.*

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#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Whole Psalm.*—*The progressive* "I wills." I. I will cry. II. I will abide in thy tabernacle. III. I will trust. IV. I will sing praise.

*Verse 1.*—Answers to prayer to be earnestly sought. I. What hinders the answer of prayer? II. What is our duty when answers are denied? III. What encouragements we have to believe that the delay is only temporary.

*Verse 2.*—"Lead me." I. Show me the way: reveal Jesus. II. Enable me to tread it: work faith in me. III. Uplift me where I cannot tread: do for me what is beyond me.

*Verse 2.*—"Higher than I." Jesus greater than our highest efforts, attainments, desires, expectations, conceptions.

*Verse 2.*—God, the saints' rock.—*John Owen's Two Sermons.* Works. Vol. IX., pp. 237—256.

*Verse 2.*—The heart's cry and desire. I. A recognition of a place of safety; then, II. We have this place brought before us, as abundantly sufficient, when personal weakness has been realised. IV. The character of this refuge, and the position of a believer when availing himself of it: the place of refuge is "a rock," and the position of the believer is "upon a rock."—*P. B. Power.*

*Verses 2, 3.*—I. *How* would he pray? "I will cry unto thee." II. *Where* would he pray? "From the ends of the earth." III. *When* would he pray? "When my heart is overwhelmed." IV. *For what* would he pray? "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." V. *Whence* does he derive his encouragement to pray? "For thou hast been," etc. (verse 3).—*William Jay.*

*Verse 3.*—"A shelter" from the rain of trouble, the storm of persecution, the floods of Satanic temptation, the heat of divine wrath, the blast of death. The



ark, Lot's mountain, the blood-stained door in Egypt, the city of refuge, the cave Adullam. "A strong tower:" lasting in itself, impregnable against foes, secure for the occupant.

Verses 4, 7.—I. My privilege, "I will abide" (verse 4). II. The ground of it, "He shall abide," etc. (verse 7).

Verse 4 (*first clause*).—Where the priest has presented the sacrifice; where the law is laid up in the ark as fulfilled; where the light of the Spirit's candlestick shines; where the manna abides; where the glory is above the mercy-seat; where no enemy can enter; where I commune with a covenant God.

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—Enquire whether or no it fares with us as with the saints.

Verses 5, 8.—I. Vows heard in heaven. II. Vows to be carefully fulfilled on earth.

Verse 5 (*second clause*).—I. They that fear God have a "heritage." II. This heritage is "given." III. We may know that we possess it.—*William Jay*.

Verse 6.—Our King, his eternal existence, our personal joy in this, and our joy for our descendants.

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