

## PSALM LXVII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician. *Who he was matters not, and who we may be is also of small consequence, so long as the Lord is glorified. On Neginoth, or upon stringed instruments. This is the fifth Psalm so entitled, and no doubt like the others was meant to be sung with the accompaniment of "harpers harping with their harps." No author's name is given, but he would be a bold man who should attempt to prove that David did not write it. We will be hard pushed before we will look for any other author upon whom to father these anonymous odes which lie side by side with those ascribed to David, and wear a family likeness to them. A Psalm or Song. Solemnity and vivacity are here united. A Psalm is a song, but all songs are not Psalms: this is both the one and the other.*

### EXPOSITION.

**G**OD be merciful unto us, and bless us; *and* cause his face to shine upon us. Selah.

2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

6 *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; *and* God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

1. "*God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.*" This is a fit refrain to the benediction of the High Priest in the name of the Lord, as recorded in Num. vi. 24, 25. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." It begins at the beginning with a cry for *mercy*. Forgiveness of sin is always the first link in the chain of mercies experienced by us. Mercy is a foundation attribute in our salvation. The best saints and the worst sinners may unite in this petition. It is addressed to the God of mercy, by those who feel their need of mercy, and it implies the death of all legal hopes or claims of merit. Next, the church begs for a blessing; "*bless us*"—a very comprehensive and far-reaching prayer. When we bless God we do but little for *our* blessings are but words, but when God blesses he enriches us indeed, for his blessings are gifts and deeds. But his blessing alone is not all his people crave, they desire a personal consciousness of his favour, and pray for a smile from his face. These three petitions include all that we need here or hereafter.

This verse may be regarded as the prayer of Israel, and spiritually of the Christian church. The largest charity is shown in this Psalm, but it begins at home. The whole church, each church, and each little company, may rightly pray, "*bless us.*" It would, however, be very wrong to let our charity end where it begins, as some do; our love must make long marches, and our prayers must have a wide sweep, we must embrace the whole world in our intercessions.

"*Selah.*" Lift up the heart, lift up the voice. A higher key, a sweeter note is called for.

2. "*That thy way may be known upon earth.*" As showers which first fall upon the hills afterwards run down in streams into the valleys, so the blessing of the Most High comes upon the world through the church. We are blessed for the sake of others as well as ourselves. God deals in a way of mercy with his saints, and then they make that way known far and wide, and the Lord's name is made famous in the earth. Ignorance of God is the great enemy of mankind, and the

testimonies of the saints, experimental and grateful, overcome this deadly foe. God has a set way and method of dealing out mercy to men, and it is the duty and privilege of a revived church to make that way to be everywhere known. "*Thy saving health among all nations,*" or, *thy salvation*. One likes the old words, "*saving health,*" yet as they are not the words of the Spirit but only of our translators, they must be given up: the word is *salvation*, and nothing else. This all nations need, but many of them do not know it, desire it, or seek it; our prayer and labour should be, that the knowledge of salvation may become as universal as the light of the sun. Despite the gloomy notions of some, we cling to the belief that the kingdom of Christ will embrace the whole habitable globe, and that all flesh shall see the salvation of God: for this glorious consummation we agonize in prayer.

3. "*Let the people praise thee, O God.*" Cause them to own thy goodness and thank thee with all their hearts; let nations do this, and do it continually, being instructed in thy gracious way. "*Let all the people praise thee.*" May every man bring his music, every citizen his canticle, every peasant his praise, every prince his Psalm. All are under obligations to thee, to thank thee will benefit all, and praise from all will greatly glorify thee; therefore, O Lord, give all men the grace to adore thy grace, the goodness to see thy goodness. What is here expressed as a prayer in our translation, may be read as a prophecy, if we follow the original Hebrew.

4. "*O let the nations be glad and sing for joy,*" or, they shall joy and triumph. When men know God's way and see his salvation, it brings to their hearts much happiness. Nothing creates gladness so speedily, surely, and abidingly as the salvation of God. Nations never will be glad till they follow the leadership of the great Shepherd; they may shift their modes of government from monarchies to republics, and from republics to communes, but they will retain their wretchedness till they bow before the Lord of all. What a sweet word is that "to sing for joy!" Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because overflowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed. Whole nations will do this when Jesus reigns over them in the power of his grace. We have heard hundreds and even thousands sing in chorus, but what will it be to hear whole nations lifting up their voices, as the noise of many waters and like great thunders. When shall the age of song begin? When shall groans and murmurs be exchanged for holy hymns and joyful melodies? "*For thou shalt judge the people righteously.*" Wrong on the part of governors is a fruitful source of national woe, but where the Lord rules, rectitude is supreme. He doeth ill to none. His laws are righteousness itself. He rights all wrongs and releases all who are oppressed. Justice on the throne is a fit cause for national exultation. "*And govern the nations upon earth.*" He will lead them as a shepherd his flock, and through his grace they shall willingly follow, then will there be peace, plenty, and prosperity. It is great condescension on God's part to become the Shepherd, of nations, and to govern them for their good: it is a fearful crime when a people who know the salvation of God, apostatize and say to the Lord "depart from us." There is some cause for trembling lest our nation should fall into this condemnation; may God forbid.

"*Selah.*" Before repeating the chorus, the note is again elevated, that full force may be given to the burst of song and the accompaniment of harps.

"Strings and voices, hands and hearts,  
In the concert bear your parts;  
All that breathe, your Lord adore,  
Praise him, Praise him, evermore!"

5. These words are no vain repetition, but are a chorus worthy to be sung again and again. The great theme of the Psalm is the participation of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah; the Psalmist is full of it, he hardly knows how to contain or express his joy.

6. "*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*" Sin first laid a curse on the soil, and grace alone can remove it. Under tyrannical governments lands become unproductive; even the land which flowed with milk and honey is almost a wilderness under Turkish rule; but, when the principles of true religion shall have elevated mankind, and the dominion of Jesus shall be universally acknowledged, the science of tillage shall be perfected, men shall be encouraged to labour, industry shall banish penury, and the soil shall be restored to more than its highest condition of fertility.

We read that the Lord turneth "a fruitful land into barrenness," for the wickedness of them that dwell therein, and observation confirms the truth of the divine threatening; but even under the law it was promised, "the Lord God shall make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land for good." There is certainly an intimate relation between moral and physical evil, and between spiritual and physical good. Alexander notes that the Hebrew is in the past tense, and he concludes that it is ungrammatical to render it in the future; but to us it seems that the prophet-bard, hearing the nations praise the Lord, speaks of the bounteous harvest as already given in consequence. On the supposition that all the people praise Jehovah, the earth has yielded her increase. The future in the English appears to be the clearest rendering of the Hebrew.

"*And God, even our own God, shall bless us.*" He will make earth's increase to be a real blessing. Men shall see in his gifts the hand of that same God whom Israel of old adored, and Israel, especially, shall rejoice in the blessing, and exult in her own God. We never love God aright till we know him to be ours, and the more we love him the more do we long to be fully assured that he is ours. What dearer name can we give to him than "mine own God." The spouse in the song has no sweeter canticle than "my beloved is mine and I am his." Every believing Jew must feel a holy joy at the thought that the nations shall all be blessed by Abraham's God; but every Gentile believer also rejoices that the whole world shall yet worship the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our Father and our God.

7. "*God shall bless us.*" The prayer of the first verse is the song of the last. We have the same phrase twice, and truly the Lord's blessing is manifold; he blesses and blesses and blesses again. How many are his beatitudes! How choice his benedictions! They are the peculiar heritage of his chosen. He is the Saviour of all men, but specially of them that believe. In this verse we find a song for all future time. God shall bless us is our assured confidence; he may smite us, or strip us, or even slay us, but he must bless us. He cannot turn away from doing good to his elect. "*And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*" The far off shall fear. The ends of the earth shall end their idolatry, and adore their God. All tribes, without exception, shall feel a sacred awe of the God of Israel. Ignorance shall be removed, insolence subdued, injustice banished, idolatry abhorred, and the Lord's love, light, life, and liberty, shall be over all, the Lord himself being King of king and Lord of lords. *Amen, and Amen.*

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—How admirably balanced are the parts of this missionary song! The people of God long to see all the nations participating in their privileges, "visited with God's salvation, and gladdened with the gladness of his nation" (Psalm cvi. 5). They long to hear all the nationalities giving thanks to the Lord, and hallowing his name; to see the face of the whole earth, which sin has darkened so long, smiling with the brightness of a second Eden. This is not a vapid sentiment. The desire is so expressed as to connect with it the thought of duty and responsibility. For how do they expect that the happy times are to be reached? They trust, in the first instance, to the general diffusion of the knowledge of God's way, the spreading abroad of the truth regarding the way of salvation. With a view to that, they cry for a time of quickening from the presence of the Lord, and take encouragement in this prayer from the terms of the divinely-appointed benediction. As if they had said, "Hast thou not commanded the sons of Aaron to put thy name upon us, and to say: The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord cause his face to shine on thee and be gracious to thee? Remember that sure word of thine. God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us. Let us be thus blessed, and we shall in our turn become a blessing. All the families of the earth shall, through us, become acquainted with thy salvation." Such is the church's expectation. And who shall say it is unreasonable? If the little company of a hundred and twenty disciples who met in the upper chamber at



Jerusalem, all of them persons of humble station, and unobtrusive talents, were endued with such power by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that within three hundred years the paganism of the empire was overthrown, one need not fear to affirm that, in order to the evangelisation of the world, nothing more is required than that the churches of Christendom be baptised with a fresh effusion of the same Spirit of power.—*William Binnie*.

*Whole Psalm.*—There are seven stanzas; twice three two-line stanzas, having one of three lines in the middle, which forms the clasp or spangle of the septiad, a circumstance which is strikingly appropriate to the fact that the Psalm is called "the Old Testament Paternoster" in some of the old expositors.—*Franz Delitzsch*.

*Verse 1.*—"God be merciful unto us, and bless us," etc. God forgives, then he gives; till he be merciful to pardon our sins through Christ, he cannot bless or look kindly on us sinners. All our enjoyments are but blessings in bullion, till gospel grace and pardoning mercy stamp and make them current. God cannot so much as bear any good will to us, till Christ makes peace for us: "On earth peace, good will towards men." Luke ii. xiv. And what joy can a sinner take, though it were to hear of a kingdom fallen to him, if he may not have it with God's good will.—*William Gurnall*.

*Verse 1.*—"God be merciful unto us"—Hugo attributes these words to penitents; "Bless us," to those setting out in the Christian life; "Cause his face to shine upon us," to those who have attained, or the sanctified. The first seek for pardon, the second for justifying peace, the third for edification and the grace of contemplation.—*Lorinus*.

*Verses 1 and 2.*—Connect the last clause of verse 1 with the first of verse 2, and observe that God made his face to shine upon Moses, and make known to him his way. "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel," as if the common people could only see the deeds of the Lord, but his way, his plans, his secrets were revealed only to him upon whom the light of God's face had shone.—*C. H. S.*

*Verse 2.*—"That thy way may be known," etc. The Psalmist here supposes that there are certain rules or principles, in accordance with which God bestows blessings on mankind; and he prays that those rules and principles may be everywhere made known upon the earth.—*Albert Barnes*.

*Verse 2.*—"That thy way may be known," etc. By nature we know little of God, and nothing of Christ, or the way of salvation by him. The eye of the creature, therefore, must be opened to see the way of life before he can by faith get into it. God doth not use to waft souls to heaven like passengers in a ship, who are shut under the hatches, and see nothing all the way they are sailing to their port; if so, that prayer might have been spared which the Psalmist, inspired of God, breathes forth in the behalf of the blind Gentiles: "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." As faith is not a naked assent, with affianced and innitency\* on Christ; so neither is it a blind assent, without some knowledge. If, therefore, thou continuest still in thy brutish ignorance, and knowest not so much as who Christ is, and what he hath done for the salvation of poor sinners, and what thou must do to get interest in him, thou art far enough from believing. If the day be not broke in thy soul, much less is the Sun of Righteousness arisen by faith in thy soul.—*William Gurnall*.

*Verse 2.*—"That thy way may be known." The sinful Jew, obstinate in his unbelief, shall see and hate. He shall see, and be enraged at the salvation of the Gentiles; but let us see and know, that is, love. For to know is often put for to love, as in the passages—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them: I know mine, and am known of mine;" that is, I love my own sheep, and they love me. . . . There is here a sudden transition from the third person to the second, that in speaking of God he might not say, "His way," or "His salvation," but "thy way," and "Thy salvation;" setting forth the vehemence of an ardent suppliant, and the grace of God as he reveals himself to that suppliant while still pouring forth his prayers.—*Gerhohus* (1093—1169).

*Verse 2.*—"That thy way may be known," etc. As light, so the participation of God's light is communicative: we must not pray for ourselves alone, but for all

\* Innitency.—Act of leaning on.

others, that God's way may be known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations. "*Thy way*;" that is, thy will, thy word, thy works. God's will must be known on earth, that it may be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Except we know our Master's will, how shall we do it? *Ergo*, first pray with David here: "*Let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth*;" and then, "*Let all the people praise thee*." God's will is revealed in his word, and his word is his way wherein we must walk, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. Or, "*Thy way*;" that is, thy works, as David elsewhere (Ps. xxv. 10): "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth." Or, as others\* most fitly: "*Thy way*," that is, thy *Christ*; "*Thy saving health*," that is, thy *Jesus*: for "I am the way," saith our Saviour (John xiv. 6): "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me;" wherefore, "*Let thy Son be known upon earth; thy Jesus among all nations*."—*John Boys*.

*Verse 3.*—"Let the people praise thee." Mark the sweet order of the blessed Spirit: first, mercy; then, knowledge; last of all, praising of God. We cannot see his countenance except he be merciful to us; and we cannot praise him except his way be known upon earth. His mercy breeds knowledge; his knowledge, praise.—*John Boys*.

*Verse 3.*—"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee." What then? "*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us*." We have comforts increased, the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapours go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive, so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse from the sea, unto the sea; so there is between God and us; the more we praise him, the more our blessings come down; and the more his blessings come down, the more we praise him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the springs lie low, we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves.—*Thomas Manton*.

*Verse 3.*—This verse is exceedingly emphatic. 1. First, by an apostrophe to God, in the pronoun, *Thee*. As if he said: Let the people praise *thee*, not strange gods; for thou art the only true God. 2. Secondly, inasmuch as it is not said, *Let us praise thee, O God*; but let the *people* praise thee, and let *all* the people. For here is expressed the longing of the pious heart, and its fond desire that God should be praised and magnified throughout all lands and by all people of the round earth. 3. Thirdly, by the iteration, in which the same particle is repeated in this and the fifth verse no less than four times, as if the duty could not be sufficiently inculcated. It is not enough to have said it once; it is delightful to repeat it again.—*Wolfgang Musculus* (1497—1563).

*Verse 4.*—"For thou shalt judge the people righteously," etc. The Psalmist may here seem to contradict himself; for if mercy make men rejoice, then judgment occasioneth men to tremble. Answer is made, that all such as have known the ways of the Lord, and rejoice in the strength of his salvation, all such as have the pardon of their sins assured and sealed, fear not that dreadful assize, because they know the judge is their advocate. Or, (as Jerome,) let all nations rejoice, because God doth judge righteously, being the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. Acts x. 34. Or, *let all nations rejoice*, because God doth govern all nations; that whereas theretofore they wandered in the fond imaginations of their own hearts, in wry ways, in by-ways; now they are directed by the Spirit of truth to walk in God's highway, which leads unto the celestial Jerusalem; now they shall know Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. For judging is often used for ruling. 1 Sam. vii. 15; 2 Cor. i. 10. So David doth here expound himself: "*thou shalt judge*," that is, thou shalt "*govern the nations*."—*John Boys*.

*Verse 4.*—"Govern." Lead and guide them as the shepherd his flock.—*Benjamin Boothroyd*.

*Verse 4.*—"And lead (margin) the nations." God now *overrules* the nations in their ways, but surely they are *led* by another guide. There is a bridle in their jaws causing them to err. They are held and shaken in the sieve of vanity, until he come to whom the government pertains.—*Arthur Pridham*.

\* Augustine; Jerome; Hilary.

Verses 5, 6.—“*Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee!*” What then? “*Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.*” Our unthankfulness is the cause of the earth’s unfruitfulness. While man is blessing God for his mercies, He is blessing man with his mercies.—*William Secker, in “The Nonsuch Professor.”* 1660.

Verse 6.—“*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*” An increase of wealth is but the natural result of increased piety and intelligence. There are certain qualities essential to temporal prosperity. These are industry, economy, moderation; and such are the qualities begotten of godliness. . . . Nor is it an unreasonable expectation that our globe should, under the reign of righteousness, yield all those temporal advantages of which it is capable. Science, favoured by piety, may greatly add to the earth’s fruitfulness; and mechanical genius may still further abbreviate human toil, and increase human comforts. The great inventions and discoveries of science, by which toil is lessened and comfort enhanced, are all the products of Christian minds. . . . Can we, then, doubt that in the era to which we look forward, labour shall cease to be a burden? Can we believe that the life of the labouring classes is to continue to be all but a ceaseless round of toil and vexation—every hand stretched out to procure something that is needed, or to ward off something that is feared? Scripture predicts the mitigation of the curse; and, in the discoveries of science and the inventions of mechanics, we see the means by which the prediction is to be accomplished. This consummation may still be in the distant future; but if we do not grudge the oak years for its growth, the glory to be revealed is surely worthy of a process as gradual.—*William Reid, in “Things to Come Practically Considered.”* 1871.

Verse 6.—“*God, even our own God, shall bless us.*” What a rapturous expression is that. “*God, even our own God, shall bless us!*” and that, “*Thy God, thy glory!*” Upon interest in God follows their interest in his glory and blessedness; which is so much the dearer and more valuable, as it is theirs; their glory from their God. They shall be blessed by God, their own God; “*drink waters out of their own well.*” How endearing a thing is propriety! Another man’s son is ingenuous, comely, personable; this may be a matter of envy; but mine own is so, this is a joy. I read in the life of a devout nobleman of France,\* that receiving a letter from a friend in which were inserted these words: “*Deus meus et omnia,*” my God and my all, he thus returns back to him: “*I know not what your intent was to put into your letter these words, ‘Deus meus et omnia, My God and my all:’ only you invite me thereby to return the same to you, and to all creatures. ‘My God and my all; my God and my all; my God and my all.’ If, perhaps, you take this for your motto, and use it to express how full your heart is of it, think you it possible I should be silent upon such an invitation, and not express my sense thereof? Likewise be it known unto you, therefore, that he is ‘my God and my all;’ and, if you doubt of it, I shall speak of it a hundred times over. I shall add no more, for anything else is superfluous to him that is truly penetrated with ‘my God and my all;’ I leave you, therefore, in this happy state of jubilation, and conjure you to beg for me, of God, the solid sense of these words.” And do we think, “*my God and my all,*” or, “*my God and my glory,*” will have lost its emphasis in heaven? or that it will be less significant among awakened souls? These things concur, then, concerning the object; it is most excellent, even divine, entire, permanent, and theirs: how can it but satisfy?—*John Howe, in “The Blessedness of the Righteous.”**

Verse 6.—“*Our own God.*” How unexpressible was the inward pleasure wherewith we may suppose those words to have been uttered. How delightful an appropriation! as if it were intended to be said, the blessing itself were less significant, it could not have that savour with it, if it were not from our own God. Not only, therefore, allow, but urge your spirits thus to look towards God, that you may both delight in him as being in himself the most excellent one, and also as being yours; for know, you are not permitted only, but obliged to eye, accept, and rejoice in him as such.—*John Howe.*

Verses 6, 7.—The promise refers directly to the visible fertility of the renewed earth at the time of Israel’s recovery, but it includes a fuller reference to higher things; for the true increase yielded by any of God’s works is the revenue of praise which redounds to his holy name. Such, then, is the promise I have to bring before

\* Monsieur de Renti.



you. In its widest sense, the lower creation is now made subject to vanity, because of man's sin; but in the kingdom of Christ this curse will be removed, and all God's works will yield their full increase—a tribute of unmingled honour and praise to his name.

Let us consider—1. The preparation for this increase. 2. The increase itself. 3. The blessing of God, which will crown it.

I. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THIS INCREASE. What are the means? What is the way of its accomplishment? Whence does it proceed? Our Psalm is full of instruction. Consider—1. *Its fountain*: the free mercy of God. The Psalm begins, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us." Whatever the details and steps of the work of redemption, all must be traced up to this original fountain, the sovereign grace and mercy of our God. . . . The eternal, free, unchangeable, inexhaustible mercy of our God, revealed through his dear Son Jesus Christ; this is the fountain-head of the blessed increase here foretold. . . . 2. *The order* in which this increase is granted may next be considered. Salvation is given to the Jew first, and then also to the Greek. The prayer of this Psalm is, "Cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." It is the divine plan first to choose his people and bless them, and then to make them a blessing, as we see in Abraham, the father of the faithful. It is through his church that God blesses the world. . . . The same principle is true in every revival of pure religion. . . . But all this order of divine mercy has yet to be more fully seen in what is before us; in the restoration of Israel, and its effect upon the world at large. . . . 3. *The immediate precursor of this increase is the return of our Lord* from heaven, the coming of Christ to judge the earth and reign over all nations. The Psalm calls all nations to rejoice in this: "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth." . . . The world craves, and will crave more and more for righteous government. The Lord has promised to supply this natural want of the human heart, though he take vengeance on his hardened enemies. Even in the coming of the Lord to judgment, goodness will so finally triumph that the nations are to be glad and sing for joy. . . . It is the Lord judging the people and governing the nations, and all the people praising him, that prepares directly and immediately for the promised blessedness. "*Then shall the earth yield her increase.*" . . .

II. THE INCREASE ITSELF. This increase has many aspects. Let us view them in a climax of benefits. 1. *Natural fertility*. The first sentence of curse and barrenness, of thorns and thistles, was pronounced on Adam's fall, and renewed on Cain's murder. It seems to have been partially removed after the deluge. . . . Even now, two-thirds of our world are ocean, incapable of increase; half of the rest, and perhaps more, is almost desert, and of the remainder the largest part is very imperfectly tilled. There is room, even in the latter for a vast increase, when the whole earth might become like the garden of the Lord. 2. *The redemption of art*. Its activity, its talent, and discoveries are now great and wonderful; but it is mainly turned to human self-sufficiency and vanity, and bears little fruit to God's glory and the highest benefit of man. But in the period predicted in this Psalm, every creature, when redeemed to man's use, shall be also reclaimed to God's glory. . . . 3. *The redemption of science*. . . . 4. *Society will yield its increase to God*. . . . Men now live as without God in the world, full though it be of proofs of his wisdom and love. . . . What a change when every social circle shall be a fellowship of saints, and all bent to one great purpose, the divine glory and the blessedness of each other. 5. *The soul shall yield its increase*. The earth is only the figure of the human heart, a soil ever fertile for good or evil. Thus the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, regards it: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is high unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Then the thorns and briers of a crooked and perverse generation will cease. . . . The fruits of righteousness will abound from the human race to the glory of God. Much praise, much zeal, much reverence, much humility, will distinguish his servants. Faith, hope, and love will all be in the fullest exercise. Christ will be all and in all, and every power will be consecrated to him. This is the best increase the earth yields to God. 6. *The large number*

of God's true servants, thus yielding themselves to him, is another part of this blessedness. . . . 7. *The perpetuity of this increase* has to be added to this glory. This is according to the promise made to the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.—*Condensed from Edward Bickersteth's Sermon in the "Bloomsbury Lent Lectures."* 1848.

Verses 6, 7.—Double blessings from God—temporal and spiritual; blessings peculiar to the Jews, and blessings suited to Christians. O Lord, I refuse not the temporal blessings it pleases thee to send me; I will receive them with humble gratitude as the gift of thy goodness: but I entreat from thee especially for spiritual blessings; and that thou wouldest treat me rather as a Christian than as a Jew.—*Pasquier Quesnel* (1634—1719), in "*Les Psaumes de David avec des Reflexions Morales.*"

Verse 7.—Note, how joy in God, and fear of God, are combined. By joy the sadness and anxiety of diffidence are excluded, but by fear, contempt and false security are banished. So Ps. ii., "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

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#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. Here is mercy in God the Father. II. Here is blessing as the fruit of that mercy in God the Son. III. Here is the experience of that blessing in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 1.—The need of seeking a blessing for ourselves.

Verses 1, 2.—The prosperity of the church at home, the hope for missions abroad.

Verse 2.—I. The way of God towards the earth. 1. A way of mercy. 2. Of blessing. 3. Of comfort. II. The knowledge of that way. 1. By outward means. 2. By inward teaching. III. The effect of that knowledge. Salvation among all nations.

Verse 2.—What is the true health of men?

Verse 3.—Viewed, I. As the desire of every renewed heart. II. As a prayer. III. As a prophecy.

Verse 4.—I. The reign of God in the world: it is not left to itself. II. The joy of the world on that account: "Let the nations," etc. III. The reason of that joy: "He will judge righteously." 1. As faithful to his law. 2. Faithful to his promises of mercy.

Verses 5—7.—I. The prayer (verse 5). II. The promise (verse 6). 1. Of temporal good. 2. Of spiritual good. III. The prediction (verse 7).

Verses 6, 7.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 819: "The Minstrelsy of Hope."

Verse 7.—I. God to man: "shall bless us." II. Man to God: "shall fear him."

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