

## PSALM LXX.

**TITLE.**—To the Chief Musician, a Psalm of David.—*So far the title corresponds with Psalm XL., of which this is a copy with variations. David appears to have written the full-length Psalm, and also to have made this excerpt from it, and altered it to suit the occasion. It is a fit pendant to Psalm LXIX., and a suitable preface to Psalm LXXI. To bring to remembrance. This is the poor man's memorial. David personally pleads with God that he may not be forgotten, but David's Lord may be heard here also. Even if the Lord seems to forget us, we must not forget him. This memorial Psalm acts as a connecting link between the two Psalms of supplicatory expostulation, and makes up with them a precious triad of song.*

### EXPOSITION.

[The Reader is referred for full Exposition and Notes to Psalm XL., verses 13—17, in "Treasury of David," Vol. II., pp. 239—241.]

**MAKE** haste, O God, to deliver me ; make haste to help me, O LORD.  
2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul : let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee : and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

5 But I am poor and needy : make haste unto me, O God : thou art my help and my deliverer ; O LORD, make no tarrying.

1. This is the second Psalm which is a repetition of another, the former being Psalm liii., which was a rehearsal of Psalm xiv. The present differs from the Fortieth Psalm at the outset, for that begins with, "Be pleased," and this, in our version, more urgently with, "Make haste ;" or, as in the Hebrew, with an abrupt and broken cry, "O God, to deliver me ; O Lord, to help me hasten." It is not forbidden us, in hours of dire distress, to ask for speed on God's part in his coming to rescue us. The only other difference between this and verse 13 of Psalm xl., is the putting of *Elohim* in the beginning of the verse for *Jehovah*, but why this is done, we know not ; perhaps, the guesses of the critics are correct, but perhaps they are not. As we have the words of this Psalm twice in the letter, let them be doubly with us in spirit. It is most meet that we should day by day cry to God for deliverance and help ; our frailty and our many dangers render this a perpetual necessity.

2. Here the words, "together," and, "to destroy it," which occur in Psalm xl., are omitted : a man in haste uses no more words than are actually necessary. His enemies desired to put his faith to shame, and he eagerly entreats that they may be disappointed, and themselves covered with confusion. It shall certainly be so ; if not sooner, yet at that dread day when the wicked shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt. "Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul : let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt ;" turned back and driven back are merely the variations of the translators. When men labour to turn others back from the right road, it is God's retaliation to drive them back from the point they are aiming at.

3. "Let them be turned back." This is a milder term than that used in Psalm xl., where he cries, "let them be desolate." Had growing years matured and mellowed the Psalmist's spirit ? To be "turned back," however, may come to the same thing as to be "desolate ;" disappointed malice is the nearest akin to desolation that can well be conceived. "For a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha." They thought to shame the godly, but it was their shame, and shall be their shame for

ever. How fond men are of taunts, and if they are meaningless "Ahas," more like animal cries than human words, it matters nothing, so long as they are a vent for scorn and sting the victim. Rest assured, the enemies of Christ and his people shall have wages for their work; they shall be paid in their own coin; they loved scoffing, and they shall be filled with it—yea, they shall become a proverb and a by-word for ever.

4. Anger against enemies must not make us forget our friends, for it is better to preserve a single citizen of Zion, than to kill a thousand enemies. "*Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.*" All true worshippers, though as yet in the humble ranks of seekers, shall have cause for joy. Even though the seeking commence in darkness, it shall bring light with it. "*And let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.*" Those who have tasted divine grace, and are, therefore, wedded to it, are a somewhat more advanced race, and these shall not only feel joy, but shall with holy constancy and perseverance tell abroad their joy, and call upon men to glorify God. The doxology, "Let the Lord's name be magnified," is infinitely more manly and ennobling than the dog's bark of "Aha, aha."

5. "*But I am poor and needy.*" Just the same plea as in the preceding Psalm, verse 29: it seems to be a favourite argument with tried saints; evidently our poverty is our wealth, even as our weakness is our strength. May we learn well this riddle. "*Make haste unto me, O God.*" This is written instead of "yet the Lord thinketh upon me," in Psalm xl.: and there is a reason for the change, since the key note of the Psalm frequently dictates its close. Psalm xl. sings of God's thoughts, and, therefore, ends therewith; but the peculiar note of Psalm lxx. is "Make haste," and, therefore, so it concludes. "*Thou art my help and my deliverer.*" My help in trouble, my deliverer out of it. "*O Lord, make no tarrying.*" Here is the name of "Jehovah" instead of "my God." We are warranted in using all the various names of God, for each has its own beauty and majesty, and we must reverence each by its holy use as well as by abstaining from taking it in vain.

I have presumed to close this recapitulatory exposition with an original hymn, suggested by the watchword of this Psalm, "MAKE HASTE."

Make haste, O God, my soul to bless!  
My help and my deliverer thou;  
Make haste, for I'm in deep distress,  
My case is urgent; help me now.

Make haste, O God! make haste to save!  
For time is short, and death is nigh;  
Make haste ere yet I'm in my grave,  
And with the lost for ever lie.

Make haste, for I am poor and low;  
And Satan mocks my prayers and tears;  
O God, in mercy be not slow,  
But snatch me from my horrid fears.

Make haste, O God, and hear my cries;  
Then with the souls who seek thy face,  
And those who thy salvation prize,  
I'll magnify thy matchless grace.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—Francke would apply the present Psalm to the state of the Christian church after the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and would put the words in the mouths of the faithful of that time. On the same ground of transferring the language adapted to Christ in Psalm xl. to the faithful in this Psalm, we need not hesitate to take them on our lips, as the language of the church in every age. I cannot but reassert my conviction of the intentional arrangement of the Psalms in the order in which we now have them, made in all probability, partially

at least, at the time they were handed over to public use. It is surely a daring conjecture made by Walford, that the repetition of this Psalm arose from some mistake of the persons by whom the Psalms were collected and arranged, after the return from the captivity in Babylon.—*W. Wilson.*

*Verse 2.*—“*Let them be confounded ;*” viz., among themselves, and in their own understandings : “*and put to shame ;*” viz., in the sight and presence of men before whom they think to attain great glory, in banding themselves against me.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

*Verse 3.*—“*Aha, aha.*” In describing his human foes, our Saviour represents them as saying to him, “*Aha, aha.*” These exclamations are ebullitions of exulting insolence. They can escape from the lips of those only who are at once haughty and cruel, and insensible to the delicacies and decorums of demeanour. Doubtless, they would be the favourite expressions of the rude rabble that accompanied the traitor in his ignoble campaign against Incarnate Love, and of the rude aristocratic mob that held over the Apostle of Heaven the mockery of an ecclesiastical trial, and of the larger, more excited, and more rancorous multitude that insultingly accompanied him to the cross, and mocked him, and wagged their heads at him, and railed upon him as he meekly, but majestically, hung on the accursed tree. The prescient Saviour would, no doubt, catch in his ears the distant mutter of all the violent and ruthless exclamations with which his foes were about to rend the air ; and, amid these heartless and sneering ejaculations, he could not but feel the keen and poisoning edge of the malevolent and hilarious cry, “*Aha, aha.*” O miracle of mercy ! He who deserved the hallelujahs of an intelligent universe, and the special hosannahs of all the children of men, had first to anticipate, and then to endure from the mouths of the very rebels whom he came to bless and to save, the malicious tauntings of “*Aha, aha.*”—*James Frame.*

*Verse 4.*—“*Such as love thy salvation.*” They love it for its own sake ; they love it for the sake of him who procured it by his obedience unto death ; they love it for the sake of that Holy Spirit who moved them to seek it and accept it ; and they love it for the sake of their own souls, which they cannot but love, and which, without it, would be the most miserable outcasts in the universe. No wonder that in the light of its intrinsic importance, and of its intrinsic relations, they should be “*such as love God’s salvation.*” All men are lovers as well as seekers ; for all men love. Some love money more than God’s salvation ; others love pleasure, even the pleasures of sin, more than God’s salvation ; and others love bustle and business more than God’s salvation. But, as the stamp of the material, the temporal and the evanescent, is on all these earthly objects of men’s love, the friends of Jesus elevate above them all, as the worthier object of their regard and embrace, the salvation of God.—*James Frame.*

*Verse 4.*—“*Let God be magnified.*” Not only “*The Lord be magnified,*” but also “*always.*” Behold, when thou wast straying, and wast turned away from him ; he recalled thee : *Be the Lord magnified.* Behold, he hath inspired thee with confession of sins ; thou hast confessed, he hath given pardon : *Be the Lord magnified.* . . . Now, thou hast begun to advance, thou hast been justified, thou hast arrived at a sort of excellence of virtue ; is it not a seemly thing that *thou* also sometime be magnified ? No ! *Let them say, Be the Lord always magnified.* A sinner thou art, be he magnified in order that he may call ; thou confessest, be he magnified in order that he may forgive : now thou livest justly, be he magnified in order that he may direct ; thou perseverest even unto the end, be he magnified in order that he may glorify. *Be the Lord, then, always magnified.* Let just men say this, let them say this that seek him. Whosoever doth not say this, doth not seek him. . . . *Be the Lord magnified.* But, wilt thou thyself never be great ? wilt thou be nowhere ? In him was something, in me nothing ; but if in him is whatsoever I am, *be he magnified,* not I. But, what of these ? “*But I am poor and needy :*” he is rich, he abounding, he needing nothing. Behold my light, behold whence I am illumined, for I cry, “*Thou shalt illumine my candle, O Lord ; my God, thou shalt illumine my darkness.*” The Lord doth loose men fettered, the Lord raiseth up men crushed, the Lord maketh wise the blind men, the Lord keepeth the proselytes.” Psalm xviii. 28 ; Psalm cxlvi. 7. What, then, of thee ? “*But I am needy and poor.*” I am like an orphan, my soul is like a widow destitute and desolate ; help I seek,

always mine infirmity I confess. "*But I am poor and needy.*" There have been forgiven me my sins, now I have begun to follow the commandments of God; still, however, I am needy and poor. Why still needy and poor? Because I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind. Rom. vii. 23. Why needy and poor? Because, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Matt. v. 6. Still I hunger, still I thirst.—*Augustine.*

Verse 5.—"*But I am poor and needy.*" He had been rich, but for our sake he had become poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. Out of the fulness of his grace he had voluntarily entered, for our sakes, into a state in which he had experience, and most bitter experience, of the want of the means of enjoyment. . . . But the word here rendered "*poor*" is often, elsewhere, translated afflicted; in various ways he was afflicted. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and the acquaintance of grief. He was reproached, and "reproach broke his heart."—*James Frame.*

Verse 5.—"*I am poor and needy.*" By this I hold to be meant the chastisements, and fiery trials that come from *God the Father*; the temptations and bitter assaults of that foul and fell fiend, *Satan*; the persecutions and vexations inflicted by the hands of unreasonable and wicked men; and (but in this following *Christ* must be exempted) the inward corruptions, disordered motions, unsettled affections, and the original pollutions brought from the mother's womb; with the soul and body's inaptness and unableness with cheerfulness and constancy to run the direct and just paths of God's commandments. Many of these made the Head, all of these (and more, too) the members, "*poor and needy.*"—*John Barlow.* 1618.

Verse 5.—"*O Lord, make no tarrying.*" His prayer for himself, like his prayer for his foes and for his friends, was answered. The Lord made no tarrying. Ere four and twenty hours had rolled past, his rescued spirit was in Paradise, and the crucified thief was with him. O what a change! The morning saw him condemned at the bar of an earthly tribunal, sentenced to death, and nailed to the bitter tree; before the evening shadowed the hill of Calvary, he was nestling in the bosom of God, and had become the great centre of attraction and of admiration to all the holy intelligences of the universe. The morning saw him led out through the gate of the Jerusalem below, surrounded by a ribald crowd, whose hootings rung in his ear; but ere the night fell, he had passed through the gate of the Jerusalem above, and his tread was upon the streets of gold, and angel anthems rose high through the dome of heaven, and joy filled the heart of God.—*James Frame.*

Verse 5 (third clause).—"*Helper,*" in all good works; "*Deliverer,*" from all evil ones. "*Make no long tarrying:*" it is the cry of the individual sinner.—*Dionysius the Carthusian* (1471), quoted in *Neale and Littledale's Commentary.*

#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. Occasion of his prayer. 1. Affliction. 2. Helplessness. II. Subject of his prayer. Deliverance, help. III. Importunity of his prayer. The time of deliverance may be in answer to prayer, as well as deliverance itself.

Verse 1.—I. Times when such urgent prayer is allowable, praiseworthy, or faulty. II. Reasons for expecting a speedy reply. III. Consolations if delay should occur.

Verse 2.—I. There are those who seek our soul's hurt. II. We must oppose them, not dally or yield. III. Our best weapon is prayer to God. IV. Their defeat is here described.

Verse 3.—I. Who are these who cry "shame"? II. What master do they serve? III. What shall their wages be?

Verse 4.—Joy for seekers, and employment for finders.

Verse 4 (last clause).—I. The character. II. The saying. III. The wish.

Verse 5.—I. Who need help? II. Who renders help? III. What it comes to: "deliver." IV. What prayer it suggests.

Verse 5.—I. Confession: "I am poor and needy." II. Profession: "Thou art my help," etc. III. Supplication: "Make haste;" "Make no tarrying."