

PSALM LXVIII.

TITLE.—To the Chief Musician, a Psalm or Song of David.—We have already said enough upon this title when dealing with Psalms LXV. and LXVI. The present is obviously a song to be sung at the removal of the ark; and in all probability was rehearsed when David conducted it with holy joy from the house of Obed-edom to the prepared place on Mount Zion. It is a most soul stirring hymn. The first verses were often the battle-song of the Covenanters and Ironsides; and the whole Psalm fitly pictures the way of the Lord Jesus among his saints, and his ascent to glory. The Psalm is at once surpassingly excellent and difficult. Its darkness in some stanzas is utterly impenetrable. Well does a German critic speak of it as a Titan very hard to master. Our slender scholarship has utterly failed us, and we have had to follow a surer Guide. We trust our thoughts may not however prove unprofitable.

DIVISION.—With the words of the first two verses the ark is uplifted, and the procession begins to move. In verses 3—6, the godly in the assembly are exhorted to commence their joyous songs, and arguments are adduced to help their joy. Then the glorious march of Jehovah in the wilderness is sung: verses 7—10, and his victories in war are celebrated in verses 11—14. The joyous shouts are louder as Zion comes in sight, and the ark is borne up the hill: verses 15—19. On the summit of the mount the priests sing a hymn concerning the Lord's goodness and justice; the safety of his friends, and ruin of his foes; verses 20—23. Meanwhile the procession is described as it winds up the hill; verses 24—27. The poet anticipates a time of wider conquest, verses 28—31: and concludes with a noble burst of song unto Jehovah.

EXPOSITION.

LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive *them* away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

1. "*Let God arise.*" In some such words Moses spake when the cloud moved onward, and the ark was carried forward. The ark would have been a poor leader if the Lord had not been present with the symbol. Before we move, we should always desire to see the Lord lead the way. The words suppose the Lord to have been passive for awhile, suffering his enemies to rage, but restraining his power. Israel beseeches him to "arise," as elsewhere to "awake," "gird on his sword," and other similar expressions. We, also, may thus impudently cry unto the Lord, that he would be pleased to make bare his arm, and plead his own cause. "*Let his enemies be scattered.*" Our glorious Captain of the vanguard clears the way readily, however many may seek to obstruct it; he has but to arise, and they flee, he has easily over-thrown his foes in days of yore, and will do so all through the ages to come. Sin, death, and hell know the terror of his arm; their ranks are broken at his approach. Our enemies are *his* enemies, and in this is our confidence of victory. "*Let them also that hate him flee before him.*" To hate the infinitely good God is infamous, and the worst punishment is not too severe. Hatred of God is impotent. His proudest foes can do him no injury. Alarmed beyond measure, they shall flee before it comes to blows. Long before the army of Israel can come into the fray, the haters of God shall flee before HIM who is the champion of his chosen. He comes, he sees, he conquers. How fitting a prayer is this for the commencement of a revival! How it suggests the true mode of conducting one:—the Lord leads the way, his people follow, the enemies flee.

2. "*As smoke is driven away.*" Easily the wind chases the smoke, completely it removes it, no trace is left; so, Lord, do thou to the foes of thy people. They fume in pride, they darken the sky with their malice, they mount higher and higher in arrogance, they defile wherever they prevail: Lord, let thy breath, thy Spirit,

thy Providence, make them to vanish for ever from the march of thy people. Philosophic scepticism is as flimsy and as foul as smoke; may the Lord deliver his Church from the reek of it. "As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God." Wax is hard by itself, but put it to the fire, how soft it is. Wicked men are haughty till they come into contact with the Lord, and then they faint for fear; their hearts melt like wax when they feel the power of his anger. Wax, also, burns and passes away; the taper is utterly consumed by the flame: so shall all the boastful power of the opposers of the gospel be as a thing of nought. Rome, like the candles on her altars, shall dissolve, and with equal certainty shall infidelity disappear. Israel saw, in the ark, God on the mercy-seat—power in connection with propitiation—and they rejoiced in the omnipotence of such a manifestation; this is even more clearly the confidence of the New Testament church, for we see Jesus, the appointed atonement, clothed with glory and majesty, and before his advance all opposition melts like snow in the sun: the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. When he comes by his Holy Spirit, conquest is the result; but when he arises in person, his foes shall utterly perish.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

3. "But let the righteous be glad." The presence of God on the throne of grace is an overflowing source of delight to the godly; and let them not fail to drink of the streams which are meant to make them glad. "Let them rejoice before God." The courtiers of the happy God should wear the garments of gladness, for in his presence is fulness of joy. That presence, which is the dread and death of the wicked, is the desire and delight of the saints. "Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." Let them dance with all their might, as David did, for very joy. No bounds should be set to joy in the Lord. "Again, I say, rejoice," says the apostle, as if he would have us add joy to joy without measure or pause. When God is seen to shine propitious from above the mercy-seat in the person of our Immanuel, our hearts must needs leap within us with exultation, if we are indeed among those made righteous in his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. Move on, O army of the living God, with shouts of abounding triumph, for Jesus leads the van.

4. "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name." To time and tune, with order and care, celebrate the character and deeds of God, the God of his people. Do it again and again; and let the praise, with resolution of heart, be all directed to him. Sing not for ostentation, but devotion; not to be heard of men, but of the Lord himself. Sing not to the congregation, but "unto God." "Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH." Remember his most great, incomprehensible, and awful name; reflect upon his self-existence and absolute dominion, rise to the highest pitch of joyful reverence in adoring him. Heaven beholds him riding on the clouds in storm, and earth has seen him marching over its plains with majesty. The Hebrew seems to be: "Cast up a highway for him who marcheth through the wilderness," in allusion to the wanderings of the tribes in the desert. The marches of God were in the waste howling wilderness. His eternal power and Godhead were there displayed in his feeding, ruling, and protecting the vast hosts which he had brought out of Egypt. The ark brought all this to remembrance, and suggested it as a theme for song. The name JAH is an abbreviation of the name Jehovah; it is not a diminution of that name, but an intensified word, containing in it the essence of the longer, august title. It only occurs here in our version of Scripture, except in connection with other words such as Hallelujah. "And rejoice before him." In the presence of him who marched so gloriously at the head of the elect nation, it is most fitting that all his people should display a holy delight. We ought to avoid dullness in our worship. Our songs should be weighty with solemnity, but not heavy with sadness. Angels are nearer the throne than we, but their deepest awe is consonant with the purest bliss: our sense of divine greatness

must not minister terror but gladness to our souls; we should "rejoice before him."

It should be our wish and prayer, that in this wilderness world, a highway may be prepared for the God of grace. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," is the cry of gospel heralds, and we must all zealously aim at obedience thereto; for where the God of the mercy-seat comes, blessings innumerable are given to the sons of men.

5. "*A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*" In the wilderness the people were like an orphan nation, but God was more than a father to them. As the generation which came out of Egypt gradually died away, there were many widows and fatherless ones in the camp, but they suffered no want or wrong, for the righteous laws and the just administrators whom God had appointed, looked well to the interests of the needy. The tabernacle was the Palace of Justice; the ark was the seat of the great King. This was great cause for joy to Israel, that they were ruled by ONE who would not suffer the poor and needy to be oppressed. To this day and for ever, God is, and will be, the peculiar guardian of the defenceless. He is the President of Orphanages, the Protector of Widows. He is so glorious that he rides on the heavens, but so compassionate that he remembers the poor of the earth. How zealously ought his church to cherish those who are here marked out as Jehovah's especial charge. Does he not here in effect say, "Feed my lambs?" Blessed duty, it shall be our privilege to make this one of our life's dearest objects. The reader is warned against mis-quoting this verse; it is generally altered into "*the husband of the widow.*" but Scripture had better be left as God gave it.

6. "*God setteth the solitary in families.*" The people had been sundered and scattered over Egypt; family ties had been disregarded, and affections crushed; but when the people escaped from Pharaoh they came together again, and all the fond associations of household life were restored. This was a great joy. "*He bringeth out those which are bound with chains.*" The most oppressed in Egypt were chained and imprisoned, but the divine Emancipator brought them all forth into perfect liberty. He who did this of old continues his gracious work. The solitary heart, convinced of sin and made to pine alone, is admitted into the family of the First-born; the fettered spirit is set free, and its prison broken down, when sin is forgiven; and for all this, God is to be greatly extolled, for he hath done it, and magnified the glory of his grace. "*But the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*" If any find the rule of Jehovah to be irksome, it is because their rebellious spirits kick against his power. Israel did not find the desert dry, for the smitten rock gave forth its streams; but even in Canaan itself men were consumed with famine, because they cast off their allegiance to their covenant God. Even where God is revealed on the mercy-seat, some men persist in rebellion, and such need not wonder if they find no peace, no comfort, no joy, even where all these abound. Justice is the rule of the Lord's kingdom, and hence there is no provision for the unjust to indulge their evil lustings: a perfect earth, and even heaven itself, would be a dry land to those who can only drink of the waters of sin. Of the most soul-satisfying of sacred ordinances these witless rebels cry, "what a weariness it is!" and, under the most soul-sustaining ministry, they complain of "the foolishness of preaching." When a man has a rebellious heart, he must of necessity find all around him a dry land.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even Sinai itself was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

7. "*O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people.*" What a sweetly suitable association, "thou" and "thy people;"—thou before, and thy people following! The Lord went before, and, therefore, whether the Red Sea or burning sand lay in the way, it mattered not; the pillar of cloud and fire always led them

by a right way. "When thou didst march through the wilderness." He was the Commander-in-chief of Israel, from whom they received all orders, and the march was therefore *his* march. "His stately step the region drear beheld." We may speak, if we will, of the "wanderings of the children of Israel," but we must not think them purposeless strays, they were in reality a well-arranged and well-considered march.

"SELAH." This seems an odd place for a musical pause or direction, but it is better to break a sentence than spoil praise. The sense is about to be superlatively grand, and, therefore, the *selah* intimates the fact to the players and singers, that they may with suitable solemnity perform their parts. It is never untimely to remind a congregation that the worship of God should be thoughtfully and heartily presented.

8. "The earth shook." Beneath the sublime tread the solid ground trembled. "The heavens also dropped at the presence of God," as if they bowed before their God, the clouds descended, and "a few dark shower-drops stole abroad." "Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God." Moses tells us, in Ex. xix., that "the whole mountain quaked greatly." That hill, so lone and high, bowed before the manifested God. "The God of Israel." The one only living and true God, whom Israel worshipped, and who had chosen that nation to be his own above all the nations of the earth. This passage is so sublime, that it would be difficult to find its equal. May the reader's heart adore the God before whom the unconscious earth and sky act as if they recognised their Maker and were moved with a tremor of reverence.

9. "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain." The march of God was not signaled solely by displays of terror, for goodness and bounty were also made conspicuous. Such rain as never fell before dropped on the desert sand, bread from heaven and winged fowls fell all around the host; good gifts were poured upon them, rivers leaped forth from rocks. The earth shook with fear, and in reply, the Lord, as from a cornucopia, shook out blessings upon it; so the original may be rendered. "Whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary." As at the end of each stage, when they halted, weary with the march, they found such showers of good things awaiting them that they were speedily refreshed. Their foot did not swell all those forty years. When they were exhausted, God was not. When they were weary, he was not. They were his chosen heritage, and, therefore, although for their good he allowed them to be weary, yet he watchfully tended them and tenderly considered their distresses. In like manner, to this day, the elect of God in this wilderness state are apt to become tired and faint, but their ever-loving Jehovah comes in with timely succours, cheers the faint, strengthens the weak, and refreshes the hungry; so that once again, when the silver trumpets sound, the church militant advances with bold and firm step towards "the rest which remaineth." By this faithfulness, the faith of God's people is confirmed, and their hearts established; if fatigue and want made them waver, the timely supply of grace stays them again upon the eternal foundation.

10. "Thy congregation hath dwell therein." In the wilderness itself, enclosed as in a wall of fire, thy chosen church has found a home; or, rather, girdled by the shower of free gifts which fell all around the camp, thy flock has rested. The congregation of the faithful find the Lord to be their "dwelling-place in all generations." Where there were no dwellings of men, God was the dwelling of his people. "Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor." Within the guarded circle there was plenty for all; all were poor in themselves, yet there were no beggars in all the camp, for celestial fare was to be had for the gathering. We, too, still dwell within the circling protection of the Most High, and find goodness made ready for us: although poor and needy by nature, we are enriched by grace; divine preparations in the decree, the covenant, the atonement, providence, and the Spirit's work, have made ready for us a fulness of the blessing of the Lord. Happy people, though in the wilderness, for all things are ours, in possessing the favour and presence of our God.

11 The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it*.

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, *yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was *white* as snow in Salmon.

11. In the next verses we do not sing of marching, but of battle and victory "*The Lord gave the word.*" The enemy was near, and the silver trumpet from the tabernacle door was God's mouth to warn the camp; then was there hurrying to and fro, and a general telling of the news; "*great was the company of those that published it.*" The women ran from tent to tent and roused their lords to battle. Ready as they always were to chant the victory, they were equally swift to publish the fact that the battle-note had been sounded. The ten thousand maids of Israel, like good handmaids of the Lord, aroused the sleepers, called in the wanderers, and bade the valiant men hasten to the fray. O for the like zeal in the church to-day, that, when the gospel is published, both men and women may eagerly spread the glad tidings of great joy.

12. "*Kings of armies did flee apace.*" The lords of hosts fled before the Lord of Hosts. No sooner did the ark advance than the enemy turned his back: even the princely leaders stayed not, but took to flight. The rout was complete, the retreat hurried and disorderly;—they "*did flee, did flee;*" helter skelter, pell-mell, as we say.

"Where are the kings of mighty hosts?
Fled far away, fled far and wide.
Their triumph and their trophied boasts
The damsels in their bowers divide."

"*And she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*" The women who had published the war-cry shared the booty. The feeblest in Israel had a portion of the prey. Gallant warriors cast their spoils at the feet of the women and bade them array themselves in splendour, taking each one "*a prey of divers colours, of divers colours of needlework on both sides.*" When the Lord gives success to his gospel, the very least of his saints are made glad and feel themselves partakers in the blessing.

13. "*Though ye have lien among the pots.*" Does he mean that the women at home, who had been meanly clad as they performed their household work, would be so gorgeously arrayed in the spoil, that they would be like doves, of silver wing and golden plumage? Or, would he say that Israel, which had been begrimed in the brick-kilns of Egypt, should come forth lustrous and happy in triumph and liberty? Or, did the song signify that the ark should be brought from its poor abode with Obed-edom into a fairer dwelling-place? It is a hard passage, a nut for the learned to crack. If we knew all that was known when this ancient hymn was composed, the allusion would no doubt strike us as being beautifully appropriate, but as we do not, we will let it rest among the unriddled things. Alexander reads it, "*When ye shall lie down between the borders, ye shall be like the wings,*" etc., which he considers to mean, "*when settled in peace, the land shall enjoy prosperity;*" but this version does not seem to us any more clear than our authorised one. Of making many conjectures there is no end; but the sense seems to be, that from the lowest condition the Lord would lift up his people into joy, liberty, wealth, and beauty. Their enemies may have called them squatters among the pots—in allusion to their Egyptian slavery; they may have jested at them as scullions of Pharaoh's kitchen; but the Lord would avenge them and give them beauty for blackness, glory for grime. "*Yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*" The dove's wing flashes light like silver, and anon gleams with the radiance of "*the pale, pure gold.*" The lovely, changeable colours of the dove might well image the mild, lustrous beauty of the nation, when arrayed in white holiday-attire, bedecked with their gems, jewels, and ornaments of gold. God's saints have been in worse places than among the pots, but now they soar aloft into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

14. "*When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.*" The victory was due to the Almighty arm alone; he scattered the haughty ones who came against his people, and he did it as easily as snow is driven from the bleak sides of Salmon. The word *white* appears to be imported into the text, and by leaving it out the sense is easy. A traveller informed the writer that on a raw and gusty day, he saw the side of what he supposed to be Mount Salmon suddenly

swept bare by a gust of wind, so that the snow was driven hither and thither into the air like the down of thistles, or the spray of the sea : thus did the Omnipotent one scatter all the potentates that defied Israel. If our authorized version must stand, the conjectures that the bleached bones of the enemy, or the royal mantles cast away in flight, whitened the battle-field, appear to be rather too far-fetched for sacred poetry. Another opinion is, that Salmon was covered with dark forests, and appeared black, but presented quite another aspect when the snow covered it, and that by this noteworthy change, from sombre shade to gleaming whiteness, the poet sets forth the change from war to peace. Whatever may be the precise meaning, it was intended to pourtray the glory and completeness of the divine triumph over the greatest foes. In this let all believers rejoice.

15 The hill of God *is* as the hill of Bashan ; an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills ? *this is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in ; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever.

17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels : the Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy *place*.

18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive : thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.

19 Blessed be the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. Selah.

15. Here the priests on the summit of the chosen hill begin to extol the Lord for his choice of Zion as his dwelling-place. "*The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan,*" or more accurately, "a hill of God is Bashan," that is to say, Bashan is an eminent mountain, far exceeding Zion in height. According to the Hebrew custom, every great or remarkable thing is thus designated. Where we talk of the Devil's Dyke, the Devil's Ditch, the Devil's Punch Bowl, etc., the more commendable idiom of the Hebrews speaks of the hill of God, the trees of the Lord, the river of God, etc. "*An high hill as the hill of Bashan,*" or rather, "a mount of peaks is Bashan." It does not appear that Zion is compared with Bashan, but contrasted with it. Zion certainly was not a high hill comparatively ; and it is here conceded that Bashan is a greater mount, but not so glorious, for the Lord in choosing Zion had exalted it above the loftier hills. The loftiness of nature is nothing before the Lord. He chooses as pleases him, and, according to the counsel of his own will, he selects Zion, and passes by the proud, uplifted peaks of Bashan ; thus doth he make the base things of this world, and things that are despised, to become monuments of his grace and sovereignty.

16. "*Why leap ye, ye high hills ?*" Why are ye moved to envy ? Envy as ye may, the Lord's choice is fixed. Lift up yourselves, and even leap from your seats, ye cannot reach the sublimity which Jehovah's presence has bestowed on the little hill of Moriah. "*This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in.*" Elohim makes Zion his abode, yea, Jehovah resides there. "*Yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever.*" Spiritually the Lord abides eternally in Zion, his chosen church, and it was Zion's glory to be typical thereof. What were Carmel and Sirion, with all their height, compared to Zion, the joy of the whole earth ! God's election is a patent of nobility. They are choice men whom God has chosen, and that place is superlatively honoured which he honours with his presence.

17. "*The chariots of God are twenty thousand.*" Other countries, which in the former verse were symbolically referred to as "high hills," gloried in their chariots of war ; but Zion, though far more lowly, was stronger than they, for the omnipotence of God was to her as two myriads of chariots. The Lord of Hosts could summon more forces into the field than all the petty lords who boasted in their armies : his horses of fire and chariots of fire would be more than a match for their fiery steeds and flashing cars. The original is grandly expressive, "the war-chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands." The marginal reading of our Bibles, "*even many thousands,*" is far more correct than the rendering, "*even thousands of angels.*" It is not easy to see where our venerable translators found these "angels," for they are not in the text ; however, as it is a blessing to entertain them unawares,

we are glad to meet with them in English, even though the Hebrew knows them not; and the more so because it cannot be doubted that they constitute a right noble squadron of the myriad hosts of God. We read in Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, of the Lord's coming "with ten thousands of saints," or holy ones, and in Heb. xii. 22, we find upon Mount Zion "an innumerable company of angels," so that our worthy translators putting the texts together, inferred the angels, and the clause is so truthfully explanatory, that we have no fault to find with it. "*The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place,*" or, "it is a Sinai in holiness." God is in Zion as the Commander-in-chief of his countless hosts, and where he is, there is holiness. The throne of grace on Zion is as holy as the throne of justice on Sinai. The displays of his glory may not be so terrible under the new covenant as under the old; but they are even more marvellous if seen by the spiritual eye. Sinai has no excellency of glory beyond Zion; but the rather it pales its light of law before the noontide splendours of Zion's grace and truth. How joyful was it to a pious Hebrew to know that God was as truly with his people in the tabernacle and temple as amid the terrors of the Mount of Horeb; but it is even more heart-cheering to us to be assured that the Lord abides in his church, and has chosen it to be his rest for ever. May we be zealous for the maintenance of holiness in the spiritual house which God condescends to occupy: let a sense of his presence consume, as with flames of fire, every false way. The presence of God is the strength of the church; all power is ours when God is ours. Twenty thousand chariots shall bear the gospel to the ends of the earth; and myriads of agencies shall work for its success. Providence is on our side, and it "has servants everywhere." There is no room for a shade of doubt or discouragement, but every reason for exultation and confidence.

18. "*Thou hast ascended on high.*" The ark was conducted to the summit of Zion; God himself took possession of the high places of the earth, being extolled and very high. The antitype of the ark, the Lord Jesus, has ascended into the heavens with signal marks of triumph. To do battle with our enemies, the Lord descended and left his throne; but now the fight is finished, he returns to his glory; high above all things is he now exalted. "*Thou hast led captivity captive.*" A multitude of the sons of men are the willing captives of Messiah's power. As great conquerors of old led whole nations into captivity, so Jesus leads forth from the territory of his foe a vast company as the trophies of his mighty grace. From the gracious character of his reign it comes to pass that to be led into captivity by him is for our captivity to cease, or to be itself led captive; a glorious result indeed. The Lord Jesus destroys his foes with their own weapons; he puts death to death, entombs the grave, and leads captivity captive. "*Thou hast received gifts for men,*" or, received gifts among men: they have paid thee tribute, O mighty Conqueror, and shall in every age continue to do so willingly, delighting in thy reign. Paul's rendering is the gospel one: Jesus has "received gifts for men," of which he makes plentiful distribution, enriching his church with the priceless fruits of his ascension, such as apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and all their varied endowments. In him, the man who received gifts for man, we are endowed with priceless treasures, and, moved with gratitude, we return gifts to him, yea, we give him ourselves, our all. "*Yea, for the rebellious also:*" these gifts the rebels are permitted to share in; subdued by love, they are indulged with the benefits peculiar to the chosen. The original runs, "even the rebellious," or, "even from the rebellious," of which the sense is that rebels become captives to the Lord's power, and tributaries to his throne.

"Great King of grace, my heart subdue,
I would be led in triumph too;
A willing captive to my Lord,
To own the conquests of his word."

"*That the Lord God might dwell among them.*" In the conquered territory, Jah Elohim would dwell as Lord of all, blessing with his condescending nearness those who were once his foes. When Canaan was conquered, and the fort of Zion carried by storm, then was there found a resting-place for the ark of God; and so when the weapons of victorious grace have overcome the hearts of men, the Lord God, in all the glory of his name, makes them to be his living temples. Moreover, the ascension of Jesus is the reason for the descent of the Lord God, the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus dwells with God, God dwells with men. Christ on high is the reason of the Spirit below. It was expedient that the Redeemer should rise, that the Comforter should come down.

19. "*Blessed be the Lord.*" At the mention of the presence of God among men the singers utter an earnest acclamation suggested by reverential love, and return blessings to him who so plentifully blesses his people. "*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*" Our version contains a great and precious truth, though probably not the doctrine intended here. God's benefits are not few nor light, they are loads; neither are they intermittent, but they come "daily;" nor are they confined to one or two favourites, for all Israel can say, "he loadeth us with benefits." Delitzsch reads it, "He daily bears our burden;" and Alexander, "Whoever lays a load upon us, the Mighty God is our salvation." If he himself burdens us with sorrow, he gives strength sufficient to sustain it; and if others endeavour to oppress us, there is no cause for fear, for the Lord will come to the rescue of his people. Happy nation, to be subdued by a King whose yoke is easy, and who secures his people from all fear of foreign burdens which their foes might try to force upon them. "*Even the God of our salvation.*" A name most full of glory to him, and consolation to us. No matter how strong the enemy, we shall be delivered out of his hands; for God himself, as King, undertakes to save his people from all harm. What a glorious stanza this is! It is dark only because of its excessive light. A world of meaning is condensed into a few words. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, therefore blessed be the Saviour's name for evermore. All hail! thou thrice blessed Prince of Peace! All thy saved ones adore thee, and call thee blessed.

"*Selah.*" Well may the strings need tuning, they have borne an unparalleled strain in this mighty song. Higher and yet higher, ye men of music, lift up the strain. Dance before the ark, ye maidens of Israel; bring forth the timbrel, and sing unto the Lord who hath triumphed gloriously.

20 *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.

22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea:

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.

20. "*He that is our God is the God of salvation.*" The Almighty who has entered into covenant with us is the source of our safety, and the author of our deliverances. As surely as he is our God he will save us. To be his is to be safe. "*And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*" He has ways and means of rescuing his children from death: when they are at their wit's end, and see no way of escape, he can find a door of deliverance for them. The gates of the grave none can open but himself, we shall only pass into them at his bidding; while on the heavenward-side he has set open the doors for all his people, and they shall enjoy triumphant issues from death. Jesus, our God, will save his people from their sins, and from all else besides, whether in life or death.

21. "*But God shall wound the head of his enemies.*" The Preserver is also the Destroyer. He smites his foes on the crown of their pride. The seed of the woman crushes the serpent's head. There is no defence against the Lord, he can in a moment smite with utter destruction the lofty crests of his haughty foes. "*And the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*" He may glory in his outward appearance, and make his hair his pride, as Absalom did; but the Lord's sword shall find him out, and pour out his soul. Headstrong sinners will find that providence overcomes them despite their strong heads. They who go on in sin will find judgments come on them; and the adornment of their pride may be made the instrument of their doom. He covers the head of his servants, but he crushes the head of his foes. At the second coming of the Lord Jesus, his enemies will find his judgments to be beyond conception terrible.

22. This verse, by the insertion of the words, "*my people,*" is made to bear the meaning which the translators thought best; but, if their interpolated word is omitted we probably get nearer to the sense. "*The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.*" Though his foes should endeavour to escape, they should not be able. Amos describes the Lord as saying, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb

up to heaven, thence will I bring them down : and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence ; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." As there is no resisting Israel's God, so is there no escape from him, neither the heights of Bashan nor the depths of the great sea can shelter from his eye of detection and his hand of justice. The powers of evil may flee to the utmost ends of the earth, but the Lord will arrest them, and lead them back in chains to adorn his triumph.

23. "*That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies.*" Vengeance shall be awarded to the oppressed people, and that most complete and terrible. "*And the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*" So overwhelming should be the defeat of the foe that dogs should lick their blood. Here "the stern joy which warriors feel" expresses itself in language most natural to the oriental ear. To us, except in a spiritual sense, the verse sounds harshly ; but read it with an inner sense, and we also desire the utter and crushing defeat of all evil, and that wrong and sin may be the objects of profound contempt. Terrible is the God of Israel when he cometh forth as a man of war, and dreadful is even the Christ of God when he bares his arm to smite his enemies. Contemplate Rev. xix. and note the following :—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called The Word of God. . . . And I saw an angel standing in the sun ; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth : and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

24 They have seen thy goings, O God ; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after ; among *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels.

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

27 There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali.

24. "*They have seen thy goings, O God.*" In the song the marchings of the Lord had been described ; friends and foes had seen his goings forth with the ark and his people. We suppose that the procession was now climbing the hill, and entering the enclosure where the tabernacle of the ark was pitched ; it was suitable at this moment to declare with song that the tribes had seen the glorious progress of the Lord as he led forth his people. "*Even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*" The splendid procession of the ark, which symbolised the throne of the great King, was before the eyes of men and angels as it ascended to the holy place ; and the Psalmist points to it with exultation before he proceeds to describe it. All nature and providence are, as it were, a procession attending the great Lord, in his visitations of this lower globe. Winter and summer, sun and moon, storm and calm, and all the varied glories of nature swell the pomp of the King of kings, of whose dominion there is no end.

25. "*The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after.*" This was the order of the march, and God is to be worshipped evermore with due decorum. First the singers, and lastly the musicians, for the song must lead the music, and not the music drown the singing. In the midst of the vocal and instrumental band,

or all around them, were the maidens : "among them were the damsels playing with timbrels." Some have imagined that this order indicates the superiority of vocal to instrumental music ; but we need not go so far for arguments, when the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel already teach us that truth. The procession depicted in this sublime song was one of joy, and every means was taken to express the delight of the nation in the Lord their God.

26. "*Bless ye God in the congregations.*" Let the assembled company magnify the God whose ark they followed. United praise is like the mingled perfume which Aaron made, it should all be presented unto God. He blesses us ; let him be blessed. "*Even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.*" A parallel passage to that in Deborah's song : "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord." The seat of the ark would be the fountain of refreshing for all the tribes, and there they were to celebrate his praises. "Drink," says the old inscription, "drink, weary traveller ; drink and pray." We may alter one word, and read it, drink and praise. If the Lord overflows with grace, we should overflow with gratitude. Ezekiel saw an ever-growing stream flow from under the altar, and issue out from under the threshold of the sanctuary, and wherever it flowed it gave life : let as many as have quaffed this life-giving stream glorify "the fountain of Israel."

27. "*There is little Benjamin with their ruler.*" The tribe was small, having been greatly reduced in numbers, but it had the honour of including Zion within its territory. "And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him ; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." Little Benjamin had been Jacob's darling, and now the tribe is made to march first in the procession, and to dwell nearest to the holy place. "*The princes of Judah and their council.*" Judah was a large and powerful tribe, not with one governor, like Benjamin, but with many princes "and their company," for so the margin has it. "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," and the tribe was a quarry of stones wherewith to build up the nations : some such truth is hinted at in the Hebrew. "*The princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*" Israel was there, as well as Judah ; there was no schism among the people. The north sent a representative contingent as well as the south, and so the long procession set forth the hearty loyalty of all the tribes to their Lord and King. O happy day, when all believers shall be one around the ark of the Lord ; striving for nothing but the glory of the God of grace.

28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength : strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver : scatter thou the people *that* delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt ; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

The prophet now puts into the mouth of the assembly a song, foretelling the future conquests of Jehovah.

28. "*Thy God hath commanded thy strength.*" His decree had ordained the nation strong, and his arm had made them so. As a commander-in-chief, the Lord made the valiant men pass in battle array, and bade them be strong in the day of conflict. This is a very rich though brief sentence, and, whether applied to an individual believer, or to the whole church, it is full of consolation. "*Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*" As all power comes from God at first, so its continual maintenance is also of him. We who have life should pray to have it "more abundantly ;" if we have strength we should seek to be still more established. We expect God to bless his own work. He has never left any work unfinished yet, and he never will. "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly ;" and now, being reconciled to God, we may look to him to perfect that which concerneth us, since he never forsakes the work of his own hands.

29. "*Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.*" The palace of God, which towered above Jerusalem, is prophesied as becoming a

wonder to all lands, and when it grew from the tabernacle of David to the temple of Solomon, it was so. So splendid was that edifice that the queen of far-off Sheba came with her gifts; and many neighbouring princes, overawed by the wealth and power therein displayed, came with tribute to Israel's God. The church of God, when truly spiritual, wins for her God the homage of the nations. In the latter-day glory this truth shall be far more loudly and largely verified.

30. "*Rebuke the company of spearmen;*" or, "*the beasts of the reeds,*" as the margin more correctly renders it. Speak to Egypt, let its growing power and jealousy be kept in order, by a word from thee. Israel remembers her old enemy, already plotting the mischief, which would break out under Jeroboam, and begs for a rebuking word from her Omnipotent Friend. Anti-christ also, that great red dragon, needs the effectual word of the Lord to rebuke its insolence. "*The multitude of the bulls,*" the stronger foes; the proud, headstrong, rampant, fat, and roaring bulls, which sought to gore the chosen nation,—these also need the Lord's rebuke, and they shall have it too. All Egypt's sacred bulls could not avail against a "thus saith Jehovah." Popish bulls, and imperial edicts, have dashed against the Lord's church, but they have not prevailed against her, and they never shall. "*With the calves of the people.*" The poorer and baser sort are equally set on mischief, but the divine voice can control them; multitudes are as nothing to the Lord when he goes forth in power; whether bulls or calves, they are but cattle for the shambles when Omnipotence displays itself. The gospel, like the ark, has nothing to fear from great or small; it is a stone upon which every one that stumbleth shall be broken. "*Till every one submit himself with pieces of silver.*" The Lord is asked to subdue the enemies of Israel, till they rendered tribute in silver ingots. Blessed is that rebuke, which does not break but bend; for subjection to the Lord of hosts is liberty, and tribute to him enriches him that pays it. The taxation of sin is infinitely more exacting than the tribute of religion. The little finger of lust is heavier than the joins of the law. Pieces of silver given to God are replaced with pieces of gold. "*Scatter thou the people that delight in war.*" So that, notwithstanding the strong expression of verse 23, God's people were peacemakers, and only desired the crushing of oppressive nations, that war might not occur again. Let the battles of peace be as fierce as they will; heap coals of fire on the heads of enemies, and slay their enmity thereby. That "they who take the sword should perish by the sword," is a just regulation for the establishment of quiet in the earth. What peace can there be, while blood-thirsty tyrants and their myrmidons are so many? Devoutly may we offer this prayer, and, with equal devotion, we may bless God that it is sure to be answered, for "he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire."

31. "*Princes shall come out of Egypt.*" Old foes shall be new friends. Solomon shall find a spouse in Pharaoh's house. Christ shall gather a people from the realms of sin. Great sinners shall yield themselves to the sceptre of grace, and great men shall become good men, by coming to God. "*Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*" Cush shall hasten to present peace offerings. Sheba's queen shall come from the far south. Candace's chamberlain shall ask of Him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter. Abyssinia shall yet be converted, and Africa become the willing seeker after grace, eagerly desiring and embracing the Christ of God. Poor Ethiopia, thy hands have been long manacled and hardened by cruel toil, but millions of thy sons have in their bondage found the liberty with which Christ made men free; and so thy cross, like the cross of Simon of Cyrene, has been Christ's cross, and God has been thy salvation. Hasten, O Lord, this day, when both the civilization and the barbarism of the earth shall adore thee, Egypt and Ethiopia blending with glad accord in thy worship! Here is the confidence of thy saints, even thy promise; hasten it in thine own time, good Lord.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the clouds.

35 O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed be God.

32. "*Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth.*" Glorious shall that song be in which whole empires join. Happy are men that God is one who is consistently the object of joyous worship, for not such are the demons of the heathen. So sweet a thing is song that it ought to be all the Lord's; a secular concert seems almost a sacrilege, a licentious song is treason. "*O sing praises unto the Lord.*" Again and again is God to be magnified; we have too much sinning against God, but cannot have too much singing to God. "*Selah.*" Well may we rest now that our contemplations have reached the millennial glory. What heart will refuse to be lifted up by such a prospect!

33. "*To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old.*" Before, he was described in his earthly manifestations, as marching through the desert; now, in his celestial glory, as riding in the heavens of the primeval ages. Long ere this heaven and earth were made, the loftier abodes of the Deity stood fast; before men or angels were created, the splendours of the Great King were as great as now, and his triumphs as glorious. Our knowledge reaches but to a small fragment of the life of God, whose "*goings forth were of old, even from everlasting.*" Well might the Jewish church hymn the eternal God, and well may we join therewith the adoration of the Great Firstborn:—

" Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,
He led the host of morning stars.
Thy generation who can tell?
Or count the number of thy years? "

"*Lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.*" Was there a thunder-clap just then heard in heaven? Or did the poet's mind flash backward to the time when from the heaven of heavens the voice of Jehovah broke the long silence and said, "*Light be,*" and light was. To this hour, the voice of God is power. This gospel, which utters and reveals his word, is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Our voices are fitly called to praise him whose voice spoke us into being, and gives us the effectual grace which secures our well-being.

34. "*Ascribe ye strength unto God.*" When even his voice rends the rocks and uproots the cedars, what cannot his hand do? His finger shakes the earth; who can conceive the power of his arm? Let us never by our doubts or our daring defiances appear to deny power unto God; on the contrary, by yielding to him and trusting in him, let our hearts acknowledge his might. When we are reconciled to God, his omnipotence is an attribute of which we sing with delight. "*His excellency is over Israel.*" The favoured nation is protected by his majesty; his greatness is to them goodness, his glory is their defence. "*And his strength is in the clouds.*" He does not confine his power to the sons of men, but makes it like a canopy to cover the skies. Rain, snow, hail, and tempest are his artillery; he rules all nature with awe-inspiring majesty. Nothing is so high as to be above him, or too low to be beneath him; praise him, then, in the highest.

35. "*O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places.*" Thou inspirest awe and fear. Thy saints obey with fear and trembling, and thine enemies flee in dismay. From thy threefold courts, and especially from the holy of holies, thy majesty flashes forth and makes the sons of men prostrate themselves in awe. "*The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people.*" In this thou, who art Israel's God by covenant, art terrible to thy foes by making thy people strong, so that one shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. All the power of Israel's warriors is derived from the Lord, the fountain of all might. He is strong, and makes strong: blessed are they who draw from his resources, they shall renew their strength. While the self-sufficient faint, the All-sufficient shall sustain the feeblest believer. "*Blessed be God.*" A short but sweet conclusion. Let our souls say Amen to it; and yet, again, Amen.

NEW TRANSLATION.

In order that our readers may see the Psalm at a glance in a good translation, we subjoin the version of FRANZ DELITZSCH; recommending our ministerial brethren to procure the volumes of his valuable Commentary on the Psalms, issued by the Messrs. CLARK, of Edinburgh.

PSALM LXVIII.

HYMN OF WAR AND VICTORY IN THE STYLE OF DEBORAH.

- 2 LET Elohim arise, let His enemies be scattered,
And let those who hate Him flee before His face.
- 3 As smoke is driven away, do Thou drive them away;
As wax melteth before the fire,
Let the wicked perish before Elohim.
- 4 And let the righteous rejoice, let them exult before Elohim,
And let them be glad with joy.
- 5 Sing unto Elohim, harp His name,
Pave a highway for Him who rideth along through the steppes;
Jah is his name, and exult ye before Him.
- 6 A Father of the fatherless and an Advocate of the widows
Is Elohim in his Holy habitation.
- 7 Elohim maketh a household for the solitary,
He leadeth forth prisoners into prosperity;
Yet the rebellious abide in a land of drought.
- 8 Elohim, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,
When Thou didst march along in the wilderness—(*Sela.*)
- 9 The earth shook,
The heavens also dropped before Elohim,
Yon Sinai before Elohim, the God of Israel.
- 10 With plentiful rain didst Thou, Elohim, water Thine inheritance,
And when it was parched, THOU hast confirmed it.
- 11 Thy creatures have settled down therein,
Thou didst provide with Thy goodness for the poor, Elohim.
- 12 The Lord will sound forth the mandate;
Of the women who herald victory there is a great army.
- 13 The kings of hosts shall flee, shall flee,
And she that tarrieth at home shall divide the spoil.
- 14 If ye encamp among the sheep-folds,
The dove's wings are covered with silver
And her feathers with glistening gold.
- 15 When the Almighty scattereth kings therein,
It becometh snow-white upon Zalmon.
- 16 A mountain of Elohim is the mountain of Bashan,
A mountain full of peaks is the mountain of Bashan.
- 17 Why look ye enviously, ye many-peaked mountains,
Upon the mountain which Elohim hath chosen, to dwell thereon?
Yea, Jahve will dwell [there] for ever.

- 18 The war-chariots of Elohim are myriads, a thousand thousands,
The Lord is among them, it is a Sinai in holiness.
- 19 Thou hast ascended up to the height, Thou hast led captives captive,
Thou hast received gifts among men,
Even from the rebellious, that Jah Elohim might dwell [there].
- 20 Blessed be the Lord :
Day by day doth He bear our burden,
He, God, is our salvation. (*Sela.*)
- 21 He, God, is to us a God for deeds of deliverance,
And Jahve the Lord hath ways of escape for death.
- 22 Yea, Elohim will smite the head of His enemies,
The hairy scalp of him who stalketh along in his trespasses.
- 23 The Lord hath said : Out of Bashan will I bring back,
I will bring back out of the depths of the sea,
- 24 That thou mayest bathe thy foot in blood,
That the tongue of thy dogs may have its share of the enemy.
- 25 They behold Thy splendid procession, Elohim,
The splendid procession of my God, my King in holiness.
- 26 Before went the singers, behind the players on stringed instruments,
In the midst of damsels striking timbrels.
- 27 In the choirs of the congregation bless ye Elohim,
The Lord, ye who are out of the fountain of Israel.
- 28 There is Benjamin the youngest, their ruler ;
The princes of Judah—their motley band,
The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.
- 29 Thy God hath commanded thy supreme power—
Uphold in power, Elohim, what Thou hast wrought for us !—
- 30 From Thy temple above Jerusalem
Let kings present offerings into Thee.
- 31 Threaten the wild beast of the reed, the troops of bulls with the calves
of the people,
That they may prostrate themselves with ingots of silver !—
He hath scattered the peoples that delight in wars.
- 32 Magnates come out of Egypt,
Cush—quickly do his hands stretch out unto Elohim.
- 33 Ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto Elohim,
Praising the Lord with stringed instruments—(*Sela.*)
- 34 To Him who rideth in the heaven of heavens of the primeval time—
Lo, He made Himself heard with His voice, a mighty voice.
- 35 Ascribe ye might unto Elohim !
Over Israel is His majesty,
And His omnipotence in the heights of the heavens.
- 36 Terrible is Elohim out of thy sanctuaries ;
“ The God of Israel giveth might and abundant strength to the people ! ”
Blessed be Elohim !

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—In this Psalm we have especial reason to condemn or to admire the timidity, or the caution and delicacy of our translators, whichever it may be considered, for the manner in which they have rendered the names of the Almighty. They almost universally translate them "God" or "Lord;" whereas, it has been observed that, almost all the remarkable titles of the Deity are employed in describing and praising the person addressed here. He is called "Elohim" in verse 2; "Adonai," verse 12; "Shaddai," verse 15; "Jehovah," verse 17; "Jah," verse 19; and "Al," verse 20. The Hebrew names of God have, each of them, a distinct and peculiar meaning. No one word will suffice for them all. The vague use of the terms "God" and "Lord" in our translation can never convey to the reader's mind the important ideas which the original expressions, if properly translated, would bear, and we have lost a strong additional confirmation of the deity of Messiah, by abandoning the testimony which the ascription to him of God's peculiar titles would give to this great truth.—*R. H. Ryland.*

Whole Psalm.—As lxvii. opened with a reference to the form of blessing (Numb. vi. 24-26), so this with a reference to the prayer used when the cloud-pillar summoned the camp to commence a march. *There* the presence (*panim*) of God shed saving light on his people; here his enemies flee from it (*mippanayv*, ver. 1). . . . In the Jewish ritual the Psalm is used at Pentecost, the Anniversary of the Giving of the Law, and the Feast of Finished Harvest. . . . The remarkable character of the Psalm is indicated by the fact that there are no fewer than thirteen words in it which are not found elsewhere. The Pentecostal Gift of Tongues seems needed for its full exposition.—*William Kay.*

Whole Psalm.—By many critics esteemed the loftiest effusion of David's lyrical muse.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—To judge from the antiquity of its language, the concise description, the thoroughly fresh, forcible, and occasional artlessly ironical expression of its poetry, we consider this poem as one of the most ancient monuments of Hebrew poetry.—*Boettcher.*

Whole Psalm.—It must be confessed that in this Psalm there are as many precipices, and as many labyrinths, as there are verses, or even words. It has not inappropriately been designated the cross of critics, the reproach of interpreters.—*Simon de Muis.*

Whole Psalm.—The beginning of this Psalm clearly intimates that the inspired Psalmist had light given him to see the march of Israel through the wilderness, the ark of the covenant moving before the people to find a resting place. The Psalmist is filled with praise, when he is enabled to see that God revealed his Fatherly love in the whole of that movement—that his eye was upon the fatherless, the widow, the solitary, and afflicted; but David is also carried by the Spirit to the Mount of Olives, where he sees the ascending Lord; he sees the triumphal chariots, with an innumerable company of angels, and then beholds the Lord welcomed in glory as the mighty Conqueror; and not only so, but as having received or purchased gifts for men, even the rebellious (ver. 18), "that the Lord God might dwell among them," or *within them*. "Wherefore," the command of our Father is, "come out from among them, and be ye separate," etc. (2 Cor. vi. 17-18). The doxology of God's people is, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits." Our blessed Master attends day by day to all our wants, and causes his love to flow to us, because he is God our Salvation—Selah. What comfort ought this to afford under every condition! for the Lord Jesus goes before us through the desert. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. The widow, the fatherless, the desolate, are all the objects of his care and love. He has gone before us to prepare our heavenly rest; the work is finished. He now comes, day by day, to load us with blessings, and at the last will carry us safely through death into life and glory. To the Lord our Saviour belong the issues from death; then, "Death, where is thy sting?" etc.—*Ridley H. Herschell, in "Strength in Weakness. Meditations on some of the Psalms in time of Trial."* 1860.

Verse 1.—"Let God arise," etc. The moving ark * is a type of Jesus going forth to cast down rebel foes. It is high joy to trace the Antitype's victorious march.

* See Numbers x. 35, 36.

How mightily the Lord advanced! The strength of God was in his arm. His sword was Deity. His darts were barbed with all Jehovah's might. "He had on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of Lords." Rev. xix. 16. His foes, indeed, strove mightily. It was no easy work to rescue souls from Satan's grasp, or to lay low the prison-house of darkness. The enemy rushed on, clad in his fiercest armour, wild in his keenest rage, wily in his deadliest crafts. He plied his every temptation, as a terrific battery. But the true Ark never quailed. The adversary licked the dust. Malignant passions maddened in opposing breasts. The kings stood up; rulers took counsel; all plots were laid; the ignominious death was planned and executed. But still the Ark moved on. The cross gave aid, not injury. The grave could not detain. Death could not vanquish. The gates of hell fly open. The mighty conqueror appears. And, as in Canaan, the ark ascended Zion's hill amid triumphant shouts, so Jesus mounts on high. The heaven of heavens receives him. The Father welcomes the all-conquering Saviour. Angelic hosts adore the glorious God-man. The Rising Prayer has full accomplishment, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

And now, from glory's throne, he cheers his humble followers in their desert march. Their toils, their conflicts, and their fears are many. They oftimes seem as a poor worm beneath the crushing feet. But they survive, they prosper, they lift up the head. As of old the ark was victory, so Jesus is victory now. Yes, every child of faith shall surely set a conquering foot upon the host of foes. Hear this, ye mad opposers, and desist. Where are the nations who resisted Israel? Where are the Pharaohs, the beleaguered kings, the Herods, the chief-priests, the Pilates? Share not their malice, lest you share their end. Read in this word your near destruction, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee."

And, as the Rising Prayer has never failed, so, too, the Resting Prayer now teems with life. "Return, O Lord." Jesus is ready to fly back. Israel's many thousands wait, but wait not in vain. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 37. O joyful day, triumphant sight! What ecstasy, what shouts, what glory! Salvation's Lord returns. Welcome, welcome to him!—*Henry Law*, in "*Christ is All! The Gospel of the Old Testament.*" 1858.

Verse 1.—"Arise." The mercifulness of God is seen in his patience toward the wicked, implied in the word "*arise*," for he seemeth, as it were, to *sleep* (Psalm xlv. 23), and not to mark what is done amiss. The Lord is patient, and would have none to perish, but would have all men to come to repentance. He was longer in destroying one city (*Jericho*, Joshua vi. 4), than in building the whole world; slow to wrath, and ready to forgive, desiring not the death of a sinner, but rather he should amend. He doth not arise to particular punishments, much less to the general judgment, but after long suffering and great goodness. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I," quoth our Lord, "have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matt. xxiii. 37.—*John Boys*.

Verse 1.—"Let his enemies be scattered." You may, if you please, take the words either as a prayer, or as a prophecy: as a prayer that they may; or as a prophecy, that they shall be scattered. Or, you may read it, *Surgente Domino. As soon as the Lord shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered*, and so make it a theological axiom: and so it is a proposition *æternæ veritatis*, everlastingly true, true in the first age of the world, and true in the last age of the world, and will be true to the world's end. We may make it our prayer, that they may be destroyed; and we may prophesy, that they shall be destroyed. *Summa votorum est, non ex incerto poscentis, sed ex cognitione scientiæque sperantis*, saith Hilary. It is a prayer not proceeding from a doubting and wavering heart, as if God did at sometimes deliver his church, and at others fail and leave her to the will of her enemies; but grounded upon certain knowledge and infallible assurance that he will "*arise, and not keep silence*," and avenge himself of his enemy. For there is a kind of presage and prophecy in prayer: if we pray as we should, he hath promised to grant our request; which is a fairer assurance than any prophet can give us. "*Let God arise*," and *God will arise*, it is but the difference of a tense, and the Hebrews commonly use the one for the other. . . .

In this prayer or prophecy, or conclusion, you may, as in a glass, behold the providence of God over his people, and the destiny and fatal destruction of wicked

men. Or, you may conceive God sitting in heaven, and looking down upon the children of men, and laughing to scorn all the designs of his enemies; his *exurgat*, his rising, as a tempest to scatter them, and as a fire to melt them. And these two, *exurgat* and *dissipabuntur*, the rising of God and the destruction of his enemies, divide the text, and present before our eyes two parties or sides, as it were, in main opposition. Now, though the *exurgat* be before the *dissipabuntur*, God's rising before the scattering, yet there must be some persons to rouse God up and awake him before he will arise to destroy. We will, therefore, as the very order of nature required, consider first the persons which are noted out unto us by three several appellations, as by so many marks and brands in their forehead. They are, 1. *Enemies*; 2. *Haters of God*; 3. *Wicked men*. But God, *rising* in this manner, is more especially against the fact than the person, and against the person only for the fact. We must, therefore, search and inquire after that; and we find it wrapt up and secretly lurking in the *dissipabuntur*, in their punishment; for scattering supposeth a gathering together, as corruption doth generation. That, then, which moved God to rise is this: his *enemies*, they that *hated him*, the *wicked*, were gathered together, and consulted against God and his church, as we see it this day; and, seeing it, are here met together to fall down before God in all humility, that he may arise and scatter them. This is *nunc opportunitatis*, the very time and appointed time for God to arise. In which phrase is implied a kind of pause and deliberation, as if God were not always up, and ready to execute judgment. And, hereby, he manifesteth—1. His patience to the wicked: he is not always up, as it were, to destroy his enemies; 2. His justice, which cometh at length, though it come not so soon as men in misery expect; 3. His mercy to his children: though for a while he seem to sleep, and not to hearken to the voice of their complaints, yet, at last, he rises up and helps them. Lastly, we shall take notice of the effect, or end, of this rising; and that is the destruction of his enemies, here drawn out to our view, in four several expressions, as in so many colours:—1. *Dissipabuntur, they shall be scattered*; 2. *Fugient, they shall fly*; 3. *Deficient, they shall vanish like smoke*; 4. *Liquefient, they shall be melted as wax*; which all meet and are concentrated in *peribunt, they shall perish at the presence of God*.—Anthony Farindon.

Verses 1—3.—Whether the Jewish Church fully comprehended the meaning of the predictions or not, it is absolutely certain that her members were taught, in more places than one, earnestly to pray for Christ's second advent; and to one of these prayers I would now direct your attention, considering, I. *The Prayer of the Jewish Church for the Second Advent of Christ*. II. *The duty of the Christian Church to join in it*. The Psalmist, moved by the Spirit of God, adopts the words used by Moses in the wilderness, when the ark, in which God dwelt between the cherubim, set forward; for we read in the 10th of Numbers, "It came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." But the wanderings of Israel were now over, and the ark of the Lord had found a place of rest. The people of God were in the land promised to their fathers; their enemies were subdued; and the ark went forth no more with the armies of Israel. It is not, therefore, the removal of the ark to which the prophet alludes in his prayer. The context of the Psalm, and the expressions used, carry us on far beyond the days of David, and refer us to times still future. David prays for the return of him of whom the ark was a type, whose glorious advent he beheld by the spirit of prophecy. The words of the text contain a prayer for the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never has this prayer been yet answered in its full extent. The Lord has oft interfered in behalf of his people, or to rouse the wicked to repentance; but these interpositions were temporary, and the world was left again to the government of his providence. God has often given tokens sufficient to show the world what he will do when the day of his wrath is come. . . . But yet the world and the church abound with wickedness, and mourn because of sin. They that hate the Lord flee not before him, but are still suffered to open their mouths in blasphemy; nor have the wicked perished in the presence of God. . . . This rising up, for which the Psalmist prays, is connected with the restoration of Israel, the establishment of universal peace, and the conversion of all nations: ver. 22, 29, 30, 31. II. As members of the Christian Church, we continually profess our faith in the second coming of Christ; and, it may be, that we sometimes meditate upon his glorious appearance; but have we, like David, adopted it as one of the subjects of our addresses at the throne of grace? . . . Has

our faith ever enabled us to take up the language of the text, and say, "*Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him*"? This leads me, in the second place, to point out our duty to join in the Psalmist's petitions. If it were a prayer suited only to the individual case of David, no obligation could rest upon us to unite in it; but it is a prayer for the universal church, for every one who loves the Saviour, and desires to see "the King in his beauty," for every one who mourns over the state of the world and the church. It is a prayer frequently repeated in Holy Scripture of the Old Testament taught by our Lord, now offered up by saints in the presence of God, and with which the Scriptures of the New Testament conclude. . . .

It is remarkable that only one prayer of the departed saints has been made known to us, and that this one should be a prayer to the same effect. In the 5th Chapter of the Revelation, the Lord is pleased to give us a view of the state of those who have died as martyrs. St. John says, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Though removed from this scene of woe and misery, safe from all the attempts of the wicked, and in the enjoyment of God's presence, their happiness is not yet complete, and they still find subject matter for prayer and supplication. They still long for that day when the Lord shall arise to judgment, and put an end to the triumph of the wicked. With this prayer also the New Testament concludes. . . . We cannot, therefore, doubt, but that it is our duty to join in a prayer which the Holy Ghost has dictated, which our Lord has appointed, which the saints in heaven use, and which the beloved disciple offered up. The nature of the prayer presents another argument to enforce this duty. We are bound to pray for those things which promote the honour of Christ, and the eternal happiness of his people. But never shall the honour of Christ be complete, nor his people happy, nor the righteous be glad and rejoice exceedingly, until God arise and his enemies be scattered.—*Alexander M'Caul, D.D., in "Plain Sermons on Subjects Practical and Prophetic."* 1840.

Verse 2.—"*As smoke is driven away,*" etc. The Psalmist adds a striking figure to illustrate how easily God can overthrow the machinations of our enemies, comparing them to *smoke which vanishes away when blown upon by the wind, or wax which melts before the fire.* We consider it utterly incredible that such a formidable array of opposition should be made to disappear in a moment. But the Spirit takes this method of chiding the fearfulness of our carnal minds, and teaching us that there is no such strength in our enemies as we suppose—that we allow the smoke of them to blind our eyes, and the solid mass of resistance which they present to deceive us into a forgetfulness of the truth, that the mountains themselves flow down at the presence of the Lord.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 2.—"*As smoke is driven away,*" etc. "Their end was bitter as the smoke," said an aged teacher. What meanest thou, O Master? asked his young disciple. "I was thinking of the end of the unrighteousness," replied the old man, "and of how too often I, like the Psalmist, have been envious when they were in prosperity. Their lives have seemed so bright and glowing that I have thought they resembled the blaze of a cheerful fire on a winter's night. But, as I have watched them, they have suddenly vanished like the flame that fades into black and bitter smoke; and I have ceased to envy them. Trust not, O my scholar, only to that which appears brilliant; but watch also for its ending, lest thou be deceived."—*Hubert Bower, in "Parables and Similitudes of the Christian Life."* 1871.

Verse 3.—"*But let the righteous be glad.*" The wicked flee from the presence of God, since it inspires them with terror; the righteous on the other hand rejoice in it, because nothing delights them more than to think that God is near them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Exalt him that rideth upon the heavens.*" Or, as Symmachus, Jerome, Bishop Lowth, Merrick, and others render, "Prepare the way for him who rideth through the deserts: אָרָבוֹת *aravoth*; i.e., who rode through the wilderness on the cherubim; alluding to the passage of the ark.—"*Comprehensive Bible.*"

Verse 4.—"*Rideth.*" Said, perhaps, with allusion to the cherubim on which

Jehovah was borne (xviii. 10), God himself being the Leader and Captain of his people, riding as it were at their head as an earthly captain might lead his army, riding on a war-horse.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 4.—“*Upon the heavens.*” The ancient versions in general render the word עֲבֹתָא, *super occasus*, or *occasum*. The *desert* or *solitude* is the proper and general meaning of it, and there is no authority to render it by *the heavens*, but that of the Rabbins, which, indeed, is little or none; and of the Chaldee paraphrase which gives it עֲבֹתָא הַשָּׁמַיִם, *super thronam gloriae ejus in nono caelo*: who sits upon the throne of his glory in the ninth heaven. The Psalmist here alludes, as I apprehend, to the passage of the Israelites through the deserts in their way to the promised land, and describes it in many of the principal circumstances of it in the following verses; and God is said to *ride*, or, *be carried through the deserts*, as the ark of his presence was carried through them, and accompanied the Israelites in all their various stages during their continuance and pilgrimage in them.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 4.—God always goes at the head of his people through the deserts of suffering and need; in the deserts of trouble they find in him a true leader.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verse 4.—“*His name JAH.*” JAH, as the concentration of Jehovah, is the more emphatic term (*Stier*). It occurs for the first time in Ex. xv. 2.—*Frederic Fysh*, in “*A Lyrical Literal Version of the Psalms.*” 1850.

Verse 5.—“*A father of the fatherless.*” In a spiritual sense, the *orphans*, whose father God is, says Hilary, are those who have renounced their father the Devil, and those to whom Christ, at his departure, sent another *Comforter*, according to his promise—“*I will not leave you orphans.*”—*Lorinus.*

Verse 5.—Does not James i. 27, refer to this verse, for we have “*the fatherless,*” “*the widow,*” and then the “*holiness,*” of the God we serve?—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 5.—“*God in his holy habitation.*” Albeit the Lord be infinite and uncomprehended by any place, yet hath he appointed a trusting-place where his people shall find him by his own ordinance, to wit, the assembly of his saints, his holy temple shadowing forth Christ to be incarnate, who now is in heaven, now is incarnate, and sitting at the right hand of God, in whom dwells the Godhead; here, here is God to be found.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 6.—“*God setteth the solitary in families.*” It may be interpreted of the fruitfulness and increase of the church with converts, under the gospel dispensation, even from among the Gentiles, who were before solitary, or were alone, without God and Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but, being called and converted by the ministry of the word, were brought into and placed in gospel churches, or families. . . . Gospel churches, like families, have a master over them, who is Christ the Son and firstborn, of whom they are named; where are saints of various ages, sizes, and standing; some fathers, some young men, and some children; where are provisions suitable for them, and stewards to give them their portion of meat in due season, who are the ministers of the word; and laws and rules, by which they are directed and regulated, and everything is kept in good decorum.—*John Gill.*

Verse 8.—“*The God of Israel.*” Sinai was the seat not only of God, but of the *covenant God* of the people of Israel; from which the law was proclaimed, and the covenant struck between God and his people.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 9.—The “*Thou*” in the Hebrew is emphatic: “*Thine inheritance, even when it was wearied (i.e., worn out) thou didst confirm;*” or, “*fortify it.*” Thou who alone couldst strengthen one worn out, didst so for thy people.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 9.—“*A liberal rain.*” The words translated a *liberal rain*, read literally in the Hebrew a *rain of freenesses*; and I agree with interpreters in thinking that he alludes to the blessing as having come in the exercise of free favour, and to God, as having of his own unprompted goodness provided for all the wants of his people. Some read, a *desirable rain*; others, a *rain flowing without violence, or gentle*; but neither of these renderings seems eligible. Others read, a *copious or plentiful rain*; but I have already stated what appears to me to be the preferable sense.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 9.—“*A gracious rain* ;” that is, of manna.—*Edmund Law* (1703—1787), quoted by *Richard Warner* in *loc.* 1828.

Verse 9.—“*Rain.*” One fountain, says Cyril, waters thy paradise, and the rain that falls upon all the world is the same ; it is white in the bloom of the hawthorn, red in the rose, purple in the hyacinth, and diverse in diverse kinds, and all in all ; yet it itself is the same and of the same kind. . . . So also the Holy Spirit, though he is one and the same and not divisible, yet to every one he divideth grace according as he wills.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 9.—“*A plentiful rain.*” Thy love has been as a shower ! The returns, but a dew-drop, and that dew-drop stained with sin.—*James Harrington Evans.* 1785—1849.

Verse 10.—“*Thy congregation.*” The words are choice and expressive. Addressing God, (the poet) intentionally and emphatically calls the people of Israel *thy combined congregation*, in contrast to former divisions and various dissensions, to signify, that the people was now welded together, formed into one society, and united at the same time, that it was well ordered, and constituted as the *society of God*, wherein his laws flourished and were wont to be observed.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 10.—“*Thy congregation.*” Or, *Thy living creatures*, *חַיִּים, רַב־כְּנָסָא* LXX., *animalia*, Vulgate ; probably a reference to the immense number of quails which were miraculously brought to the camp of the Israelites, and, in a manner, *dwelt around it.*—*Note in the “Comprehensive Bible.”*

Verse 10.—“*Thy congregation.*” Or, *Thy living creatures.* That desolate place, where only wild beasts before could live, was now by those showers of manna (verse 9) enabled to sustain a multitude of other *tamer living creatures*, even of men and all their flocks and herds.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 10 (first clause).—*“Father :—“As for thy food (manna and quails), they dwell in the midst of it.”—Edmund Law.*

Verse 10 (first clause).—*As to thy food, they dwell amidst it.* The ambiguity of the word *חַיִּים* has occasioned various renderings of this line. Parkhurst considers the radical sense of *חַיִּים* is “to be vigorous, strong ;” hence the noun denotes *force*, a body of men (2 Sam. xxiii. 13) ; and also that which gives strength, the means of support, or food (Judg. vi. 4 and xvii. 10) ; and compare Neh. ix. 6. Our translators took the term in the first sense ; I take it in the second, because the connection seems to require it, and because *חַיִּים* refers always to a body of men, as soldiers, as actually engaged in some kind of warfare. Hence what is called the *troop* of Philistines (2 Sam. xxiii. 13) is called the *camp* of the Philistines. 1 Chron. xi. 15. And, lastly, because the common version has no antecedent to which *חַיִּים*, in it, or amidst it, can refer ; but this version has one in the noun *food*. I think there is then a reference not only to the manna, but to the quails, which God brought in abundance around the camp. Exod. xvi. 13 ; Num. xi. 31. Thus he prepared in his goodness for the poor.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 10.—“*Thou hast prepared in thine own sweetness for the poor, O God.*” In *thine own sweetness*, not in his sweetness. For the needy he is, for he hath been made weak, in order that he may be made perfect : he hath acknowledged himself indigent, that he may be replenished.—*Augustine.*

Verse 11.—“*The Lord gave the word : great was the company of those that published it.*” You shall find, when the enemies of the church are destroyed, that God hath many preachers made that do teach his praises. . . . The words in the original are very significant, and do note two things. First, the word which you read “*company,*” in the Hebrew it is “*army,*” “*great was the army of preachers.*” An army of preachers is a great matter ; nay, it is a great matter to have seven or eight good preachers in a great army ; but to have a whole army of preachers that is glorious. Secondly, it doth note out the heartiness of this preaching army, for the word *חַיִּים*, soul, is to be understood as in that place of Ecclesiastes ; it is said there, “*The words or book of the preacher,*” which, being in the feminine gender, doth suppose *nephesh*, and as if he should say, as Vatablus hath it : the words or book of him that hath a preaching soul or heart, or the words of a preaching soul or heart. So here where it is said, great is the army of preachers, the word being in the feminine gender, it is as if he should say, great is the army of preaching souls, whose very hearts within them shall preach of the Lord’s works. Now, my brethren, it is much to have a preaching army ; but if this army shall with heart and soul preach

of God's praise, O that is a blessed thing. Yet thus shall it be when the enemies of God shall be destroyed. And, therefore, seeing God will not lose all those sermons of his own praises, in due time the enemies of the church shall be scattered.—*William Bridge*, in "*The True Soldier's Convoy*," 1640.

Verse 11.—It is owing to the word, the appointment, and power of God, that any persons are induced or enabled to preach the gospel.—*John Newton* (1725—1807), in "*Messiah*."

Verses 11, 12.—This account of Israel's victories is applicable to victories obtained by the exalted Redeemer, when the enemies of man's salvation were vanquished by the resurrection of Christ, and the heathen nations were compelled to own his power; and this great victory was first notified by women to the disciples.—From "*A Practical Illustration of the Book of Psalms*; by the Author of the Family Commentary on the New Testament." [Mrs. Thomson.] 1826.

Verses 11, 12.—The Lord did give his word at his ascension, and there were a multitude of them that published it, and by this means kings of armies were put to flight: they conquered by the word: there is not such another way to rout kings and their armies.—*William Strong*. —1654.

Verses 11—14.

The Lord giveth the word!
A great company of women announce the glad tidings!
Kings with their armies flee—they flee!
And those, who dwell within the house, divide the spoil!
Although they lie among the hearth-stones,
They are become like a dove's wings overlaid with silver,
And like her pinions overlaid with yellow gold.
When the Almighty scattereth kings,
They glisten therein, as snow upon Salmon.

Those who dwell within the house—i.e., the women. They are thus described in allusion to their retired habits of life, in eastern countries. *Lie among the hearth-stones—i.e.,* are habitually employed in the lowest domestic offices, and whose ordinary dress, therefore, is mean and soiled. *The hearth-stones—*Hebrew rests (for boilers). *They are become—*by being decked in the spoils of the enemy.—*Glisten as snow—*Hebrew (each woman) is snowy: therein—i.e., in the spoils distributed amongst them.—*French and Skinner's Translation and Notes.*

Verse 12.—"*Kings of armies did flee apace.*" In the Hebrew it is, they fled, they fled; fled is twice. Why so? That is, they did flee very hastily, and they fled most confusedly, they fled all ways; they fled, they fled, noting the greatness of the flight.—*William Bridge.*

Verse 12.—"*The kings of hosts shall flee.*"—The "hosts" are the numerous well-equipped armies which the kings of the heathen lead forth to the battle against the people of God. The unusual expression, "kings of hosts," sounds very much like an ironically disparaging antithesis to the customary "Jahve of Hosts."—*Böttcher, quoted by Delitzsch.*

Verse 12.—"*She that tarried at home.*" That is, all the noncombatants, saith Kimchi. Or, the women also (those *domi portæ*) came forth to pillage. These days of the gospel do abound with many godly matrons and holy virgins. And it is easy to observe that the New Testament affordeth more store of good women than the old.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 12.—"*Divided the spoil,*" not merely (as Hupfeld) "receives her portion of the spoil," but rather "distributes among her daughters and handmaidens, etc., the share of the spoil" which her husband has brought home.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 13.—It would neither be profitable nor possible to give the reader all the conjectures with which learned men have illustrated or darkened this passage. My aim has been to give a selection, not perhaps what may be called a judicious one, but a sort of sample selection, containing specimens of interpretations. Hammond, who is a very high authority, collects what are probably the best suggestions; we, therefore, give the substance of his long note upon this place. Solomon Jarchl and others see in the word the idea of boundaries, ways, and paths which serve as divisions of land, hence the divergence of the Septuagint into the meaning of portions and inheritances. The boundaries were usually heaps of stones, broken bricks, and rubbish, hence another meaning. But stones, bricks, etc., were

often used to support pots in the open-air cookery of the orientals, hence we come to the meaning of "among the pots." And, as Job on his dunghill sat among ashes, and scraped himself with a potsherd, we see that sitting among such rubbish was a conspicuous image of the most dejected and squalid condition. In the wings of a dove, Hammond sees an allusion to the golden cherubic wings which covered the ark, whereby God's presence was exhibited to his people, and their prosperity secured. His explanation of the whole is as follows:—"The Israelites that were oppressed, and long lay in a sad and black, destitute, despised condition, were now at length advanced to all prosperity, splendour, and glory (as was remarkable in their coming out from the kilns of Egypt, with the jewels and wealth of the Egyptians, and afterward more illustriously at their enjoying of Canaan). And so, under Christ's kingdom, the heathenish idolaters that were brought to the basest and most despicable condition of any creatures, worshipping wood and stone, etc., and given up to the vilest lusts, and a reprobate mind (Rom. i.), should from that detestable condition be advanced to the service of Christ, and practice of all Christian virtues, charity, meekness, etc., the greatest inward beauties in the world."—C. H. S.

Verse 13.—"Though ye have *lien* among the pots," etc. That is, probably, though ye have laboured and lain down *between the brick-kilns* in Egypt,—a poor, enslaved, and oppressed people, yet ye shall gradually rise to dignity, prosperity, and splendour; as a dove, which has been defiled with dirt, disordered, and dejected, by washing herself in a running stream, and trimming her plumage, gradually recovers the serenity of her disposition, the purity of her colour, and the richness and varied elegance of her appearance.—W. Greenfield, in "Comp. Bible."

Verse 13.—"Though ye have *lien* among the pots;" or, *between two rows of stones* (understand hearth-stones), as in camps, and elsewhere also, which even to this day used to be laid and disposed to make fire between them to dress meat by, setting on or hanging over it pots and kettles, etc. Others, *between or among dripping-pans, or pots*, the sense being all one, and this—though you should be cast or thrust out into the uttermost slavery, or vilest condition (as in Egypt), all besmoked and besmattered, like cooks and scullions, yet shall God through his gracious blessing make you to shine again like a goodly flying dove, which glistereth as if it were of silver and gold.—Theodore Haak's "Translation of the Dutch Annotations, as ordered by the Synod of Dort in 1618." London, 1657.

Verse 13.—"Though ye had lain among the folds." Though ye had been treated by the Egyptians as a company of contemptible shepherds, and were held in abomination by them as such. See Genesis xvi. 34.—William Green, in "A New Translation of the Psalms, with Notes," etc. 1762.

Verse 13 (first clause).—German, "lie a-field," i.e., though you thus, in deep peace, lie among the sheepfolds.—T. C. Barth.

Verse 13.—"Will ye lie down among the sheepfolds?" A sharp remonstrance. Will ye lie at ease, in the quiet of your pastoral life, as the dove with unsoiled plumage in her peaceful nest, while your brethren are in the tumult and dust of the conflict! Compare Judges v. 16 (from which this allusion is taken) and 17.—Thomas J. Conant.

Verse 13.—"Though ye have *lien* among the pots," etc. Here is one Hebrew word in the original which especially renders the Scripture intricate; namely שֵׁפָתַיִם, *shephattajim*; which, being a word of divers significations and translations, occasions various interpretations. It is rendered, I. *limits or bounds*; II. *lots or inheritances*; III. *pots or pot-ranges*. 1. Some render it *two limits, or two bounds* (the word being of the dual number); viz., the *two limits, bounds, or coasts of the enemies, ready to afflict, vex, and infest them on each hand*. Or, *two confines of the country where they fortified themselves against their enemies*. This sense some later writers embrace: and it's one of the interpretations which Ainsworth gives, though not in the first place. But this version seems here very unsuitable, for that it quite destroys the elegance and fitness of the opposition between the two metaphors, representing Israel's different conditions, *before* and *under* David's Government. Some render it *two lots, or two inheritances*. So the LXX., ἀνά μέσον τῶν κλήρων; that is, *amidst the lots, or between the inheritances*; inheritances, as in Canaan, being anciently set out by *lots*. This Hierom seems to follow, turning it, *Si dormiatis inter medios cleros*: and thus he expounds it: "When thou believest the two Testaments, in both thou shalt find the Holy Ghost. And though there be a beauty, even according to the letter, to know what thou readeest, the force of all the comeliness is in the sense. Therefore, the outward ornament of the words is demonstrated by the name of *silver*; but the more secret mysteries are contained in the hidden

gifts of gold, etc. So that, with him, the *two lots* are the *two Testaments*; the *dove* is the Holy Ghost; her *wings covered with silver*, the *outward letter of the Testaments*, the *feathers of yellow gold*, the *inward, spiritual, and mysterious sense*. But this is rather a witty allegorical allusion, than a judicious and solid exposition. Augustine also expounds the words much to this effect, but altogether as unsatisfactorily. The ancient Fathers are not always the best expositors. 3. But most do render the word *pots* or *pot-ranges*. Thus: "Although ye have lien among the pots (or, between the pot-ranges; or, between the two banks or rows—viz., of stone to hang pots on in the camp or leaguer), yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered (or decked) with silver, and her feathers with yellow-greenish gold." And they observe in the words a double metaphor: (1.) The one of Israel's lying among the pots, as scullions lie among the pots, kettles, or cauldrons in the camp or leaguer in time of war, and so are blacked, soiled, smutted, deformed; denoting Israel's abject, low, mean, sullied, deformed, and despicable condition under afflictions and extreme distresses in time past in Egypt, the wilderness, Canaan, and in the time of the Judges. (2.) The other of Israel's being like the wings of a dove (which is of very speedy flight for escape), of bright silver and beauteous golden colour; representing their escape and deliverance at last out of all their blacking, smutting, and deforming afflictions, into the contrary, beauteous, prosperous, and happy state under the kingdom of David, especially of Jesus Christ the true David. *Blackness* notes extreme affliction, affliction and misery; *doves' wings*, escape; white *silver-colour* and beauteous *golden colour*, prosperity and felicity. Thus the metaphors are elegantly opposed one to another, and very significantly set forth the several conditions of Israel; first, as lying among the pots of deep afflictions in former times, but after as assured of deliverance, of better days, and that they should be as a *silver-winged and golden-feathered dove*, full of beauty, comeliness, prosperity, and felicity. To this effect R. David Kimchi, Pagnin, Calvin, Muis, Foord, Ainsworth, and others expound these words.—Francis Roberts, in a Sermon entitled "The Checquer-Work of God's Providences, towards His Own People, made up of Blacks and Whites," etc. 1657.

Verse 13.—"Though ye have lien among the pots," etc. Miss Whately, in her work, "Ragged Life in Egypt," describing some of the sights witnessed from the flat roofs of the houses in Cairo, among other interesting objects, states:—The roofs are usually in a great state of litter, and were it not that *Hasna*, the seller of *geeleh*, gets a palm-branch, and makes a clearance once in a while, her roof would assuredly give way under the accumulation of rubbish. One thing never seemed cleared away, and that was the heaps of old broken pitchers, sherds, and pots, that in these and similar houses are piled up in some corner; and there is a curious observation in connection with this. A little before sunset, numbers of *pigeons* suddenly emerge from behind the pitchers and other rubbish, where they have been sleeping in the heat of the day, or pecking about to find food. They dart upwards, and career through the air in large circles, their outspread wings catching the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, so that they really resemble bright "yellow gold;" then, as they wheel round, and are seen *against* the light, they appear as if turned into molten silver, most of them being pure white, or else very light coloured. This may seem fanciful, but the effect of *light* in these regions is difficult to describe to those who have not seen it; and, evening after evening, we watched the circling flight of the doves, and always observed the same appearance. It was beautiful to see these birds, rising clean and unsoiled, as doves always do, from the dust and dirt in which they had been hidden, and soaring aloft in the sky till nearly out of sight among the bright sunset clouds. Thus a believer, who leaves behind him the corruptions of the world, and is rendered bright by the Sun of Righteousness shining upon his soul, rises higher and higher, nearer and nearer to the light, till, lost to the view of those who stay behind, he has passed into the unknown brightness above! —Miss Whately, in "Ragged Life in Egypt."

Verse 13.—"Silver" and "yellow gold." The changing colours of the dove's plumage are here described. Mant reads it—

"Whose wings, a silver light illumes,
And gleams of verdant gold play o'er her burnished plumes!"

It will illustrate the variety of the translations, if we add that of Keble:

' His plumes inlaid with silver sheen,
His pinions of the pale pure gold."

Personally, I have had cause to remark the flash of the wing of a pigeon, for, in passing before my study window, that bird has often led me to imagine that some unusual light had flashed across the sky; in every case, a mild and silvery light. As to the varying hues of the plumage of birds, Mr. Gosse, after quoting from Sonnerat's Voyage in New Guinea, says, "In reference to the brilliant metallic hues of the epimachus and other birds, the traveller takes occasion to notice the iridescent effect which is produced by the different angle at which light falls on the feathers. The emerald green, for instance, will often fling out rays of its two constituent primary colours, at one time being blue-green, at another gold-green, while in certain lights all colour vanishes, and a velvet-black is presented to the eye." This it seems to me is a very natural and complete explanation of the poetic language here employed.—C. H. S.

Verse 14.—"Salmon" or Zalmon, properly Tsalmon, צלמון a woody hill near Shechem (Judges ix. 48). Whether it is this that is referred to in Psalm lxxviii. 14, is disputed. Some interpreters take צלמון here in its etymological meaning of darkness, = צל; thus Luther renders the clause "so wird es helle wo es dunkel ist," thus it be bright where it is dark, and understands it with a Messianic reference. Ewald adopts much the same rendering. The majority, however, retain the name as a proper name, but exhibit great variety in their explanation of the passage. Hengstenberg thinks that the phrase, "it snows on Tsalmon," is equivalent to "there is brightness where there was darkness," the hill, originally dark with wood, is now white with snow. De Dieu supposes a comparison: Tsalmon is white with the bones of the slaughtered kings, as if with snow. Some suppose that there is here a mere note of time: it was winter, the snow was on Tsalmon (Herder); and this Hupfeld adopts, with the explanation that the statement is made derisively, with reference to those who tarried at home, deterred by the winter's snow. He considers the passage (12—14) as a fragment of an ancient song, celebrating some of the early conquests of Israel in Canaan, and deriding those, who, from indolence or fear, shrank from the enterprise. He translates thus:

"The kings of the armies, flee, flee,
And the housewife shares the spoil!
Will ye lie among the shippens?
Pigeon feathers decked with silver,
And their wings with yellow gold!
As the Almighty scattered kings therein,
It was snowing on Tsalmon."

William Lindsay Alexander, in "A Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature." 1866.

Verse 14.—The verb may be viewed as in the second person—*Thou, O God! didst make it fair and white as Mount Salmon with snow.* The reader may adopt either construction, for the meaning is the same. It is evident that David insists still upon the figure of the whiteness of silver, which he had previously introduced. The country had, as it were, been blackened or sullied by the hostile confusion into which it was thrown, and he says that it had now recovered its fair appearance, and resembled Salmon, which is well known to have been ordinarily covered with snows. Others think that Salmon is not the name of a place, but an appellative, meaning a dark shade. I would retain the commonly received reading. At the same time, I think that there may have been an allusion to the etymology. It comes from the word צל, *tselem*, signifying a shade, and Mount Salmon had been so called on account of its blackness. This makes the comparison more striking; for it intimates that as the snows whitened this black mountain, so the country had resumed its former beauty, and put on an aspect of joy, when God dispelled the darkness which had lain upon it during the oppression of enemies.—John Calvin.

Verse 14.—"It was as white as snow in Salmon." That is, this thine inheritance, thy peculiar people, appeared as bright and glorious in the sight of their neighbours, as the snowy head of Salmon glisters by the reflection of the sunbeams.—Thomas Fenton.

Verse 14.—"White as snow in Salmon." The expression here used seems to denote, that everything seemed so bright and cheerful to the mind of God's people, as Salmon does to their eyes, when glistening with snow. As snow is much less common, and lies a much shorter time in Judæa than in England, no wonder that it is much more admired; accordingly, the son of Sirach speaks of it with a kind

of rapture. "The eye will be astonished at the beauty of its whiteness, and the heart transported at the raining of it." *Ecclus. xliii. 18 or 20.—Samuel Burder.*

Verse 14.—"Salmon." Dean Stanley conjectures that Salmon is another name for Mount Ebal; it was certainly near Shechem (see Judges ix. 48), but it is almost hopeless to expect to identify it, for Mr. Mills, the industrious author of "Nablus and the modern Samaritans," could not find any one who knew the name of Salmon, neither could he discover any traditions in reference to it, or indeed any allusions to it in Samaritan literature. The word signifies a shade, and may, perhaps, popularly be accepted as identical with the name the "Black Forest."—*C. H. S.*

Verse 15.—"Hill of Bashan." The world's physical greatness must yield to the church's spiritual grandeur. The "hill of God" is here an emblem of the *world-kingsdoms*, which (Psalm lxxv. 6) are great only by the grace of God. A great hill reminds us of the *creative* power of God. Hence, "the hill of Elohim" (the general name of God as the *Creator*) stands in contrast to the *hill* which (verse 16) "the Lord" (Jehovah) will dwell in for ever. It lay in the north, in the region east of Jordan, or the land of Hermon, the kingdom of Og, the most formidable enemy whom Israel encountered on their march to Canaan. "The hill of Bashan is the high snow-summit of Anti-Lebanon, or Hermon, the extreme limit of Bashan. There was a peculiar propriety, from its position on the boundary between Judea and the heathen world, in employing it as a symbol of the world's might (verse 22; Psalm xlii. 6; lxxxix. 12)" (*Hengstenberg*). The original name of Hermon was *Sion*; *i.e., lofty* (Deut. iv. 48); allied in sound to *Zion*, which suggested the contrast here between the *world-hills* and the *Lord's hill*.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verses 15, 16—

"A mountain of God Mount Bashan is:
A mountain of peaks Mount Bashan is.
Why are ye piqued, ye peak'd mountains?
At the mountain which God desires to dwell in?
Yea, Jehovah will dwell therein for ever."

Frederic Fysh's Version.

Verse 16.—"Why leap ye?" As triumphing, and making a show of your natural advantages over *Sion*. Or, to insult over it, and compare and equalise yourselves in honour with it; poetical kind of speeches. Others translate it, *Why gaze you, as though you were ravished with admiration?*—*John Diodati.*

Verse 16.—"This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in." This low, little, barren hill of *Zion*; and God's election maketh the difference, as it did of *Aaron's* rod from the rest, and doth still of the church from the rest of the world. The *Lamb Christ* is on *Mount Zion*. Rev. xiv. 1.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 17.—"The chariots of God." What are these "chariots of God?" Come, we will not stand to mince the matter, look but round about thee, and thou shalt see those *innumerable* chariots and angels here spoken of; for so many *creatures* as thou seest, so many angels and chariots of God thou seest; they are all his host, they are all his chariots wherein he rides; and, whether you see it or no, "*The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*" The glory of the Lord fills them all (had we but our eyes open to see it so), and they are all at his command, and there is not one creature but doth his pleasure. Oh, brethren! how glorious and blessed a thing it is, that looking round about us to behold and see, that look how many creatures *visible* and *invisible* thou seest or conceivest in thy mind to be, for thy soul now to look on them as so many fiery chariots and horsemen for its defence, protection, and preservation! And, on the other hand, "How fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," who hath all these chariots and horsemen at his command to execute his will and vengeance on those that neglect, hate, and oppose him.—*John Everard, in "Militia Cœlestis, or the Heavenly Host."* 1653.

Verse 17.—

"About his chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub, and seraph, potentates, and thrones,
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots win
From the armoury of God, where stand of old
Myriads."

John Milton, in "Paradise Lost."

Verse 17.—“*Twenty thousand* ;” rather, *two myriads*, רבתיים singular רבתי; for רבתי only here in the dual, the infinite number doubled. “*Thousands of angels*,” lit., *thousands of iteration* ; i.e., with marg., *many thousands* (Bythner, Gesenius, etc.), רבתי only here, from רבתי, to repeat. The rendering of *angels* was probably suggested by the references to Sinai, next clause (see Deut. xxxiii. 2, where for *saints* read *holy ones*) ; “*chariots*” (רכבי) being used collectively for those who rode in them, as often elsewhere.—*William de Burgh.*

Verse 18.—“*Thou hast ascended on high*,” etc. Some think it refers to God’s goings forth on behalf of his people Israel, leading them forth to victory, taking their enemies captive, and enriching them with the spoils. Suppose it be so, we are warranted to consider it as mainly referring to Christ, for so the apostle has applied it. Ephesians iv. 8.

The apostle not only applies it to Christ, but *proves* it applicable. Thus he reasons (verses 9, 10), “*Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended*,” etc. The captivity which he led captive was our spiritual enemies who had led us captive—Satan, death ; and, having obtained the victory, he proceeds to divide the spoils. *Gifts to men*—as David made presents. And hence comes our ordinances, ministers, etc. There was a glorious fulfilment immediately after his ascension, in a rich profusion of gifts and graces to his church, like David’s presents. Here it is “*received* ;” in Ephesians, “*gave*.” He received that he might give ; received the spoil that he might distribute it. But, as I wish to appropriate the passage to the work allotted me, the whole of that to which I would at this time call your attention will be contained in two things :—

I. *The great blessings of the Christian ministry.*

1. Ministers are *received for*, and are *given to*, you by Christ. As men, and as sinful men, ministers are as nothing, and wish not to make anything of themselves ; but, as the gifts of Christ, it becomes you to make much of them. (1.) If you *love Christ*, you will make much of your minister, on account of his being *his gift*—a gift designed to supply Christ’s absence in a sort. He is gone (“*ascended*”), but he gives you his servants. By-and-by you hope to be with him, but as yet you are as sheep in the wilderness. He gives you a shepherd. (2.) If you *fear God*, you will be afraid of treating your pastor amiss, seeing he is the gift of Christ. God took it ill of Israel for despising Moses. Numbers xii. 8. He is “*my servant*.”

2. Ministers are not only given to, but *received for* you, of God the Father, as a covenant blessing, among the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. In this view, consider that Christ received nothing at his Father’s hand but what cost him dear—cost him his life. Or, if the allusion be to the dividing of the spoils, suppose we say, he received them as a conqueror receives the spoils at the hand of the foe. Your minister was one of those who, like yourselves, were brands consuming in the fire. Christ took him from your enemies and gives him to you. Make much of the gift on this account. “*This I received of the Amorite.*”

3. Consider your unworthiness of such a blessing. You are *men*, mere men, and what is more, *rebellious* men, who had joined with Satan. And must you share the spoils ? It is not usual to divide the spoils amongst rebels. . . . Men that put him to death had these gifts given to them ; and we should all have done the same. Some of you, it is likely, have been vile and abandoned characters, and yet, etc. . . .

4. The end of it : “*That the Lord God might dwell among them.*” “*But will God, indeed, dwell with men ?*” God had not dwelt with the world, nor in it, while sin bore the rule ; but Christ’s mediation was for the bringing it about. “*Will God, indeed, dwell with men ?*” He will ; and how ? It is by the means of ordinances and ministers. A church of Christ is God’s house ; and where any one builds a house, it is a token that he means to dwell there. What a blessing to a village, a country, for God to build a house in it. It is by this that we may hope for a blessing upon the means to the conversion of our children and friends, and for the edification of believers.

II. *Point out some corresponding duties as answering to these your privileges.*

1. Constant and diligent attendance at the house of God. If the house of God be God’s dwelling, let it be yours, your home. If God gives you a pastor, do you thankfully receive and prize him. He hath not dealt so with every village.

2. Cheerfully contribute to his support. Christ has given you freely, and you ought to give him freely. Consider it is not a gift, but as a debt, and not as done to him, but to Christ.

3. Follow these things which make for peace, with which the presence and blessing of God are connected.

4. Shun those things that tend to provoke the Lord to withdraw his gifts, and to cease to dwell among you.—*Andrew Fuller's Sketch of a Sermon, addressed to the Church at Moulton, on the Ordination of Mr. (since Doctor) Carey, August 1st, 1787.*

Verse 18.—But who is he of whom it is written, that "*he ascended up on high?*" I confess that the sixty-eighth Psalm, wherein these words are first written, is literally to be understood, not of any triumph for the slaughter of the host of Sennacherib, which was done in the time of king Hezekias (as the Jews do most fabulously dream), when the very title of this Psalm, that ascribeth it unto David, doth sufficiently confute this vanity; nor yet for any of the victories of David which he obtained against his bordering enemies, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Idumæans, and the Philistines (as some would have it); but of that great and glorious pomp which was then done and showed, when king David with great joy and triumph did bring the ark of the covenant into the hill of Sion; and, therefore, these words, "*Thou art gone up on high,*" do signify that the ark, which formerly had lain in an obscure place, and was transported from one place to another, was now ascended and seated in a most illustrious and conspicuous place, even in the kingly palace; and these words, "*thou hast led captivity captive,*" do signify those enemies which formerly had spoiled and wasted divers countries; but now, being vanquished by king David, were led captive in this triumph (for so it was the manner of those times, as Plutarch doth excellently declare in the life of Paulus Æmilius); and the other words, "*thou hast received gifts for men,*" do signify those spoils that were freely offered for conditions of peace, and were triumphantly carried about in this pompous show, for the greater solemnity of the same; and then (as the manner was among the chieftains when they triumphed, *Bellica laudatis dona dedisse viris*, to bestow warlike gifts upon worthy men), gifts were bestowed on several men, in several manner, as Sigonius sheweth. Yet I say that, mystically, this Psalm is an ἐπιδικσιον, or a triumphal song, penned by king David upon the foresight of Jesus Christ arising from the dead, and with great joy and triumph ascending up into heaven, and thence sending his Holy Spirit unto his apostles and disciples; and, having overcome all his enemies, collecting by the ministry of his preachers, his churches and chosen people together, and so guiding and defending them here in this life, until he doth receive them into eternal glory.—*Griffith Williams. 1636.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast led captivity captive.*" The expression is emphatical. He has conquered and triumphed over all the powers which held us in captivity, so that captivity itself is taken captive. The spirit and force of it is destroyed; and his people, when released by him, and walking in his ways, have no more to apprehend from those whose captives they were, than a conqueror has to fear from a prisoner in chains. The energy of the phrase is not unlike that of the apostle: "Death is swallowed up in victory."—*John Newton.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast led captivity captive,*" etc. The ancient prophecy of David is fulfilled here on the foot of mount Olivet. To take "*captivity captive,*" signifies that Christ conquered the allied principalities and powers, the devil, sin, death, and hell; and that he deprived them of the instruments wherewith they enslaved men. He not only silenced the cannon on the spiritual Gibraltar, but he took rock, fortification, and all. He not only silenced the horrible and destructive battlements of the powerful and compactly-united ghostly enemies, but he threw down the towers, razed the castles, and took away the keys of the dungeons. He is the Master henceforth, and for ever. He did, also, at the same time, save his people. Where, O Jesus, is the army of which thou art the Captain? "Here! all the names are written in pearls on the breastplate which I wear as a high-priest." He had no sooner left the grave than he began to distribute his gifts, and did so all along the road on his way to his Father's house; and, especially after he entered the heaven of heavens, did he shower down gifts unto men, as a mighty conqueror loaded with treasures with which to enrich and adorn his followers and people. They were gifts of mercy: gifts to the rebellious; to those who threw down their arms at his feet in penitent submission, "that the Lord God may dwell among them." The apostle shows that a portion of these gifts are gifts of ministry. Accordingly, whenever God condescends to dwell among a people and in a country, he gives that people and country his ministry. He sends them his gospel in the mouths of faithful servants. He establishes there his house; the board and the

candlestick; and then, in his Spirit, he dwells there and blesses his heritage.—*Christmas Evans.* 1766—1838.

Verse 18.—The apostle (Eph. iv. 8) does not quote the words of the Psalm literally, but according to the sense. The phrase, "*Thou hast received gifts,*" as applied to Christ at his glorification, could only be for the purpose of distribution, and hence the apostle quotes them in this sense, "*He gave gifts to men.*" This Hebrew phrase may be rendered either, "Thou hast received gifts in the human nature," or, "Thou hast received gifts for the sake of man" (see Gen. xviii. 28; 2 Kings xiv. 6.) The apostle uses the words in the sense of the *purpose* for which the gifts were received, and there is no contradiction between the Psalmist and the apostle. Thus, the difficulties of this quotation vanish when we examine them closely, and the Old and New Testaments are in complete harmony. Rosenmüller expounds Ps. xviii., and never mentions the name of Christ; and the neologists in general see no Messiah in the Old Testament. To these, indeed, Eph. iv. 8, if they had any modesty, would present a formidable obstacle. Paul asserts the Psalm belongs to Christ, and they assert he is mistaken, and that he has perverted (De Wette) and destroyed its meaning. They assert that *Lamarom*, "on high," means the heights of Mount Zion, and Paul says it means heaven. Which is right? (see the scriptural usage of the word, Ps. vii. 7; xviii. 16; xciii. 4; cii. 19; Jer. xxv. 30; Is. xxxvii. 23.) These passages connect the word with the heavenly mansions, and justify the application of the apostle.—*William Graham*, in "*Lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.*"

Verse 18.—No sooner is Christ inaugurated in his throne, but he scatters his coin, and gives gifts. He gives gifts, or the gift of gifts, the gift of the Holy Ghost. "If thou knewest the gift of God," said Christ to the Samaritan woman (John iv. 10): that gift was the water of life, and that water of life was the Spirit, as John, who knew best his mind, gave the interpretation, "This spake he of the Spirit." John vii. 39. O my soul, consider of this princely gift of Christ! Such a gift was never before, but when God gave his Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his Son;" and Christ so loved the world, that he gave his Spirit. But, O my soul, consider especially to whom this Spirit was given; the application of the gift is the very soul of thy meditation; "unto us a Son is given," said the prophet (Isa. ix. 6); and "unto us the Holy Ghost is given," saith the apostle (Rom. v. 5); and yet above all consider the reasons of this gift in reference to thyself. Was it not to make thee a temple and receptacle of the Holy Ghost? Stand a while on this! Admire, O my soul, at the condescending, glorious, and unspeakable love of Christ in this! It was infinite love to come down into our nature when he was incarnate; but this is more, to come down into thy heart by his Holy Spirit: he came near to us then, but as if that were not near enough, he comes nearer now, for now he unites himself unto thy person, now he comes and dwells in thy soul by his Holy Spirit.—*Isaac Ambrose.* 1592—1674.

Verse 18.—"Thou hast received gifts for men." The glorious ascending of God from Mount Sinai, after the giving of the law, was a representation of his "ascending up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," as Eph. iv. 10. And, as God then "led captivity captive" in the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians who had long held his people in captivity and under cruel bondage; so dealt the Lord Christ now in the destruction and captivity of Satan and all his powers (Col. ii. 15); only, whereas it is said in the Psalm that he "received the gift for men," here (Eph. iv.) it is said that "he gave gifts to men," wherein no small mystery is couched; for, although Christ is God, and is so gloriously represented in the Psalm, yet an intimation is given that he should act what is here mentioned in a condition wherein he was capable to receive from another, as he did in this matter. Acts ii. 33. And so the phrase in the original doth more than insinuate: קָבַץ לְנַפְשׁוֹ "Thou hast received gifts in Adam,"—in the man, or human nature. And לָקַח signifies as well to *give* as to *receive*, especially when anything is received to be given. Christ received this gift in the human nature to give it unto others. Now, to what end is this glorious theatre, as it were, prepared, and all this preparation made, all men being called to the preparation of it? It was to set out the greatness of the gift he would bestow, and the glory of the work which he would effect; and this was to furnish the church with ministers, and ministers with gifts for the discharge of their office and duty. And it will one day appear that there is more glory, more excellency, in giving one poor minister unto a congregation, by furnishing him with spiritual gifts for the discharge of his duty, than in the pompous instal-

ment of a thousand popes, cardinals, or metropolitans. The worst of men, in the observance of a few outward rites and ceremonies, can do the latter; Christ only can do the former, and that as he is ascended up on high to that purpose.—*John Owen.*

Verse 18.—As the passage which we have now been considering is applied by Paul in a more spiritual sense to Christ (Eph. iv. 8), it may be necessary to show how this agrees with the meaning and scope of the Psalmist. It may be laid down as an incontrovertible truth, that David, in reigning over God's ancient people, shadowed forth the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom. This must appear evident to every one who remembers the promise made to him of a never-failing succession, and which received its verification in the person of Christ. As God illustrated his power in David, by exalting him with the view of delivering his people, so has he magnified his name in his only begotten Son. But let us consider more particularly how the parallel holds. Christ, before he was exalted, emptied himself of his glory, having not merely assumed the form of a servant, but humbled himself to the death of the cross. To show how exactly the figure was fulfilled, Paul notices, that what David had foretold was accomplished in the person of Christ, by his being cast down to the lowest parts of the earth in the reproach and ignominy to which he was subjected, before he ascended to the right hand of his Father. Ps. xxii. 7. That in thinking upon the ascension, we might not confine our views to the body of Christ, our attention is called to the result and fruit of it, in his subjecting heaven and earth to his government. Those who were formerly his inveterate enemies he compelled to submission and made tributary; this being the effect of the word of the Gospel, to lead men to renounce their pride and their obstinacy, to bring down every high thought which exalteth itself, and reduce the senses and the affections of men to obedience unto Christ. As to the devils and reprobate men who are instigated to rebellion and revolt by obstinate malice, he holds them bound by secret control, and prevents them from executing intended destruction. So far the parallel is complete. Nor, when Paul speaks of Christ having *given gifts to men*, is there any real inconsistency with what is here stated, although he has altered the words, having followed the Greek version in accommodation to the unlearned reader. It was not himself that God enriched with the spoils of the enemy, but his people; and neither did Christ seek, or need to seek, his advancement, but made his enemies tributary, that he might adorn his Church with the spoil. From the close union subsisting between the head and members, to say that God manifest in the flesh received gifts from the captives, is one and the same thing with saying that he distributed them to his Church. What is said in the close of the verse is no less applicable to Christ: that he obtained his victories that as God he might dwell among us. Although he departed, it was not that he might remove to a distance from us, but, as Paul says, "that he might fill all things." Eph. iv. 10. By his ascension to heaven, the glory of his divinity has been only more illustriously displayed; and, though no longer present with us in the flesh, our souls receive spiritual nourishment from his body and blood, and we find, notwithstanding distance of place, that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 18.—"*Thou hast received gifts for men.*" Heb. אָמַן, *in man*; "*in human nature,*" says Dr. Adam Clarke, "and God, manifest in human flesh, dwells among mortals." "The gifts which Jesus Christ distributes to *man* he has received *in man*, in and by virtue of his *incarnation*, and it is in consequence of his being made man that it may be said, 'the Lord God dwells among them;' for Jesus was called *Immanuel*, 'God with us,' in consequence of his incarnation."—*Ed. Note to Calvin in loc.*

Verse 18.—"*Yea, for the rebellious also.*" I feared, also, that this was the mark that the Lord did set on Cain, even continual fear and trembling under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged upon him for the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I wind and twine and shrink under the burden that was upon me, which burden also did so oppress me, that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet. Yet that saying would sometimes come to my mind, He hath received gifts for the rebellious. Psalm lxxviii. 18. "The rebellious," thought I; why, surely, they are such as once were under subjection to their prince, even those who, after they have sworn subjection to his government, have taken up arms against him; and this, thought I, is my very condition; once I loved him, feared him, served him; but now I am a rebel; I have sold him. I have said, let him go if he will; but

yet he has gifts for rebels, and then why not for me?—*John Bunyan*, in "*Grace Abounding*."

Verse 18 (last clause).—Thou didst not regard their former disobedience, but, even although seeing them contradicting, thou didst continue to do them good, until thou madest them *thine own abode* (ὁικηθήσουσ).—*Theodore*t.

Verse 18 (last clause).—The Chaldee has, "Upon the rebellious, who become proselytes and return by repentance, the Schechinah of the glory of the Lord God dwelleth."

Verse 19.—"Blessed be the Lord," etc. Methinks the sweet singer of Israel seems to raise his note to the emulation of the choir of heaven in the melody of their *Allujahs*; yea, let me say, now that he sings above in that blessed consort of glorious spirits, his ditty cannot be better than this that he sang here upon earth, and wherein we are about to bear our parts at this time. Prepare, I beseech you, both your ears for David's song, and your hearts and tongues for your own. And first, in this angelical strain your thoughts cannot but observe the descent and the ground. The descent of gratulation, "*Blessed be the Lord*," wherein is both applause and excitation; an applause given to God's goodness, and an excitation of others to give that applause. The ground is a threefold respect. Of what God is in himself, *God and Lord*; of what God is and doth to us, "*which loadeth us daily with benefits*;" of what he is both in himself and to us, "*the God of our salvation*;" which last (like to some rich stone) is set off with a dark foil: "*To God the Lord belong the issues from death*." So, in the first for his own sake, in the second for our sakes, in the third for his own and ours; as God, as Lord, as a benefactor; as a Saviour and deliverer. "*Blessed be the Lord*." It is not hard to observe that David's *Allujahs* are more than his *Hosannas*, his thanks more than his suits. Ofttimes doth he praise God when he begs nothing; seldom ever doth he beg that favour, for which he doth not raise up his soul to an anticipation of thanks; neither is this any other than the universal undersong of all his heavenly ditties, "*Blessed be the Lord*." *Praises* (as our former translation hath it) is too low; honour is more than praise; blessing is more than honour. Neither is it for nothing that from this word בָּרַךְ, to bless, is derived בָּרָךְ, the knee, which is bowed in blessing; and the crier before *Joseph* proclaimed *Abrech*, calling for the honour of the knee from all beholders. Gen. xli. 43. Every slight, trivial acknowledgment of worth is a praise; blessing is in a higher strain of gratitude, that carries the whole sway of the heart with it in a kind of divine rapture. Praise is a matter of compliment; blessing of devotion. The apostle's rule is, *that the less is blessed of the greater*, *Abraham* of the King of Salem, the prophet's charge is, *that the greater should be blessed of the less*, yea, the greatest of the least, God of man. This agrees well; blessing is an act that will bear reciprocation; God blesseth man, and man blesseth God. God blesseth man imperatively; man blesseth God optatively. God blesseth man in the acts of mercy; man blesseth God in the notions, in the expressions of thanks. God blesses man when he makes him good and happy; man blesseth God when he confesseth how good, how gracious, how glorious he is; so as the blessing is wholly taken up in agnition,* in celebration: in the one we acknowledge the bounty of God to us; in the other we magnify him vocally, really, for that bounty. O see, then, what high account God makes of the affections and actions of his poor, silly, earth-creeping creatures; that he gives us in them power to bless himself, and takes it as an honour to be blessed of us. *David* wonders that God should so vouchsafe to bless man; how much more must we needs wonder at the mercy of God, that will vouchsafe to be blessed by man, a worm, an atom, a nothing? Yet both, *James* tells us, that *with the tongue we bless God*; and the Psalmist calls for it here as a service of dear acceptance, "*Blessed be the Lord*." Even we men live not (chameleon like) upon the air of thanks, nor grow the fatter for praises; how much less our Maker? O God, we know well that whatsoever men or angels do, or do not, thou canst not but be infinitely blessed in thyself; before ever any creature was, thou didst equally enjoy thy blessed self from all eternity: what can this worthless, loose film of flesh either add to or detract from thine infiniteness? Yet thou, *that humblest thyself to behold the things that are done in heaven and earth*, humblest thyself also to accept the weak breath of our praises, that are sent up to thee from earth to heaven. How

* Agnition, acknowledgment.

should this encourage the vows, the endeavours of our hearty thankfulness, to see them graciously taken? If men would take up with good words, with good desires, and quit our bonds for thanks, who would be a debtor? With the God of Mercy this cheap payment is current. If he, then, will honour us so far as to be blessed of us, Oh let us honour him so far as to bless him.—*Joseph Hall*, in “*A Sermon of Public Thanksgiving for the Wonderful Mitigation of the late Mortality*,” 1625.

Verse 19.—“*Blessed be the Lord.*” It is not a little remarkable to see the samts so burdened and overcharged with the duty of singing his praise, that, 1. They are forced to come off with an excess of praise, and offer to praise him, and even leave it, as it were, as they found it, and say no more, lest they should spill his praises; but, as Rev. v. 12, “*Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory and honour,*” though I be not worthy or able to give it to him. 2. That they speak broken language and half sentences in their songs, when they are deeply loaden with the deep sense of his love, as “*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits;*” there is no more in the original but “*Blessed be the Lord, that loadeth us.*”—*John Spalding*, in “*Synaxis Sacra*,” 1703.

Verse 19.—“*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*” Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his load, as much as he can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with the like sail, and therefore God, to keep us from oversetting, puts on so much as will safest bring us to heaven, our desired port.—*Ezekiel Hopkins*.

Verse 19.—“*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*” Such is man’s self-love that no inward worth can so attract his praises as outward beneficence. While thou makest much of thyself, every one shall speak well of thee; how much more while thou makest much of them! Here God hath met with us also. Not to perplex you with scanning the variety of senses wherewith I have observed this Psalm, above all other of David’s, to abound; see here, I beseech you, a four-fold gradation of divine bounty. First, here are “*benefits.*” The word is not expressed in the original, but necessarily implied in the sense: for there are but three loads whereof man is capable from God, favours, precepts, punishments, the other two are out of the road of gratulation. When we might therefore have expected judgments, behold *benefits*. And those, secondly, not sparingly hand-fulled out to us, but dealt to us by the whole load: “*loadeth with benefits.*” Whom, thirdly, doth he load but “*us*”? Not worthy and well-deserving subjects, but “*us*,” סִדְדִים, *rebels*. And, lastly, this he doth, not at one dole and no more (as even churls’ rare feasts use to be plentiful), but עַבְעַב successively, unweariedly, perpetually. One favour were too much, here are “*benefits;*” a sprinkling were too much, here is a *load*; once were too oft, here is *daily* largition.* Cast your eyes, therefore, a little upon this threefold exaggeration of beneficence; the measure, a *load of benefits*; the subject, unworthy “*us*,” the time, “*daily.*” “*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*”

Where shall we begin to survey this vast load of mercies? Were it no more, but that he hath given us a world to live in, a life to enjoy, air to breathe in, earth to tread on, fire to warm us, water to cool and cleanse us, clothes to cover us, food to nourish us, sleep to refresh us, houses to shelter us, variety of creatures to serve and delight us; here were a just load. But now, if we yet add to these, civility of breeding, dearness of friends, competency of estate, degrees of honour, honesty or dignity of vocation, favour of princes, success in employments, domestic comforts, outward peace, good reputation, preservation from dangers, rescue from evils; the load is well mended. If yet, ye shall come closer, and add due proportion of body, integrity of parts, perfection of senses, strength of nature, mediocrity of health, sufficiency of appetite, vigour of digestion, wholesome temper of seasons, freedom from cares; this course must needs heighten it yet more. If still ye shall add to these, the order, and power, and exercise of our inward faculties, enriched with wisdom, art, learning, experience, expressed by a not un-handsome elocution, and shall now lay all these together that concern estate, body, mind; how can the axle-tree of the soul but crack under the load of these favours? But, if from what God hath done for us as men, we look to what he hath done for us as Christians; that he hath embraced us with an everlasting love, that he hath moulded us anew, enlivened us by his Spirit, fed us by his word and sacraments, clothed us with his merits, bought us with his blood, becoming vile to make us glorious, a curse, to invest us with blessedness; in a word, that he hath given himself to us, his Son for us; *Oh the height, and depth, and breadth of the rich mercies of our God!* Oh

* Largition, largess, bounty.

the boundless, topless, bottomless, load of divine benefits, whose immensity reaches from the centre of this earth, to the unlimited extent of the very empyreal heavens ! "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of men."—Joseph Hall.

Verse 20.—"Our God is the God of salvation" (that is of deliverance, of outward deliverance) ; "and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death," or the goings out from death ; that is, God hath all ways that lead out from death in his own keeping, he keepeth the key of the door that lets us out from death. When a man is in the valley of the shadow of death, where shall he issue out ? Where shall he have a passage ? Nowhere, saith man, he shall not escape. But God keepeth all the passages ; when men think they have shut us up in the jaws of death, he can open them, and deliver us. "To him belong the issues from death ;" it is an allusion to one that keepeth a passage or a door : and God is a faithful keeper, and a friendly keeper, who will open the door for the escape of his people, when they cry unto him.—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 20.—"And unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." Buildings stand by the benefit of their foundations that sustain them, support them ; and of their buttresses that comprehend them, embrace them ; and of their contignations * that knit and unite them. The foundation suffers them not to sink ; the buttresses suffer them not to swerve ; the contignation and knitting suffer them not to cleave. The body of our building is in the former part of this verse ; it is this ; He that is our God is the God of salvation ; *ad salutes*, of salvations, in the plural, so it is in the original ; the God that gives us spiritual and temporal salvation too. But of this building, the foundation, the buttresses, the contignation, are in this part of the verse, which constitutes our text, and in the three diverse acceptations of the words amongst our expositors, "Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death." For, first, the foundation of this building (that our God is the God of all salvation) is laid in this, "That unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death ;" that is, it is in his power to give us an issue and deliverance, even then, when we are brought to the jaws and teeth of death, and to the lips of that whirlpool, the grave ; and so, in this acceptation, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio a morte*, a deliverance from death ; and this is the most obvious and most ordinary acceptation of these words, and that upon which our translation lays hold : "the issues from death." And then, secondly, the buttresses that comprehend and setle this building ; that, "He that is our God is the God of salvation," are thus raised ; "Unto God the Lord belong the issues of death," that is, the disposition and manner of our death, what kind of issue and transmigration we shall have out of this world, whether prepared or sudden, whether violent or natural, whether in our perfect senses or shaken and disordered by sickness ; there is [no] condemnation to be argued out of that, no judgment to be made upon that ; for howsoever they die, *precious in his sight is the death of his saints*, and with him are the issues of death, the ways of our departing out of this life are in his hands ; and so in this sense of the words, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio in morte*, a deliverance in death ; not that God will deliver us from dying, but that he will have a care of us in the hour of death, of what kind soever our passage be ; and this sense and acceptation of the words, the natural frame and contexture doth well and pregnantly administer unto us. And then, lastly, the contignation and knitting of this building, that He that is our God, is the God of all salvation, consists in this, Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death, that is, that this God the Lord, having united and knit both natures in one, and being God, having also come into this world, in our flesh, he could have no other means to save us, he could have no other issue out of this world, no return to his former glory, but by death. And so in this sense, this *exitus mortis*, the issue of death, is *liberatio per mortem*, a deliverance by death, by the death of this God our Lord, Christ Jesus ; and this, St. Augustine's acceptation of the words, and those many and great persons that have adhered to him. In all these three lines then, we shall look upon these words, first, as the God of power, the Almighty Father, rescues his servants from the jaws of death ; and then, as the God of mercy, the glorious Son rescued us by taking upon himself the issue of death ; and then (between these two), as the God of comfort, the Holy Ghost rescues us

* Contignation, a framing together ; from *contigno*, to join together, or lay with beams and rafters.

from all discomfort, by his blessed impressions before; that what manner of death soever be ordained for us, yet this *exitus mortis* shall be *introitus in vitam*, our issue in death shall be an entrance into everlasting life. And these three considerations, our deliverance *a morte, in morte, per mortem*, from death, in death, and by death, will abundantly do all the offices of the foundation, of the buttresses, of the contiguation of this our building, that "*He that is our God is the God of salvation,*" because "*Unto this God the Lord belong the issues of death.*"—*John Donne.*

Verse 20.—"*The issues from death.*" That is, the issue, or escape, from death, both in the resurrection and in the various perils of our present life.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 20.—"*Issues from death.*" The English version cannot be sustained by the Hebrew; for γ has never the force of *from*, and, therefore, the expression, as Dr. Hammond observes, must signify the several plagues and judgments inflicted by God on impenitent enemies—such as drowning in the sea, killing by the sword, etc.; which were the ways of punishing and destroying the Egyptians and Canaanites. Thus the two members of the verse are antithetical: the first speaks of God as a deliverer, and the second as a punisher; and in this respect the verse corresponds with the preceding.—*George Phillips, in "The Psalms. . . . with a Critical, Exegetical and Philological Commentary."* 1846.

Verse 21.—"*The hairy scalp.*" That is, even the most fearful enemies, that with their ghastly visage, deformed with long hair, would strike a terror into the hearts of beholders.—*Edward Leigh.*

Verse 21.—"*Hairy scalp.*" It was a practice among some of the ancient inhabitants of Arabia to allow the hair to grow luxuriantly on the top of the head, and to shave the head in other parts.—*Francis Hare.* 1740.

Verse 22.—"*I will bring the enemy.*" Both the preceding and following verse prove that this is the sense, and not as many interpreters supply, *my people*. Bashan was east of Judæa, and the sea on the west; so that the meaning is, that God would bring his enemies from every quarter to be slain by his people.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 23.—"*That thy foot may be dipped,*" etc. The blood of thy enemies, shed in such abundance that thy dogs shall lap and drink it, shall be the sea in which thou shalt pass, and that red without a figure. And, proportionably shall be the destructions on the enemies of Christ and Christians in the age of the Messiah.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verses 26—28.—This Psalm was sung, it is probable, on the removal of the ark into the City of David. Numb. x. It was now that the ark had rest, and the tribes assembled three times a year at Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen. The text is a lively description of their worship.

I. Offer a few remarks by way of expounding the passage. 1. Israel had their lesser congregations in ordinary every Sabbath-day, and their national ones three times a year. Their business in all was to *bless God*. 2. This business was to be carried on by *all Israel*, beginning at the fountain head, and proceeding through all its streams. God has blessed Israel; let Israel bless God. 3. All the tribes are supposed to be present; four are mentioned in the name of the whole, as inhabiting the confines of the land. Their union was a source of joy; they had been divided by civil wars, but now they are met together. 4. Those tribes which are named had each something particular attending it. Little Benjamin (see Judges xxi.) had nearly been a tribe lacking in Israel, but now appears with its ruler. Judah had been at war with Benjamin: Saul was a Benjamite; David was of Judah: yet they happily lost their antipathies in the worship of God. Zebulun and Naphtali were distant tribes; yet they were there! dark, too, yet there. 5. The princes and the people were all together. 6. They were supposed to be strong, but were reminded that what they had of strength was of God's commanding. Their union and success, as well as that degree of righteousness among them which exalted the nation, was of God. They are not so strong, but that they need strengthening, and are directed to pray as well as praise: "*Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*"

II. Apply the subject. Two things are here exemplified, namely—diligence and brotherly union; and three things recommended, namely—united praise; united acknowledgment that, for what they are, they are indebted to God; and united

prayer for future mercies. Each of these affords a rule for us. 1. The worship of God must be attended with *diligence*. There are the princes of Zebulun and Naphtali. They had to travel above two hundred miles three times a year, thither and back again; that is, twelve hundred in a year, twenty-four miles a week. Those who neglect the worship of God for little difficulties show that their heart is not in it, and when they do attend cannot expect to profit: "they have snuffed at it." Those whose hearts are in it often reap great advantage. God blessed the Israelites in their journeys, as well as when there (Psalm lxxxiv. 6): "The rain filleth the pools;" and so the Christians. There is a peculiar promise to those that seek him *early*. 2. The worship of God must be attended to with *brotherly love*. All the tribes must go up together. It is a kind law that enjoins *social* worship; we need each other to stimulate. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." God has made us so that we shall be greatly influenced by each other, both to good and evil. It greatly concerns us to cultivate such a spirit. To this end we must cherish an affectionate behaviour in our common intercourse—bear, forbear, and forgive; and, whatever differences we may have, not suffer them to hinder our worship. The tribes, as we have seen, had their differences; yet they were there. When all Israel met at Hebron to anoint David king, what should we have said if some had kept away because others went? 3. Our business, when assembled, must be to *bless God* in our congregations; and a pleasant work this is. Israel had reasons, and great reasons, and Christians more. Thank him for his unspeakable gift; bless him for the means of grace, and the hopes of glory. Bless him; he "healeth all thy diseases," etc. Psalm ciii. This is an employment that fits for heaven. The tears of a mourner in God's house were supposed to defile his altar. We may mourn for *sin*; but a fretful spirit, discontented and unthankful, defiles God's altar still. 4. Another part of our business is to unite in acknowledging that whatever we are, we owe it to God alone; "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." We possess a degree of strength both individually and socially. Art thou strong in faith, in hope, in zeal? It is in him thou art strong. Are we strong as a society? It is God that increaseth us with men like a flock; it is he that keeps us in union, gives us success, etc. 5. Another part of our business must be to unite in prayer for future mercies. We are not so strong, either as individuals or societies, but that there is room for increase; and this is the proper object of prayer. God has wrought a great work for us in regeneration. God has wrought much for us as a church in giving us increase, respect, and room in the earth. Pray that each may be increased; or, in the words of the text: "*Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*" Are there none who are strangers to all this?—*Andrew Fuller*.

Verse 27.—"Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali." The two royal tribes, 1. that of Benjamin, from which the first king sprang; 2. that of Judah, from which the second; and the two learned tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali. And we may note, that the kingdom of the Messiah should at length be submitted to by all the potentates and learned men in the world.—*Henry Hammond*.

Verse 27.—"Benjamin, Judah, Zebulun, Naphtali." The same tribes are prominent in the New Testament, as foremost in the battle of the church against the world. Paul, the "least" of the apostles (1 Cor. xv. 8—10), was by origin Saul of Benjamin (Phil. iii. 5). Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," James and John, the brothers, the other James, Thaddeus, and Simon, were from Judah, and the other apostles were from Naphthalim and Zabulon, or Galilee (Matt. iv. 13).—*A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 27.—"Their ruler." The *prince* of that tribe. The Greek version saith, *in a trance*; taking the Hebrew עָרַב to be of עָרַב, though it be not found elsewhere in this form; yet rare words but once used, are sundry times found in this and other Psalms. These things applied to Christ's times and after are very mystical. *Benjamin*, the least, is put here *first*; so in the heavenly Jerusalem, the *first foundation is a jasper* (Rev. xxi. 19), which was the *last* precious stone in Aaron's breastplate, on which *Benjamin's* name was graven (Exod. xxviii. 10, 20, 21). In this tribe *Paul* excelled as a prince of God, though one of the least apostles (1 Cor. xv. 8—10), who was converted in a *trance or ecstasy* (Acts ix. 3, 4, etc.); and in ecstasies he and other apostles saw the mysteries of Christ's kingdom.—*Henry Ainsworth*.

Verse 27.—"Their council;" or, *their stone*, the Messiah, that sprang from Judah, Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. cxviii. 22.—*John Gill*.

Verses 27, 28.—There are all the twelve tribes of Israel with their rulers present, to conduct the ark of God to the hill, in which it pleased him to dwell; for, though

all the tribes are not mentioned, these, which are named, include the whole, since Zebulun and Naphtali are the most remote, and Judah and Benjamin the nearest tribes to Zion. Benjamin was a dwindled family through the signal depopulation of that tribe, from which it never entirely recovered. Jud. xx. 43—48; 1 Chron. xii. 29.—*Edward Garrard Marsh, in "The Book of Psalms translated into English Verse . . . with Practical and Explanatory Notes." 1832.*

Verse 28.—"Thy God hath commanded thy strength." Singularly appropriate to the occasion for which they were composed are these stimulating words. The ark of God had during several years been kept in private houses. David had pitched a tent for its reception, and intended providing a better shrine, he would deposit the ark in the temporary sanctuary, and he gathers thirty thousand chosen men of Israel, and with these and with a multitude of the people he proceeds to the house in which the ark had been kept. The people *can* render the service of song, so "David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals" (2 Sam. vi. 5). The breach of Uzzah delayed the restoration of the ark three months; but David returned to the work, and with gladness, with burnt offerings and peace offerings, with feasting, dancing, and the sound of a trumpet, he brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the tabernacle he had pitched for it. David *can* provide a sacred place for the ark of his God, and his "God has commanded his strength." Thirty thousand chosen men *can* attend on this occasion, and a multitude besides. Then, why should they tarry at home? The occasion is worthy of their presence, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are sweet singers and skilful players in Israel, and why should they be silent. The occasion calls for praise, and their "God has commanded their strength." There are cattle upon the thousand hills of Canaan, and shall no sacrifice be brought? The occasion demands oblations, and Israel's "God has commanded their strength." There is a mountain in Canaan, beautiful for situation, and rich in historic association. God's ark *can* be brought to this mountain, and if it can be, it ought to be, for Israel's God has commanded Israel's strength. There are twelve tribes in Israel which may unite in bringing up God's ark, then let none hold back, for their "God has commanded their strength." "*Thy strength*" is thy best—all that is within thee; all that thou canst do, and be, and become; and all that thou hast—the two mites, if these be all, and the alabaster box of spikenard, very costly, if this be thy possession. . . . By that which God is in himself, by that which God is to us, by law on the heart, and by law oral and written, by the new kingdom of his love, and by all his benefits, "*Thy God commands thy strength.*" He speaks from the beginning, and from the end of time, from the midst of chaos, and from the new heavens and new earth, from Bethel and from Gethsemane, from Sinai and from Calvary, and he saith to us all, "My son, give me thine heart," consecrate to me the best and, devote to me thy strength.—*Samuel Martin.*

Verse 30.—"Rebuke the wild beasts of the reeds." This is our marginal version, which is the proper one. Most modern critics consider that the lion is here intended, which frequently makes its den among reeds or brush-wood. Innumerable lions wander about among the reeds and copses, on the borders of the rivers of Mesopotamia. The river Jordan was infested with them (Jer. iv. 7, and xlix. 19). Hence, the wild beasts of the reeds may signify the Syrian kings, who often contended with David.—*Benjamin Boothroyd.*

Verse 30.—The idolatrous king of Egypt is here enigmatically represented as dwelling, like the crocodile, among the reeds of the Nile; and with him are introduced the "*bulls*" and "*calves*," who were the gods of the people of Egypt, before whom they were ever dancing in their superstitious revels. "Quell these insults upon thy majesty, nor put down only the superstition of Egypt, but all their pomp of war also, that the Gentiles may be converted unto thee, and the idols be utterly abolished."—*Edward Garrard Marsh.*

Verse 30.—When the enemies of God rise up against his church, it is time for the church to fall down to God, to implore his aid against those enemies. Holy prayers are more powerful than profane swords.—*Thomas Wall, in "A Comment on the Times." 1657.*

Verse 30.—The words contain, first, a declaration of God's enemies; secondly, an imprecation against those enemies. The enemies are marshalled into four ranks.

1. A company of spearman, or (as some translations read it) the beast of the reeds. 2. The multitude of the bulls. 3. The calves of the people. 4. The men that delight in war. The imprecation is also twofold; the first more gentle; it is but "rebuke the spearmen;" and that with a limitation too—"till they submit themselves with pieces of silver." For they that will not, but delight in war, more severely deal with such: Scatter them; "Scatter the men that delight in war." . . . The church of God never wanted enemies, never will. "There is no peace to the wicked," saith God: there shall be no peace to the godly, say the wicked. The wicked shall have no peace which God can give; the godly shall have no peace which the wicked can take away.—*Thomas Wall.*

Verse 30.—1. Scrupulosity. 2. Envy. 3. Ignorance. 4. Ambition or pride. Upon which these four beasts in the text do act their enmity against the church: scrupulosity sets forth unto us the beast of the reeds; envy, the bulls; ignorance, the calves; the pride, the men "that delight in war."—*Thomas Wall.**

Verse 31.—"*Ethiopia.*" It is a matter of fact, familiar to the learned reader, that the names "*Ethiopia*," and "*Ethiopians*," are frequently substituted in our English version of the Old Testament, where the Hebrew preserves the proper name, "Cush." And the name, "Cush," when so applied in Scripture, belongs uniformly not to the African, but to the Asiatic, Ethiopia, or Arabia.—*Charles Forster*, in "*The Historical Geography of Arabia.*"

Verse 33.—"*And that a mighty voice;*" or, *a voice of strength*; a strong and powerful voice, such as the gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul-shaking and awakening voice; it is a heart-melting and a heart-breaking one; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds: it is a soul-charming and alluring one; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure.—*John Gill.*

Verse 33.—"*To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens.*" He who manages the heavens, directing their course and influence. He formed every orb, ascertained its motion, proportioned its solid contents to the orbit in which it was to revolve, and to the other bodies of the same system; and, as an able rider manages his horse, so does God the sun, moon, planets, and all the hosts of heaven.—*W. Greenfield*, in *Comprehensive Bible.*

Verse 33.—The praises of the church are sung to him, who, after his sufferings here below, re-ascended to take possession of his ancient throne, high above all heavens; who, from thence, speaketh to the world by his glorious gospel, mighty and powerful, as thunder, in its effects upon the hearts of men (see Ps. xxix. throughout). The power of Christ's voice, when he was on earth, appeared by the effects which followed, when he said, "Young man, arise;" "Lazarus, come forth;" "Peace, be still;" and it will yet further appear, when "all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and come forth."—*George Horne.*

Verse 34.—"*His strength is in the clouds.*" This refers to the phenomena of thunder and lightning; for all nations have observed that the electric fluid is an irresistible agent—destroying life, tearing towers and castles to pieces, rending the strongest oaks, and cleaving the most solid rocks; and the most enlightened nations have justly considered it as an especial manifestation of the power and sovereignty of God.—*W. Greenfield*, in *Comprehensive Bible.*

* This instance of spiritualising may act rather as a beacon than as an example. The author was an able divine, but in this sermon gives more play to his imagination than his common sense.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verses 1, 2.—First. The church of God ever had, and will have, enemies and haters; for against these doth the Psalmist arm himself and the church with this prayer.

Secondly. The church's enemies are God's enemies; they that hate the church, hate God. "Thine enemies," "them that hate thee."

Thirdly. God sometimes seems to sleep or lie still, and let these enemies and haters do what they will for a season. This, also, is implied: he to whom we say, "Arise," is either asleep or lies still.

Fourthly. There is a time when God will arise.

Fifthly. God's rising time is the enemies' scattering time, his haters' flying time.

Sixthly. It is the duty of God's people to pray him up when he seems to be down, and to exalt him in their praises when he doth arise to their rescue and redemption; for these words are both a prayer and a triumph, as they are used both by Moses and David.—*Thomas Case, in a Fast Sermon, preached before the House of Commons, entitled, "God's Rising, his Enemies' Scattering."* 1644.

Verses 1—3.—Prayer for the Second Advent.—*A. M'Caul.*

Verse 4.—I. The name that inspires the song: "Jah." 1. Self-existent. 2. Immutable. 3. Eternal. II. The song inspired by that name. 1. Of exultation. 2. Of confidence. 3. Of joy.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—The claims of widows and orphans upon the church of God, from God's relation to them and his indwelling in the church.

Verse 6.—Comparison of churches to families. See extract from *Dr. Gill.*

Verse 6.—I. Two curable evils: "solitary," "bound with chains." II. Two rich blessings: "set in families," "bringeth out." III. One monster evil, and its miserable consequences.

Verses 7, 8.—I. God has his seasons for delivering his people from their troubles: "When thou," etc. II. His deliverance is complete: "The earth shook," etc.; all things gave way before him. III. The deliverance is greater for the delay. 1. It is so in itself. 2. It is more prized: as in the case of Job, Abraham, Israel at the Red Sea, Daniel, his three companions, etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 7, 8, 9.—I. The presence of God in his church. 1. His pre-eminence: "before." 2. As covenant God of Israel. 3. As active and making active. 4. His rule within: they follow. 5. His design without: marching for war. II. The blessed consequences. 1. The most stolid shake. 2. The lofty bow. 3. Difficulties removed: "Sinai." 4. Blessings plenteous. 5. Church revived.

Verse 9.—I. God's mercy compared to a shower. 1. It is direct from heaven; not through priests. 2. It is pure and unmixed. 3. No one has a monopoly of it. 4. There is no substitute for it. 5. It is sovereignly dispensed, as to (1) time; (2) place; (3) manner; and (4) measure. 6. It works efficiently. Isaiah lv. 10. 7. Prayer can get it. II. There are seasons when these showers fall. 1. In the house of God. 2. In the means of grace. 3. In prayer. 4. In affliction. 5. When saints are weary (1) through working; (2) through sickness; (3) through non-success. 6. By the Holy Spirit refreshing the heart. III. These showers are meant to "confirm" God's people. IV. They are wanted *now*.

Verse 9.—I. The church is God's inheritance. 1. Chosen. 2. Purchased. 3. Acquired. II. Though his inheritance, at times it may be weary. III. When weary, it will be refreshed by him.—*G. R.*

Verse 10 (second clause).—Special goodness, for a special people, specially prepared.

Verse 10 (second clause).—It is spoken in reference to the "poor," because, I. They are the larger mass of mankind; and, whatever pride may think, in the eye of reason, policy, and revelation, by far the most important, useful, and necessary part. II. They would be more peculiarly affected by deficiency. III. To encourage those in humble and trying life to depend upon him. IV. To enforce our attention to them from the divine example.—*W. Jay.*

Verse 11.—The divinity of the gospel; the divers ways and agents for its publication.

Verses 11, 12.—I. The word given: "The Lord," etc. II. The word proclaimed: "Great," etc. III. The word obeyed: "Kings," etc. Thus it was in

Old Testament times, when to Joshua, to Gideon, to David, etc., the Lord gave the word, and it ran through the hosts, and "kings of armies," etc. Thus it was in apostolic times, when the word of reconciliation was given. Thus it is still, and will be more signally than ever hereafter.—*G. R.*

Verse 12 (last clause).—The church in redemption as a spouse tarrying at home; her home duties; the spoil of her Lord's glorious and finished work, and her dividing it.

Verse 13.—I. The contrast. 1. Instead of humiliation, exaltation. 2. Instead of pollution, purity. 3. Instead of inertness, activity. 4. Instead of deformity, beauty. II. Its application. 1. To penitence and pardon. 2. To depravity and regeneration. 3. To affliction and recovery. 4. To desertion and consolation. 5. To death and glory.—*G. R.*

Verse 14.—I. Where earth's greatest battles are fought. "Scattered," "in it," *i.e.*, in Zion. "There brake he," etc. II. By whom? The Almighty. III. When? In answer to his people's faith and prayer. IV. How? 1. Without noise, gently: as the fall of snow. 2. Without human aid: as untrodden snow. 3. Without violence: "all bloodless lay the untrodden snow."—*G. R.*

Verses 15, 16.—I. The superiority of the hill of Zion. 1. In fertility, to the hill of Bashan; to earthly pleasures. 2. In glory, to other hills; to human heights of learning and power. II. The reason of that superiority. 1. The place of God's choice. 2. Of his delight. 3. Of his abode. 4. Of his continuance for ever.—*G. R.*

Verse 16.—I. The church the dwelling-place of God. 1. Elected of old. 2. Favoured for ever. 3. Affording rest, etc., as a home for God. 4. Receiving honour, etc., for herself. II. The church, therefore, envied by others. 1. They feel their own greatness outdone. 2. They leap with rage. 3. They are unreasonable in so doing.

Verses 17, 18.—I. The comparison between Zion and Sinai. 1. The same Lord is there: "The Lord is among," etc. 2. The same attendants: "The chariots," etc. II. The contrast. 1. God descended at Sinai, ascended from near Zion. 2. Put a yoke upon them at Sinai, leads captivity captive at Zion. 3. At Sinai demanded obedience, in Zion bestows gifts. 4. In Sinai spoke terror, in Zion receives gifts for the rebellious. 5. In Sinai appeared for a short season, in Zion dwells for ever.—*G. R.*

Verse 18.—I. Christ's *ascension*. II. His *victories*. III. The *gifts* he received for men; and IV. The great *end* for which he bestows them.—*J. Newton.*

Verse 18.—"That the Lord God might dwell among them." It is ground for devout wonder that God should dwell among men, when we contemplate his *immensity*, *loftiness*, *independence*, *holiness*, and *sovereignty*; yet he does so—I. In the coming of Christ into the world. II. In the residence of his Spirit in the heart. III. In the presence of God in his churches.—*William Staughton, D.D. 1770—1829.*

Verse 19.—I. The load of benefits. II. The load of obligation. III. The load of praise due in return.

Verse 19.—I. Salvation is not to be forgotten in the midst of daily mercies. II. Daily mercies are not to be forgotten in the enjoyment of salvation.—*G. R.*

Verse 20.—Death in God's hand. I. Escapes from it. II. Entrances to it. III. The exit out of it beyond. IV. The gate which, when closed, shuts us in it for ever.

Verse 20.—I. What God has been to his people. 1. Their salvation. 2. Their portion: "Our God." II. What he will be: With them. 1. Until death. 2. In death. 3. After death.—*G. R.*

Verse 21.—The power, pride, wisdom, and very life of evil, to be conquered by God.

Verse 22.—I. Where his people may be driven. II. The certainty of their return. III. The reasons for being assured of this.

Verse 23.—*The allowable procession in the sanctuary.* The marshalled order of doctrine, the holy walk of believers, the banners of joy, the music of devotions, the shouts to the King.

Verse 24 (last clause).—Work for holy women in the church.

Verse 27.—I. The variety of song. 1. The royal tribe of Benjamin in the time of Saul. 2. The princely tribe of Judah, as David was prince regent in the time of Saul. 3. The literary tribe of Zebulun: "Out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer." 4. The eloquent tribe: "Naphtali giveth goodly words."

II. The harmony of song. Let all unite in praising the Lord, the fountain of Israel. "Ten thousand thousand are their tongues," etc.—*G. R.*

Verses 30, 31.—I. Hindrances to the progress of divine truth. 1. Idolatry. Worship of the crocodile—"beasts of the reeds," (LXX)—of bulls and calves, as in Egypt. 2. Covetousness. 3. War. II. The means for their removal. Prayer and the divine "rebuke." "Scatter thou," etc. III. The consequences of this removal; verse 31.

Verse 35. I. Consider God's jealousy towards his people for his holiness in the three "holy places." 1. In the outer court of profession. 2. In the holy place of our priesthood. 3. In the holy of holies with his Son. II. Consider his terrible-ness to his foes, as inferred from those "holy places."

Verse 35.—"Blessed be God." A brief, but very suggestive text.

