

PSALM LXXI.

There is no title to this Psalm, and hence some conjecture that Psalm LXX. is intended to be a prelude to it, and has been broken off from it. Such imaginings have no value with us. We have already met with five Psalms without title, which are, nevertheless, as complete as those which bear them.

We have here THE PRAYER OF THE AGED BELIEVER, who, in holy confidence of faith, strengthened by a long and remarkable experience, pleads against his enemies, and asks further blessings for himself. Anticipating a gracious reply, he promises to magnify the Lord exceedingly.

DIVISION.—The first four verses are faith's cry for help; the next four are a testimony of experience. From verse 9—13, the aged saint pleads against his foes, and then rejoices in hope, verses 14—16. He returns to prayer again in verses 17 and 18, repeats the confident hopes which cheered his soul, verses 19, 20, 21; and then he closes with the promise of abounding in thanksgiving. Throughout, this Psalm may be regarded as the utterance of struggling, but unstaggering, faith.

EXPOSITION.

IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

1. "*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*" Jehovah deserves our confidence; let him have it all. Every day must we guard against every form of reliance upon an arm of flesh, and hourly hang our faith upon the ever faithful God. Not only on God must we rest, as a man stands on a rock, but *in* him must we trust, as a man hides in a cave. The more intimate we are with the Lord, the firmer will our trust be. God knows our faith, and yet he loves to hear us avow it; hence, the Psalmist not only trusts in the Lord, but tells him that he is so trusting. "*Let me never be put to confusion.*" So long as the world stands, stand thou by me; yea, for ever and ever be faithful to thy servants. If thou forsake me, men will ridicule my religion, and how shall I be able to answer them? Confusion will silence me, and thy cause will be put to shame. This verse is a good beginning for prayer; those who commence with trust shall conclude with joy.

2. "*Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape.*" Be true, O God, to thy word. It is a righteous thing in thee to keep the promises which thou hast made unto thy servants. I have trusted thee, and thou wilt not be unrighteous to forget my faith. I am taken as in a net, but do thou liberate me from the malice of my persecutors. "*Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.*" Stoop to my feebleness, and hear my faint whispers; be gracious to my infirmities, and smile upon me: I ask salvation; listen thou to my petitions, and save me. Like one wounded and left for dead by mine enemies, I need that thou bend over me and bind up my wounds. These mercies are asked on the plea of faith, and they cannot, therefore, be denied.

3. "*Be thou my strong habitation.*" Permit me to enter into thee, and be as much at home as a man in his own house, and then suffer me to remain in thee as my settled abode. Whereas foes molest me, I need a dwelling framed and bulwarked, to sustain a siege and resist the attacks of armies; let, then, thine omnipotence secure me, and be as a fortress unto me. Here we see a weak man, but he is in a strong habitation; his security rests upon the tower in which he hides, and

is not placed in jeopardy through his personal feebleness. "*Whereunto I may continually resort.*" Fast shut is this castle against all adversaries, its gates they cannot burst open; the drawbridge is up, the portcullis is down, the bars are fast in their places; but, there is a secret door, by which friends of the great Lord can enter at all hours of the day or night, as often as ever they please. There is never an hour when it is unlawful to pray. Mercy's gates stand wide open, and shall do so, till, at the last, the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door. Believers find their God to be their habitation, strong and accessible, and this is for them a sufficient remedy for all the ills of their mortal life. "*Thou hast given commandment to save me.*" Nature is charged to be tender with God's servants; Providence is ordered to work their good, and the forces of the invisible world are ordained as their guardians. David charged all his troops to spare the young man Absalom, but yet he fell. God's commandment is of far higher virtue, for it compels obedience, and secures its end. Destruction cannot destroy us, famine cannot starve us; but we laugh at both, while God's mandate shields us. No stones of the field can throw us down, while angels bear us up in their hands; neither can the beasts of the field devour us, while David's God delivers us from their ferocity, or Daniel's God puts them in awe of us. "*For thou art my rock and my fortress.*" In God we have all the security which nature which furnishes the rock, and art which builds the fortress, could supply; he is the complete preserver of his people. Immutability may be set forth by the rock, and omnipotence by the fortress. Happy is he who can use the personal pronoun "my"—not only once, but as many times as the many aspects of the Lord may render desirable. Is he a strong habitation? I will call him "*my strong habitation,*" and he shall be *my rock, my fortress, my God* (verse 4), *my hope, my trust* (verse 5), *my praise* (verse 6). All mine shall be his, all his shall be mine. This was the reason why the Psalmist was persuaded that God had commanded his salvation, namely, because he had enabled him to exercise a calm and appropriating faith.

4. "*Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked.*" God is on the same side with us, and those who are our enemies are also his, for they are wicked; therefore will the Lord surely rescue his own confederates, and he will not suffer the evil to triumph over the just. He who addresses such a prayer as this to heaven, does more injury to his enemies than if he had turned a battery of Armstrongs upon them. "*Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*" Being wicked to God, they become unrighteous towards men, and cruel in their persecutions of the godly. Two hands are here mentioned: they grasp and they crush; they strike and they would slay if God did not prevent; had they as many hands as Briareus, the finger of God would more than match them.

5 For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.

5. "*For thou art my hope, O Lord God.*" God who gives us grace to hope in him, will assuredly fulfil our hope, and, therefore, we may plead it in prayer. His name is "*Jehovah, the hope of Israel*" (Jer. xvii. 13); and, as he cannot be a false or failing hope, we may expect to see our confidence justified. "*Thou art my trust from my youth.*" David had proved his faith by notable exploits when he was a youth and ruddy; it was to him a cheering recollection, and he felt persuaded that the God of his youth would not forsake him in his age. They are highly favoured who can like David, Samuel, Josiah, Timothy, and others say, "*Thou art my trust from my youth.*"

6. "*By thee have I been holden up from the womb.*" Before he was able to understand the power which preserved him, he was sustained by it. God knows us before we know anything. The elect of old lay in the bosom of God before they were laid on their mothers' bosoms; and when their infantile weakness had no feet strong enough to carry it, the Lord upheld it. We do well to reflect upon divine goodness to us in childhood, for it is full of food for gratitude. "*Thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels.*" Even before conscious life, the care of God is over his chosen. Birth is a mystery of mercy, and God is with both mother and babe. If marriages are registered in heaven, we may be sure that births are also.

Holy women do well to bless God for his mercy to them in nature's perilous hour ; but every one who is born of woman has equal cause for thankfulness. She, whose life is preserved, should render thanks, and so should he whose life is given. "*My praise shall be continually of thee.*" Where goodness has been unceasingly received, praise should unceasingly be offered. God is the circle where praise should begin, continue, and endlessly revolve, since in him we live, and move, and have our being.

7. "*I am as a wonder unto many.*" "To thousand eyes a mark and gaze am I." The saints are men wondered at ; often their dark side is gloomy even to amazement, while their bright side is glorious even to astonishment. The believer is a riddle, an enigma puzzling the unspiritual ; he is a monster warring with those delights of the flesh, which are the all in all of other men ; he is a prodigy, unaccountable to the judgments of ungodly men ; a wonder gazed at, feared, and, by-and-by, contemptuously derided. Few understand us, many are surprised at us. "*But thou art my strong refuge.*" Here is the answer to our riddle. If we are strong, it is in God ; if we are safe, our refuge shelters us ; if we are calm, our soul hath found her stay in God. When faith is understood, and the grounds of her confidence seen, the believer is no longer a wonder ; but the marvel is that so much unbelief remains among the sons of men.

8. "*Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.*" What a blessed mouthful ! A man never grows nauseated though the flavour of it be all day in his mouth. God's bread is always in our mouths, so should his praise be. He fills us with good ; let us be also filled with gratitude. This would leave no room for murmuring or backbiting ; therefore, may we well join with holy David in this sacred wish.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me ; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him : persecute and take him ; for *there* is none to deliver *him*.

12 O God, be not far from me : O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul ; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

9. "*Cast me not off in the time of old age.*" David was not tired of his Master, and his only fear was lest his Master should be tired of him. The Amalekites in the Bible history left his Egyptian servant to famish when he grew old and sick, but not so the Lord of saints ; even to hoar hairs he bears and carries us. Alas for us, if we were abandoned by our God, as many a courtier has been by his prince ! Old age robs us of personal beauty, and deprives us of strength for active service ; but it does not lower us in the love and favour of God. An ungrateful country leaves its worn-out defenders to starve upon a scanty pittance, but the pensioners of heaven are satisfied with good things. "*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*" Bear with me, and endure my infirmities. To be forsaken of God is the worst of all conceivable ills, and if the believer can be but clear of that grievous fear, he is happy : no saintly heart need be under any apprehension upon this point.

10. "*For mine enemies speak against me.*" Dogs howl over a dying lion. When David's arm was able to chastise his foes, they were yet impudent enough to slander him, and he fears that now they will take fresh license in the hour of his weakness. The text most probably means that his enemies had said that God would forsake him ; and, therefore, he is the more earnest that the Lord's faithful dealings may give them the lie. "*And they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.*" The Psalmist had enemies, and these were most malicious ; seeking his utter destruction, they were very persevering, and staid long upon the watch ; to this they added cunning, for they lay in ambush to surprise him, and take him at a disadvantage : and all this they did with the utmost unanimity and deliberation, neither spoiling their design by want of prudence, nor marring its accomplishment by a lack of unity. The Lord our God is our only and all-sufficient resort from every form of persecution.

11. "*Saying, God hath forsaken him.*" O bitter taunt ! There is no worse arrow in all the quivers of hell. Our Lord felt this barbed shaft, and it is no marvel

if his disciples feel the same. Were this exclamation the truth, it were indeed an ill day for us; but, glory be to God, it is a barefaced lie. "*Persecute and take him.*" Let loose the dogs of persecution upon him, seize him, worry him, "*for there is none to deliver him.*" Down with him, for he has no friends. It is safe to insult him, for none will come to his rescue. O cowardly boasts of a braggart foe, how do ye wound the soul of the believer; and only when his faith cries to his Lord is he able to endure your cruelty.

12. "*O God, be not far from me.*" Nearness to God is our conscious security. A child in the dark is comforted by grasping its father's hand. "*O my God, make haste for my help.*" To call God ours, as having entered into covenant with us, is a mighty plea in prayer, and a great stay to our faith. The cry of "*make haste*" has occurred many times in this portion of the Psalms, and it was evoked by the sore pressure of affliction. Sharp sorrows soon put an end to procrastinating prayers.

13. "*Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul.*" It will be all this to them to see thy servant preserved; their envy and malice, when disappointed, will fill them with life-consuming bitterness. The defeat of their plans shall nonplus them, they shall be confounded as they enquire the reason for their overthrow; the men they seek to destroy seem so weak, and their cause so contemptible, that they will be filled with amazement as they see them not only survive all opposition, but even surmount it. How confounded must Pharaoh have been when Israel multiplied, despite his endeavours to exterminate the race; and how consumed with rage must the Scribes and Pharisees have become when they saw the gospel spreading from land to land by the very means which they used for its destruction. "*Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.*" He would have their shame made visible to all eyes, by their wearing it in their blushes as a mantle. They would have made a laughing-stock of the believer, if his God had forsaken him; therefore, let unbelief and atheism be made a public scoffing in their persons.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.

14. The holy faith of the persecuted saint comes to the front in these three verses. "*But I will hope continually.*" When I cannot rejoice in what I have, I will look forward to what shall be mine, and will still rejoice. Hope will live on a bare common, and sing on a branch laden down with snow. No date and no place are unsuitable for hope. Hell alone excepted, hope is a dweller in all regions. We may always hope, for we always have grounds for it: we will always hope, for it is a never-failing consolation. "*And will yet praise thee more and more.*" He was not slack in thanksgiving; in fact, no man was ever more diligent in it; yet he was not content with all his former praises, but vowed to become more and more a grateful worshipper. When good things are both continual and progressive with us, we are on the right tack. We ought to be misers in doing good, and our motto should be "*more and more.*" While we do not disdain to "*rest and be thankful,*" we cannot settle down into resting in our thankfulness. "*Superior,*" cries the eagle, as he mounts towards the sun: higher and yet higher is also our aims, as we soar aloft in duty and devotion. It is our continual hope that we shall be able more and more to magnify the Lord.

15. "*My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day.*" We are to bear testimony as experience enables us, and not withhold from others that which we have tasted and handled. The faithfulness of God in saving us, in delivering us out of the hand of our enemies, and in fulfilling his promises, is to be everywhere proclaimed by those who have proved it in their own history. How gloriously conspicuous is righteousness in the divine plan of redemption! It should be the theme of constant discourse. The devil rages against the substitutionary sacrifice, and errorists of every form make this the main point of their attack; be it ours, therefore, to love the doctrine, and to spread its glad tidings on every side, and at all times. Mouths are never so usefully employed as in recounting the righteousness of God revealed in the salvation of believers in Jesus. The

preacher who should be confined to this one theme would never need seek another: it is the *medulla theologice*, the very pith and marrow of revealed truth. Has our reader been silent upon this choice subject? Let us, then, press him to tell abroad what he enjoys within: he does not well who keeps such glad tidings to himself. "*For I know not the numbers thereof.*" He knew the sweetness of it, the sureness, the glory, and the truth of it; but as to the full reckoning of its plenitude, variety, and sufficiency, he felt he could not reach to the height of the great argument. Lord, where I cannot count I will believe, and when a truth surpasses numeration I will take to admiration. When David spoke of his enemies, he said they were more in number than the hairs of his head; he had, therefore, some idea of their number, and found a figure suitable to set it out; but, in the case of the Lord's covenant mercies, he declares, "I know not the number," and does not venture upon any sort of comparison. To creatures belong number and limit, to God and his grace there is neither. We may, therefore, continue to tell out his great salvation all day long, for the theme is utterly inexhaustible.

16. "*I will go in the strength of the Lord God.*" Our translators give us a good sense, but not the sense in this place, which is on this wise, "I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jehovah." He would enter into those deeds by admiring study, and then, wherever he went, he would continue to rehearse them. He should ever be a welcome guest who can tell us of the mighty acts of the Lord, and help us to put our trust in him. The authorised version may be used by us as a resolve in all our exertions and endeavours. In our own strength we must fall; but, when we hear the voice which saith, "Go in this thy might," we may advance without fear. Though hell itself were in the way, the believer would pursue the path of duty, crying: "*I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*" Man's righteousness is not fit to be mentioned—filthy rags are best hidden; neither is there any righteousness under heaven, or in heaven, comparable to the divine. As God himself fills all space, and is, therefore, the only God, leaving no room for another, so God's righteousness, in Christ Jesus, fills the believer's soul, and he counts all other things but dross and dung "that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." What would be the use of speaking upon any other righteousness to a dying man? and all are dying men. Let those who will cry up man's natural innocence, the dignity of the race, the purity of philosophers, the loveliness of untutored savages, the power of sacraments, and the infallibility of pontiffs; this is the true believer's immovable resolve: "I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." For ever dedicated to thee, my Lord, be this poor, unworthy tongue, whose glory it shall be to glorify thee.

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, and thy power to every one *that* is to come.

17. "*O God, thou hast taught me from my youth.*" It was comfortable to the Psalmist to remember that from his earliest days he had been the Lord's disciple. None are too young to be taught of God, and they make the most proficient scholars who begin betimes. "*And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.*" He had learned to tell what he knew, he was a pupil teacher; he continued still learning and declaring, and did not renounce his first master; this, also, was his comfort, but it is one which those who have been seduced from the school of the gospel, into the various colleges of philosophy and scepticism, will not be able to enjoy. A sacred conservatism is much needed in these days, when men are giving up old lights for new. We mean both to learn and to teach the wonders of redeeming love, till we can discover something nobler or more soul-satisfying; for this reason we hope that our greyheads will be found in the same road as we have trodden, even from our beardless youth.

18. "*Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not.*" There is something touching in the sight of hair whitened with the snows of many a winter: the old and faithful soldier receives consideration from his king, the venerable servant is beloved by his master. When our infirmities multiply, we may, with

confidence, expect enlarged privileges in the world of grace, to make up for our narrowing range in the field of nature. Nothing shall make God forsake those who have not forsaken him. Our fear is lest he should do so; but his promise kisses that fear into silence. "*Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation.*" He desired to continue his testimony and complete it; he had respect to the young men and little children about him, and knowing the vast importance of training them in the fear of God, he longed to make them all acquainted with the power of God to support his people, that they also might be led to walk by faith. He had leaned on the almighty arm, and could speak experimentally of its all-sufficiency, and longed to do so ere life came to a close. "*And thy power to every one that is to come.*" He would leave a record for unborn ages to read. He thought the Lord's power to be so worthy of praise, that he would make the ages ring with it till time should be no more. For this cause believers live, and they should take care to labour zealously for the accomplishment of this their most proper and necessary work. Blessed are they who begin in youth to proclaim the name of the Lord, and cease not until their last hour brings their last word for their divine Master.

19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

20 *Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

19. "*Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high.*" Very sublime, unsearchable, exalted, and glorious is the holy character of God, and his way of making men righteous. His plan of righteousness uplifts men from the gates of hell to the mansions of heaven. It is a high-doctrine gospel, gives a high experience, leads to high practice, and ends in high felicity. "*Who hast done great things.*" The exploits of others are mere child's play compared with thine, and are not worthy to be mentioned in the same age. Creation, providence, redemption, are all unique, and nothing can compare with them. "*O God, who is like unto thee.*" As thy works are so transcendent, so art thou. Thou art without compeer, or even second, and such are thy works, and such, especially, thy plan of justifying sinners by the righteousness which thou hast provided. Adoration is a fit frame of mind for the believer. When he draws near to God, he enters into a region where everything is surpassingly sublime; miracles of love abound on every hand, and marvels of mingled justice and grace. A traveller among the high Alps often feels overwhelmed with awe, amid their amazing sublimities; much more is this the case when we survey the heights and depths of the mercy and holiness of the Lord. "*O God, who is like unto thee.*"

20. "*Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again.*" Here is faith's inference from the infinite greatness of the Lord. He has been strong to smite; he will be also strong to save. He has shown me many heavy and severe trials, and he will also show me many and precious mercies. He has almost killed me, he will speedily revive me; and though I have been almost dead and buried, he will give me a resurrection, and "*bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*" However low the Lord may permit us to sink, he will fix a limit to the descent, and in due time will bring us up again. Even when we are laid low in the tomb, the mercy is that we can go no lower, but shall retrace our steps and mount to better lands; and all this, because the Lord is ever mighty to save. A little God would fail us, but not Jehovah the Omnipotent. It is safe to lean on him, since he bears up the pillars both of heaven and earth.

21. "*Thou shalt increase my greatness.*" As a king, David grew in influence and power. God did great things for him, and by him, and this is all the greatness believers want. May we have faith in God, such as these words evince. "*And comfort me on every side.*" As we were surrounded with afflictions, so shall we be environed with consolations. From above, and from all around, light shall come to dispel our former gloom; the change shall be great, indeed, when the Lord returns to comfort us.

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, *even* thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee ; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long : for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

Here is the final vow of praise.

22. "*I will also praise thee with the psallery.*" Love so amazing calls for sweetest praise. David would give his best music, both vocal and instrumental, to the Best of Masters. His harp should not be silent, nor his voice. "*Even thy truth, O my God.*" This is ever a most enchanting attribute—viz., the truth or faithfulness of our covenant God. On this we rest, and from it we draw streams of richest consolation. His promises are sure, his love unalterable, his veracity indisputable. What saint will not praise him as he remembers this ? "*Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.*" Here is a new name, and, as it were, a new song. The Holy One of Israel is at once a lofty and an endearing name, full of teaching. Let us resolve, by all means within our power, to honour him.

23. "*My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee.*" It shall be no weariness to me to praise thee. It shall be a delightful recreation, a solace, a joy. The essence of song lies in the holy joy of the singer. "*And my soul, which thou hast redeemed.*" Soul-singing is the soul of singing. Till men are redeemed, they are like instruments out of tune ; but when once the precious blood has set them at liberty, then are they fitted to magnify the Lord who bought them. Our being bought with a price is a more than sufficient reason for our dedicating ourselves to the earnest worship of God our Saviour.

24. "*My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long.*" I will talk to myself, and to thee, my God, and to my fellow men : my theme shall be thy way of justifying sinners, the glorious display of thy righteousness and grace in thy dear Son ; and this most fresh and never-to-be-exhausted subject shall be ever with me, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Others talk of their beloveds, and they shall be made to hear of mine. I will become an incessant talker, while this matter lies on my heart, for in all company this subject will be in season. "*For they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.*" As in many other Psalms, the concluding stanzas speak of that as an accomplished fact, which was only requested in former verses. Faith believes that she has her request, and she has it. She is the substance of things hoped for—a substance so real and tangible, that it sets the glad soul a-singing. Already sin, Satan, and the world are vanquished, and the victory is ours.

" Sin, Satan, Death appear
To harass and appal :
Yet since the gracious Lord is near,
Backward they go, and fall.

We meet them face to face,
Through Jesus' conquest blest ;
March in the triumph of his grace,
Right onward to our rest."

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm, which has no title in the Hebrew, in the LXX. has the title, "*By David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first made prisoners.*" If any authority be allowed to this title, we must suppose that this was a Psalm written by David, which was used, as particularly adapted to the circumstances of their condition, by the Rechabites, who were descended from Jonadab (Jer. xxxv.), and the Jews, who were taken by the Chaldeans as captives to Babylon. However this may be, it seems probable that David was the author of this Psalm, and that he wrote it in his extreme age, and but a little while before he died. The line which

follows the next Psalm, and closes the second book, perhaps has a reference to this fact. Some of the Fathers interpret the Psalm mystically of the church in her old age, and her trials at the end of the world.—“*Plain Commentary.*”

Whole Psalm.—The Psalm, I am aware, is anonymous, and is, therefore, by many recent critics referred to some later writer; but I am satisfied that Venema and Hengstenberg have adduced sufficient reasons for retaining the opinion of Calvin and the older expositors, that it is from David’s pen, and is the plaintive song of his old age. It shows us the soul of the aged saint, darkened by the remembrance of his great transgression, and by the swarms of sorrows with which that sin filled all his later years. But he finds comfort in reverting to the happy days of his childhood, and especially to the irrevocable trust which he was then enabled to repose in God. The thoughts and feelings expressed remind one of those which invest with such a solemn, tender interest the Second Epistle to Timothy, which embalms the dying thoughts of the great apostle. Like Paul, David takes a retrospect of the Lord’s dealings with him from the beginning; and, in effect, declares, with the dying apostle: “I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” 2 Tim. i. 12. Only, there is this notable difference between the two, that while Paul gathered confirmation of his faith from the experience of a thirty years’ walk with his Lord, David’s experience stretched over more than twice so many years; for it began with his childhood.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—It will be asked how Christ could use such verses as verses 9 and 18, since these look forward apparently to the frailty of age. The reply to this felt difficulty is, that these expressions are used by him in sympathy with his members, and in his own case denote the state equivalent to age. *His* old age was, ere he reached three and thirty years, as John viii. 57 is supposed to imply; for “Worn-out men live fast.” Barclay seems to give the right sense in the following lines:—

“Grown old and weak, with pain and grief,
Before his years were half complete.”

Besides, the words signify, “Forsake me not from this time onward, even were I to live to grey hairs.” This is a view that conveys precious consolation to aged ones, who might be ready to say that Christ could not altogether enter into their feelings, having never experienced the failing weakness of age, the debility, the decay, the bodily infirmities so trying to the spirit. But this Psalm shows us, that in effect he did pass through that stage of our sojourning, worn out and wasted in bodily frame and feeling, by living so much in so short a time. The aged members of his church may find his sweet sympathy breathed out in Isaiah xli. 3, 4; and, here they may almost see him learning the lesson in a human way, as he bends under the weight of our frailties. For this reason, among others, this Psalm was specially prized by Robert Blair, one of our godly forefathers. He used to call it “*His Psalm.*” —*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 1.—“*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*” As if he should say: O Lord, permit not those who put their trust in thee to be confounded, and to be held up as a laughing-stock. I have placed all my hope in thee, and thou art that God who, for the sake of thy goodness and truth, hast never deserted those who hope in thee. If thou shalt suffer me to be confounded, the enemies to triumph, and my hope to be placed in thee in vain, certainly this shame shall fall upon thine own name. . . . Let us, therefore, learn from this place to be more anxious about what may happen to the name of God through us, than to our own; whether it be through us in doing, or in us in suffering. The prophet is fearful lest he should be confounded on account of his hope placed in God, although it was not in his own power, nor could he prevent it. . . .

It is necessary, first, that we should be of those who place their hope in God, then it is necessary that this piety of our hearts should not be confined to ourselves only, but should be known to all those who come in contact with us, even our opponents and enemies; else it is not possible for us to dread this kind of confusion feared by the prophet, when nobody knows that our hope is placed in God. No artist suffers confusion, if he has never shared the good opinion of his fellow men. To no sick man can it be said, Physician, heal thyself, if his reputation for medical skill has never stood high. So of those, it cannot be said, They hoped in God, let him save them if he will have them, of whom it was never remarked that they placed

any hope in God. This solicitude, therefore, belongs only to those whose hope is in the Lord : upon others it cannot fall.—*Musculus*.

Verse 1.—"In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust." It is a good beginning, and a recommendation to our prayers, when we can declare our faith and trust to be in God alone.—*Edward Walter*, in "A Help to the profitable reading of the Psalms." 1854.

Verse 2.—"Deliver me in thy righteousness." "Incline thine ear." Let my deliverance be the fruit of thy promise, and of my prayer ; and so it will be much the sweeter.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 2.—"In thy righteousness." The righteousness of God is in this place that virtue by which he makes good his promises—revenge injuries and rewards piety—which is elsewhere called his *veracity*. Upon this perfection David here calls, not because he was innocent before God, but because God had bound himself to him by promises, as if he were, in the presence of the men who were persecuting him, both innocent and righteous ; and, therefore, worthy of being delivered from this last terrible calamity into which he had fallen through Absalom, since God had thus acted towards him.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verse 2.—"Thy righteousness." Not mine. He knew that he was being chastened for his sin against Uriah. He pleads no merit of his own.—*Simon de Muis*.

Verse 2.—"Incline thine ear." And since I am so wounded that I am not able to send up my cry to thee, the Most High, do thou *incline thine ear to me* as I lie half-dead, left by the robbers who have wounded and spoiled me.—*Gerhohus*.

Verse 3.—"Whercunto I may continually resort." Would he then want to repair to him always ? Our necessities, our work, our danger require it constantly. We are commanded to pray without ceasing. And if, while we acknowledge and feel the obligation, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, we shall not lament it. Loving him, as well as depending upon him, we shall find it good to draw near to God, and delight ourselves in the Almighty ; and we shall never find him, when we want him, inaccessible. There is a way to our "strong habitation," and we know the way. There is a door, and we have the key. No sentinel keeps us back ; the dwelling is our *own* : and who dares to forbid us all its accommodations and contents ? Kings, however disposed, cannot be always approachable. Owing to the multitude of their claims, and the limitation of their powers, and the importance of keeping up a sense of their dignity, they are only accessible at certain times, and with stately formalities. But the King of kings allows us to come boldly to the throne of grace ; and enjoins us in every thing, by prayer and supplication, to make our requests unto him. We cannot be too importunate, or by our continual coming weary him.—*William Jay*.

Verse 3.—"Thou hast given commandment to save me." Let us observe his words ; he ascribes to the word and command of God a saving virtue, which no power on earth, none in hell, nor death itself can resist. Only, he says, give the command that I may be saved, and, in a moment, I shall be wholly saved.—*Musculus*.

Verse 4.—"The cruel man" is literally the leavened man, leavened with hatred of truth and enmity to God ; and, therefore, a violent opposer of his people. So, in 1 Cor. v. 8, we are cautioned against the "leaven of malice and wickedness," which, in accordance with the figure, may pervade the whole natural character of an ungodly man, his faculties and affections.—*W. Wilson*.

Verse 5.—"Thou art my hope." Not only is our hope in him, but he himself is our hope. "God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ," saith St. Paul, "our hope." 1 Tim. i. 1. Yea, there is a deeper, nearer depth : "The glory of the mystery of the gospel," says St. Paul, "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ himself is our hope, as the only Author of it ; Christ is our hope, as the End of it ; and Christ, who is the Beginning and the End, is our hope also by the way ; for he saith, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. i. 27. Each yearning of our hearts, each ray of hope which gleams upon us, each touch which thrills through us, each voice which whispers in our inmost hearts of the good things laid up in store for us, if we will love God, are the light of Christ enlightening us, the touch of Christ raising us to new life, the voice of Christ, "Whoso cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out ;" it is "Christ in us, the hope of glory," drawing us up by his Spirit who dwelleth in us, unto himself our hope. For our hope is not the glory of heaven, not joy, not

peace, not rest from labour, not fulness of our wishes, nor sweet contentment of the whole soul, nor understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, not only a torrent of delight ; it is "Christ our God," "the hope of glory." Nothing which God *could* create is what we hope for ; nothing which God could give us out of himself, no created glory, or bliss, or beauty, or majesty, or riches. What we hope for is our Redeeming God himself, his love, his bliss, the joy of our Lord himself who hath so loved us, to be our joy and our portion for ever.—*E. B. Pusey.*

Verse 5.—*"From my youth."* The remembering and acknowledging of God in youth will be great satisfaction in old age. O what joy will reflection upon youthful piety yield ! Even Seneca, a heathen, could say : "Youth well spent is the greatest comfort of old age." David could confidently plead with God for deliverance out of the hand of the wicked : "*For,*" saith he, "*thou art my hope, O Lord God : thou art my trust from my youth.*" "Cast me not off in the time of old age ; forsake me not when my strength faileth." (verse 9 ; see also verses 17, 18). An ingenuous master will not turn off a superannuated servant. When the proconsul bade Polycarp deny Christ and swear by the emperor, he answered : "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once injured me, and shall I now deny him ?" Jacob could say : "God hath fed me all my life long unto this day ; he hath been kind to me all my days, and I trust he will look to me even to the end ; and shall I now turn my back on him ?" Whither can I go to mend myself for a master ? "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." He that hath been the stay of my youth, will be the staff of my age. I dare venture my soul upon his promise who hath hitherto maintained me by his providence. "In the days of my youth, the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, his candle did shine upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness ;" and, though now "the sun, and the light, and moon and stars be darkened," in this my natural horizon, yet "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear ?" "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." I have abundant experience of his grace and presence. O the days of mercy I have had many years ago ! A good man said : "I got that in my youth, which I would not for all the world have to get now."—*O. iver Heywood.* 1629—1702.

Verse 6.—He did not, like most men, recognise the hand of God only when, in an extraordinary manner, it became manifest in life ; but his eye of faith regards the ordinary works of God as miracles. The translation from his mother's womb to the light of day is to him an object of praise. (Psalm xxii. 9, 10.) And, really, is not the preservation of the embryo, in its narrow confines, a miracle ? is it not a pledge, simultaneous with man's growing into being, of our after experience in life, that we have a God "who bringeth us out of death to light" ? (Psalm lxxviii. 20.) Is not the reason of our finding so little to praise, to be sought in our having no eyes for his daily miracles ? The Psalmist *has* eyes for the daily miracles of the Lord ; and, therefore, his mouth is daily full of the praise of the Lord.—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 6.—Blessed be God that ever I was born.—*Halyburton.*

Verse 6.—This verse corresponds with the preceding, except that David proceeds farther. He not only celebrates the goodness of God, which he had experienced from his childhood, but, also, those proofs of it which he had received previous to his birth. An almost similar confession is contained in Psalm xxii. 9, 10, by which is magnified the wonderful power and inestimable goodness of God in the generation of men, the way and manner of which would be altogether incredible, were it not a fact with which we are quite familiar. If we are astonished at that part of the history of the flood, in which Moses declares (Genesis viii. 13), that Noah and his household lived ten months amidst the offensive nuisance produced by so many living creatures, when he could not draw the breath of life, have we not equal reason to marvel that the infant, shut up within its mother's womb, can live in such a condition as would suffocate the strongest man in half an hour ? But we thus see how little account we make of the miracles which God works, in consequence of our familiarity with them. The Spirit, therefore, justly rebukes this ingratitude, by commending to our consideration this memorable instance of the grace of God which is exhibited in our birth and generation. When we are born into the world, although the mother do her office, and the midwife may be present with her, and many others may lend their help, yet did not God, putting, so to speak, his hand

under us, receive us into his bosom, what would become of us? and what hope would there be of the continuance of our life? Yea, rather, were it not for this, our very birth would be an entrance into a thousand deaths. God, therefore, is with the highest propriety said to take us out of our mother's bowels. To this corresponds the concluding part of the verse, "*My praise shall be continually of thee;*" by which the Psalmist means that he had been furnished with matter for praising God without intermission.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 7.—"I am as a wonder unto many." The Hebrew word translated "*wonder*" would, perhaps, be better expressed by *portent*. It denotes anything uncommon, and wonderful, and admits a double meaning. Some interpreters are of opinion, that it is here taken in the most favourable sense, and that the Psalmist represents himself as considered, by the many, as a *prodigy of God's goodness*. But the whole tenor of the Psalm is against this meaning; which is not badly expressed by Green: "I am become a gazing-stock to the multitude."—*Alexander Geddes. 1737—1802.*

Verse 7.—"I am as a wonder unto many," etc. On several accounts a converted man may be an object of surprise among his contemporaries. This may arise from the circumstance of his conversion dating at a late period of his life, when his long continuance in a state of impenitence seemed to render it almost certain that he would persist in it to the last. It is, indeed, a wonder to see any human being's course entirely altered at a late period, and to observe him afterwards moving in a totally different direction, influenced by different principles. Or, to take the instance of another convert, the character he is enabled to sustain, founded upon his great change, is in such marked and continued contrast to his former habits of life as to render it difficult to recognise in the Christian of to-day the sinner of yesterday. "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Or, in yet another example, the means divinely employed to effect conversion may be, apparently, so disproportionate to the magnitude of the result, as to place the result itself under suspicion and doubt. Every godly man, like Ananias of old, may hesitate to admit into his society the persecutor or the profligate of unhappy notoriety, except upon clearly discerning that he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and that old evil habits have passed away. At the same time, his former ungodly associates are mortified at his renunciation of fellowship with them, and are malicious enough to promulgate false reports concerning his character and motives. "They think it strange," says the apostle, "that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." Yet to such a convert his God is a sun and shield—a shield from the shafts of cruel slander, and a refuge to him from all storms of persecution. In all similar cases the language of the Psalmist becomes particularly appropriate: "*I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.*"—*John Leischild.*

Verse 7.—"A wonder." The Messiah did not attract the admiring gaze of mankind. He did arrest attention; he did excite "*wonder*;" but it was not the wonder of admiration. A few, whose eyes God had opened, saw, indeed, in some measure, the real grandeur there was amid all this apparent meanness. They "beheld his glory—the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;" a glory that bedimmed all created lustre. But the great body of those who beheld him were "astonished" at him. His external appearance, especially when contrasted with his claim to Messiahship, shocked them. The Galilean peasant—the Nazarene carpenter—the son of Joseph, claiming God for his own Father,—declaring himself the "bread of life," and "the light of the world," and asserting that the destinies of eternity hung on the reception or rejection of him and his message; all this excited a mingled emotion of amazement and indignation, scorn and horror, in the bosom of the great majority of his countrymen. He was "*a wonder*," a prodigy unto many. A mixture of pity and contempt, disgust and wonder, seems to have stirred the stern bosom of the Roman governor, when he brought him out wearing the robe of mock royalty and the torturing crown, and exclaimed, "Behold the man." Even his friends were confounded, though their astonishment bore a different character. The closing scene, notwithstanding what appear to us very plain forewarnings, appears to have come on them like a thunderbolt. They were overwhelmed with amazement, as well as with sorrow. What blank astonishment sat on their countenances when he made the announcement, "Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me!" How must their amazement have risen at the successive scenes of Gethsemane, and the hall of the high priest, and the court of Pilate, till at last

they saw him, in whom they trusted that he should redeem Israel, nailed to a cross like a felonious slave—execrated of man, and deserted of God! Then their amazement reached its consummation: they were “astonished at him.”—*John Brown*, in “*The Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah*.”

Verse 8.—“*Let my mouth be filled with thy praise.*” *Let my mouth, I say, be so filled with thy praise*, that from the bottom of my heart, even to the lips of my mouth, the plenitude of thy grace, O God, infused into my heart, and diffused over my lips, may loyally magnify thee; so shall I not be found like that people, of whom thou dost say: “This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” Isa. xxix. 13.—*Gerhohus*.

Verse 9.—“*Cast me not off in the time of old age,*” etc.; for now I have most need of thee. The white rose is soonest cankered; so is the white head soonest corrupted. *Sæpe nigrum cor est, caput album*. Satan maketh a prey of old Solomon, Asa, Lot, others; whom when young he could never so deceive. The heathens, therefore, well warn us to look well to our old age, as that which cometh not alone, but is infested with many diseases, both of body and mind. This David knew, and, therefore, prayed as here: “*Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*” He is a rare old man that can say with Caleb (Joshua xiv. 10, 14), “Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive,” etc.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 9.—“*Cast me not off in the time of old age,*” etc. It is not unnatural or improper for a man who sees old age coming upon him to pray for special grace, and special strength, to enable him to meet what he cannot ward off, and what he cannot but dread; for who can look upon the infirmities of old age, as coming upon himself, but with sad and pensive feelings? Who would wish to be an old man? Who can look upon a man tottering with years, and broken down with infirmities; a man whose sight and hearing are gone; a man who is alone amidst the graves of all the friends that he had in early life; a man who is a burden to himself, and to the world; a man who has reached the “Last scene of all that ends the strange, eventful history”—that scene of

“Second childishness, and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything;”

that scene when one can say—

“I have lived long enough; my way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have;”

who can think of all this and not pray for special grace for himself, should he live to see those days of infirmity and weakness? And who, in view of such infirmities, can fail to see the propriety of seeking the favour of God in early years?—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 9.—“*Cast me not off in the time of old age,*” etc. David, mindful of the noble actions which, through God’s assistance, he had achieved in his youth, beseeches him not to desert his servant, when persecuted by a rebellious son, in his old age. The weakness and temptations peculiar to that time of life, render this a petition necessary for all to make, before we are overtaken by it. The church findeth but too much occasion to make the same, now that she is sunk in years; when faith languisheth, charity waxeth cold, and the infirmities of a spiritual old age are coming fast upon her.—*George Horne*.

Verse 9.—“*Cast me not off.*” God had cast off his predecessor, Saul, and things looked as if he now meant to cast him off. His people also seemed disposed, by their joining with Absalom, to cast him off; hence the force of the petition.—*Andrew Fuller*.

Verse 9.—“*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*” Neither will Christ forsake his church in the latter days of its age, when the weakness of faith becomes more prevalent.—*W. Wilson*.

Verse 9.—“*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*” June 28. This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year. I now find I grow old: (1) My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. (2) My strength is decayed, so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. (3) My memory

of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; But thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God.—*John Wesley.*

Verse 11.—All kinds of distresses are obnoxious to the worst of misjudgments from malevolent minds. The sufferings of Christ produced this censorious scoff, "Let God deliver him, if he will have him." (Matt. xxvii. 43.) David's trouble easily induced his adversaries to conclude that "God had forsaken him, and that there was none to deliver him." But in troubles of this nature, where especially there are frightful complainings against themselves, men are more easily drawn out to be peremptory in their uncharitable judgments concerning them, because the trouble itself is somewhat rare, and apt to beget hideous impressions, and, withal the vent which the afflicted parties give by their bemoaning of their estate, in hope to ease themselves thereby, is but taken as a testimony against themselves, and the undoubted echoes of their real feelings.—*Richard Gilpin* (1625—1700), in "*Dæmonologia Sacra; or, a Treatise of Satan's Temptations.*" [In *Nichol's Series of Puritan Divines.*]

Verse 13.—"Let them be confounded," etc. Let them, who were so wicked that they never hoped anything good of me, be confounded by the evidence of the blessings which manifestly fall upon me; and, let them fail, the grounds of their abuse being taken away, as a fire fails when the fagots are removed.—*Gerhohus.*

Verse 13.—"Let them be confounded," etc. By the law of retaliation (*talio*), he might have said: "Be thou an adversary to their souls, and seek their hurt." Nothing of this is hinted at: his only desire is that they may be confounded and fail, that they may be covered with disgrace and shame. He seeks nothing beyond the frustration of their attempts, that they may begin to be ashamed, and have no cause for boasting that they came off victorious.—*Musculus.*

Verse 13.—Shame ariseth from utter disappointments. If hope deferred causeth shame, then much more hope destroyed. When a man sees his hopes quite cut off, so that he can no way reach the thing he looked for, shame takes hold of him strongly.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 13.—"That are adversaries to my soul." That hated him with a diabolical hatred, as the devil hates the souls of men, and who has his name *Satan* from the word here used. All wicked men are Satans, full of enmity against God and all good men; and such were David's enemies, spiteful and malicious, and nothing would satisfy them but his life.—*John Gill.*

Verse 11.—"But I will hope continually." Behold, O Lord, I have prayed to thee, and I am comforted. Hope has thus taught me. I am glad; because in thee I have trusted, I shall never be confounded. Sorrow returned, equipped with vast array, fortified at all points with swords and spears, and with great clamour beleaguered my city. The din of his horsemen terrified me; and, standing at the gates, he commanded silence, and thus loudly spake: "Behold the man who trusted in God; who said, I shall not be confounded for ever; who took hope for a consoler." And, when he observed me blushing at these words, he drew nearer, and said: "Where are the promises which were thy trust? Where the consolation? Where the deliverance? What have thy tears availed thee? What help have thy prayers brought thee from heaven? Thou hast cried, and no one has answered; thou has wept, and who have been moved with pity for thee? Thou hast called upon thy God, and he has been silent. Thou hast prayed to him, and he has hidden himself from thee: there has come no voice nor sound. . . . Arise, therefore, and flee for help to man, that he may free thee from thy prison." With these words, there arose such a din of arms in the camp—such a clamour of men and sounding of trumpets—that I could hardly keep up heart; and, unless my beloved Hope had brought me help, Sorrow would have seized and carried me off in chains to his own place. Comes Hope to me, gleaming in divine brightness, and, smiling, said: "O soldier of Christ, how is thy heart? What is this struggle in thy mind?" At these words, I began to blush. "Fear not," she said, "Evil shall not capture thee; thou shalt never perish. Behold, I am with thee, to deliver thee. Dost thou not know what is written (Psalm xii.), 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.' As one of the foolish women hath this Sorrow spoken; never shall he be

able to persuade thee that there is no God, or that God does not exercise a providence over all."—*Girolamo Savonarola*, 1452—1498.

Verse 14.—"And I will always hope, and add to (literally, add upon, accumulate, increase) all thy praise." To all thy praise which I have uttered hitherto, I will continue still to add.—*Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 14.—"I will expect continually." But what did he expect? That for which he prayed in the ninth verse—the preservation of his prosperity, the presence and the help of God to the very end of life. Wherefore, he adds, *continually*, in perpetuity, in the time of old age—*usque ad mortem*.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verse 14.—As there is no end to the lovingkindness of Jehovah, there should be none to our gratitude. The hope of a Christian enableth him to be thankful, even in the dark season of affliction.—*Mrs. Thomson*.

Verse 15.—The "*righteousness*" of God, here mentioned, includes not only the rectitude of his nature, and the equity of his proceedings, but likewise that everlasting righteousness which his Son hath brought in for our justification. God's *righteousness* and *salvation* are here joined together; and, therefore, let no man think to put them asunder, or expect salvation without righteousness.—*Mrs. Thomson*.

Verse 15.—"I know not the numbers." David began his arithmetic, in the 14th verse, with *addition*: "I will yet praise thee more and more;" but he is fairly beaten in this first rule of sacred mathematics. His calculation fails him, the mere enumeration of the Lord's mercies overwhelms his mind: he owns his inadequacy. Reckon either by time, by place, or by value, and the salvation of God baffles all powers of estimation.—*C. H. S.*

Verse 16.—"I will go." The word *to go* must be here taken in the sense of going to battle against enemies. This, he says, he will do, trusting not to his own, but to the power of the Lord, his heart fired with the memory of the righteousness of God. So is it in another place: "Some trust in chariots, some in horses, but we in the name of our God."—*Musculus*.

Verse 16.—"I will go in the strength of the Lord." The minister goes thus by realising this strength and depending on it. In this strength he goes into the path of communion with God, into the fields of conflict, in the privacy of domestic life, and in all the walks of active life. His boast is in the *righteousness* of Christ; and he mentions this to God as the ground of his confidence, to himself as the spring of his comforts, to others as the hope of salvation.—*Substance of Sermon by James Sherman. The first preached by him after his settlement at Surrey Chapel. September 4th, 1836.*

Verse 16.—"The strengths of the Lord God." The power of God is expressed in the plural number, to show the greatness of it, which is as a garrison to the believer.—*John Gill*.

Verse 16.—"I will go in the strength of the Lord." The phrase, *to go in*, or, *with the strengths of God*, does not teach us that he would go by means of them, by their help and assistance, as many have thought, *first*, because the word is used to signify the illustrious and mighty deeds of God; *secondly*, because it denotes the *subject* of praise; but *to go with the strengths of Jehovah*, as the rendering ought to be . . . is *to go* as if girt with his former deeds of power—girt with them as if with the *material* of praise.—*Hermann Venema*.

Verse 17.—"O God, thou hast taught me from my youth." Whence was it that David understood "more than the ancients"? (Psalm cxix. 100.) He had a Father to teach him; God was his instructor. Many a child of God complains of ignorance and dulness; remember this, thy Father will be thy tutor; he hath promised to give "his Spirit to lead thee into all truth" (John vi. 13); and God doth not only inform the understanding, but incline the will; he doth not only teach us what we should do, but enables us to do it. (Ezekiel xxxvi. 27): "I will cause you to walk in my statutes." What a glorious privilege is this, to have the star of the word pointing us to Christ, and the loadstone of the Spirit drawing!—*Thomas Watson*.

Verse 17.—"Thou hast taught me from my youth." If you ask me what were the ways by which David was taught, I might ask you what they were not. . . . God taught him by his shepherd's crook; and by the rod and sceptre of a king he taught him. He taught him by the shouts of the multitude—"Saul hath slain

his thousands and David his ten thousands ;” and he taught him just as much, if not more, by the contempt he met in the court of the Philistines. He taught him by the arrows of Jonathan, levelled in friendship ; and he taught him by the javelin of Saul levelled at his life. He taught him by the faithlessness of Abiathar, and the faithlessness of even his faithful Joab ; and he taught him by the faithfulness of Abishai, and the faithfulness of Mephibosheth ; and, let me add too, by the rebellion of Absalom, and the selfishness of Adonijah ; they were all means, by which the Lord taught his servant. And be assured, you that are under his teaching, there is nothing in your lives, but he can teach you by it : by comforts and crosses, by your wounds and your healings, by what he gives and by what he takes away. He unteaches his child, that he may teach him ; shows him his folly, that he may make him wise ; strips him of his vain confidence, that he may give him strength ; makes him know that he is nothing, that he may show him that he has all in the Lord—in Jesus his Beloved one.—*James Harrington Evans.*

Verse 17.—“*Thou hast taught me from my youth.*” Youth needs a teacher that it may embrace virtue. Seneca says, *Virtue is a hard thing to youth, it needs a ruler and guide : vices are acquired without a master.* How prone he was in his boyhood and youth to vices, we may see in Psalm xxv. “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.” Jerome, in his Epistle to Nepotianus, says : “As fire in green wood is stifled, so wisdom in youth, impeded by temptations and concupiscence, does not unfold its brightness, unless by hard work, and steady application and prayer, the incentives of youth are inwardly repelled. Hence it is that almost all nations have provided good and wise teachers of the young. Among the Spartans, one was chosen from the Magistrates and Senators to be *παιδαγωγός*, rector of the boys. . . . At Athens there were twelve men named *Sophonistæ*, elected by the suffrages of all the tribes, to moderate the manners of youth. . . . God is a teacher of his servants. Plato says, *οὐδὲν εἶναι θεοῦραρον*, that there is nothing more divine than the education of children. Of God the Father, or the whole Trinity, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, says, 1 Samuel ii. 3 : “The Lord is a God of knowledge ;” [*Scientiarum*, Vulg.] that is, as the Chaldee has it, he knows all things. . . . Socrates says, that he is the *mind of the universe*. Without him, therefore, all are demented ; but with him, and through him, in a single moment they become wise. Philo, in his treatise of the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, says, Masters cannot fill the mind of their pupils as if they were pouring water into a vessel ; but when God, the fountain of wisdom, communicates knowledge to the human race, he does it without delay, in the twinkling of an eye. . . . *His anointing shall teach you of all things.*—1 John ii. 27.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 17.—“*From my youth.*” Is it such “a crown of glory” to be found old in the ways of righteousness ? Do you then begin to be godly betimes ; that, if you live in this world you may have this crown set upon your heads when you are ancient ; for is it not better for you to be plants of God’s house than weeds upon the dunghill ? Those that are wicked are but as weeds upon a dunghill, but you that are godly are as plants in God’s own orchard. In the last of the Romans, verse 7, we find that *Andronicus and Junia* are commended because they were in Christ before Paul : “They were in Christ before me.” It is an honourable thing to be in Christ before others ; this is honourable when you are young ; and then going on in the ways of godliness all your young time, and so in your middle age, and till you come to be old.—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Verse 17.—“*Wondrous works.*” Observe that he calls the blessing of divine aid so often received in affliction, *wondrous works*. By this expression, he shows us, with what grievous perils he was tossed ; then how he had been snatched from them by the hand of God, contrary to the expectation of all men. Therefore, God is wonderful among his saints. To this end the adversities of the saints tend, that they may show forth in them the wonderful works of God.—*Muscatus.*

Verses 17, 18.—The integrity of our hearts and ways, in former walkings after God, and service for God, may by faith in Christ, as all in our justification, be pleaded. See also Isa. xxxviii. 3 and Psalm cxix. 10. The Lord himself maketh it to himself a motive to show mercy to his people (Isa. lxiii. 8 ; Jer. ii. 2) ; only we must use this plea more rarely and sparingly, in a self-denying way, in faith in Christ’s righteousness, as made ours.—*Thomas Cobbel.*

Verse 18.—“*Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not.*” God exalts pardoning grace to some more, and sanctifying grace to others ; he is

the God of grace. Those ships that have been in long voyages at sea, three or four years out, have gone through hot climates and cold, passed the equinoctial line again and again, and have run through many a difficulty, and great storms, and yet have been kept alive at sea, as they speak, when these shall meet one another at sea near the haven, how will they congratulate? And old disciples should do so, that God hath kept grace alive in their souls. And I would ask you how many thousand ships have you seen cast away before your eyes? How many that have made "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience," as the apostle speaks? This and that profession, that has run into this and that error damnable, or false opinions and teaching, though all of smaller moment; others that have struck upon quicksands of worldly preferments, and many split upon your rocks, and yet you have been kept. This should move you to bless this your God, the God of grace, the more. Come, let me knock at your hearts; are none of you old professors, like old hollow oaks, who stand in the woods among professors still, and keep their stand of profession still, and go to ordinances, etc.; but the "rain they drink in," as the apostle's word is, serves to no other end but to rot them. "These are nigh unto cursing." Or, have you green fruits still growing on you, as quickly and lively affections to God and Christ, and faith and love, as at the first, and more abounding? O bless God you are so near the haven, and lift up your hearts, your redemption draws near; and, withal, raise your confidence, that that God of grace, who hath called you into his eternal glory, will keep you for it, and possess you of it shortly.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 18.—"Forsake me not; until," etc. Apostasy in old age is fearful. He that climbs almost to the top of a tower, then slipping back, hath the greater fall. The patient almost recovered, is more deadly sick by a relapse. There were stars struck from heaven by the dragon's tail (Rev. xii. 4); they had better never have perched so high. The place where the Israelites fell into that great folly with the daughters of Moab, was in the plain, within the prospect of the Holy Land; they saw their inheritance, and yet fell short of it. So wretched is it for old men to fall near to their very entry of heaven, as old Eli in his indulgence (1 Sam. ii.); old Judah in his incest (Gen. xxxviii.); old David with Bathsheba; old Asa trusting in the physicians more than in God (2 Chron. xvi. 12); and old Solomon built the high places. Some have walked like cherubs in the midst of the stones of fire, yet have been cast as profane out of God's mountain. Ez. xxviii. 14, 16. Thus the seaman passeth all the main, and suffers wreck in the haven. The corn often promiseth a plenteous harvest in the blade, and shrinks in the ear. You have trees loaden with blossoms, yet, in the season of expectation, no fruit. A comedy that holds well many scenes, and goes lamely off in the last act, finds no applause. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke xvii. 32): think on that pillar of salt, that it may season thee.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 18.—"Until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation," etc. Are there better preachers of the works of God to be found than hoary parents in the circle of their children; or grandparents in that of their grandchildren?—*Augustus F. Tholuck.*

Verse 18.—

With years oppressed, with sorrows wora,
Dejected, harassed, sick, forlorn,
To thee, O God, I pray;
To thee my withered hands arise,
To thee I lift these falling eyes:
Oh, cast me not away!

Thy mercy heard my infant prayer;
Thy love, with all a mother's care,
Sustained my childish days:
Thy goodness watched my ripening youth,
And formed my heart to love thy truth,
And filled my lips with praise.

O Saviour! has thy grace declined?
Can years affect the Eternal Mind,
Or time its love destroy?
A thousand ages pass thy sight,
And all their long and weary flight
Is gone like yesterday.

Then, e'en in age and grief, thy name
 Shall still my languid heart inflame,
 And bow my faltering knee :
 Oh, yet this bosom feels the fire,
 This trembling hand and drooping lyre,
 Have yet a strain for thee !

Yes, broken, tuneless, still, O Lord,
 This voice, transported, shall record
 Thy goodness, tried so long ;
 Till, sinking slow, with calm decay,
 Its feeble murmurs melt away
 Into a seraph's song.

Sir Robert Grant.

Verse 19.—"O God, who is like unto thee ?" Either for greatness or goodness, for power or for mercy, for justice, truth, and faithfulness ; for the perfections of his nature, or the works of his hands ; and to be praised, revered, and adored, as he is.—*John Gill.*

Verse 19.—"Who is like unto thee !" מי כמוך, *Mi camocha.* God is alone : who can resemble him ? He is eternal ; he can have none *before*, and there can be none *after* ; for, in the infinite *unity of trinity*, he is that eternal, unlimited, impartible, incomprehensible, and uncompounded, ineffable Being, whose *essence* is hidden from all created intelligences, and whose *counsels* cannot be fathomed by any creature that even his own hand can form. "WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE !" will excite the wonder, amazement, praise, and adoration of angels and men to all eternity.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 20.—"Thou shalt quicken me again," etc. Here Jerome triumpheth over the Jews, challenging them when this was ever verified in David, for he was never dead and quickened again ; and, therefore, this must needs be expounded of him as that in Psalm xvi : "Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave ;" and to "the depths of the earth," here, answer those words, Ephesians iv. 9, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth ?" Yet, this may also be applied to David, being figuratively understood, as a like speech of Hannah, 1 Samuel ii.—*John Mayer.*

Verse 20.—"And thou shalt bring me up," etc. This is an allusion to men who are unhappily fallen into a deep pit of water. The meaning is, Thou shalt draw me out of the extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 21.—Greatness increasing with comfort, and comfort increasing with greatness ; very rarely united.—*George Rogers.*

Verse 22.—"With the psaltery." . . . "with the harp." There was a typical signification in them ; and upon this account they are not only rejected and condemned by the whole army of Protestant divines, as for instance, by Zuinglius, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Zepperus, Paræus, Willet, Ainsworth, Ames, Calderwood, and Cotton ; who do, with one mouth, testify against them, most of them expressly affirming that they are a part of the abrogated legal pedagogy ; so that we might as well recall the incense, tapers, sacrifices, new moons, circumcision, and all the other shadows of the law into use again. But Aquinas himself also, though a Popish schoolman, pleads against them upon the same account, *quia aliquid figurabant*, and saith, the Church in his time did not use them, *ne videatur judaizare*, lest they should seem to judaize.—*Samuel Mather, on The Types.*

Verse 22.—"Psaltery." . . . "harp." Suppose singing with instruments were not typical, but only an external solemnity of worship, fitted to the solace of the outward senses of children under age, such as the Israelites were in the Old Testament (Gal. iv. 1, 2, 3) ; yet now, in the grown age of the heirs of the New Testament, such external pompous solemnities are ceased, and no external worship reserved, but such as holdeth forth simplicity and gravity ; nor is any voice now to be heard in the church of Christ, but such as is significant and edifying by signification (1 Cor. xiv. 10, 11, 26), which the voice of instruments is not.—*John Cotton, 1585—1652.*

Verse 22.—"Holy One of Israel." This name of God occurs in the Psalms only in two other places, lxxviii. 41 ; lxxxix. 18 ; these last two being, according to

Delitzsch, older Psalms than this. In Isaiah, this name of God occurs thirty times; in Habakkuk once; in Jeremiah (who may have adopted it from Isaiah) twice (l. 29; li. 5).—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 23.—“*My lips* ; ” “*my soul.*” Hypocrites praise God with the “*lips*” only; but David joins the *soul* to the lips.—*William Nicholson.*

Verse 23.—“*Greatly.*” See how the word great is repeated. Great things done, verse 19; great troubles shown, verse 20; greatness increased, verse 21; and great rejoicing consequent thereon, in the present verse. In a great God, doing great things, it is meet greatly to rejoice.—*C. H. S.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Arguments used to induce the Lord to hear, drawn, I. From his *justice and equity*: “Deliver me in thy righteousness.” II. From his *word and promise*: “Thou hast given commandment,” etc. III. From his *power*: “Thou art my rock,” etc. IV. From his *relation* to him: “My God, my hope.” V. From the *qualities* of his *adversaries*: “They were wicked, unrighteous, and cruel.” VI. From his *confidence*: “Thou art my hope.” VII. From his *gracious providence*: “By thee have I been holden up,” etc. VIII. From his *thankful heart*: “My praise shall be continually,” etc. IX. He had *none to trust to* but God: “Thou art my refuge.”—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 1.—Faith is a present act; faith is a personal act, faith deals only with God, faith knows what she is about, faith kills her fears by prayer.

Verse 2.—An appeal. I. To the power of God: “Deliver me.” II. To the faithfulness of God: “In thy righteousness.” III. To the providence of God: “Cause me to escape.” IV. To the condescension of God: “Incline thine ear.” V. To the mercy of God: “Save me.”

Verse 2.—*Cause me to escape.* From whom? From what? How? By what power? For what end?

Verse 3.—(First two clauses.) The believer abiding in God and continually resorting to him.

Verse 3.—(Third clause.) A command based on the divine promise, clothed with divine power, addressed to all necessary agencies, and embracing all exigencies.

Verse 4.—I. When God is for us, the wicked are against us. II. When the wicked are against us, God is for us.

Verse 5.—God the essence of hope and faith.

Verse 7 (first clause) may be accommodated to, I. *The Saviour.* II. *The Saint.* He is a wonder, in reference to (1) What he once was; (2) What he now is; (3) What he will hereafter be. III. *The Sinner* is “a wonder unto many;” a wonder to three worlds: to (1) angels; (2) saints; (3) devils and lost souls.—*Warwell Fenn.* 1830.

Verse 7.—Consider the text, with reference to *David*, to *Christ*, and to the *Christian*. I. With reference to *David*. 1. David was a wonder as a man. 2. As a king. 3. As a servant of God. II. With respect to *Christ*. 1. Christ was a wonder in his person. 2. In his life. 3. In his miracles. 4. In his teaching. 5. In his sufferings. 6. In his ascension and mediatorial glory. III. With regard to the *Christian*. 1. The Christian is a wonder to himself. 2. To the world. 3. To wicked spirits. 4. To the angels in heaven.—*John Cawood.* 1830.

Verse 8.—I. What? filled with what?—murmurings? doubts? fears? No! Praise. My own?—of men? No. “*Thy praise.*” “*Thy honour.*” II. When? “All the day.” 1. The whole day. 2. Every day; a good preparation for heaven.

Verse 9.—There are some peculiar circumstances of old age which render this blessing—the favour and presence of God—necessary. I. Old age is a time of but little natural enjoyment, as Barzillai acknowledged. 2 Sam. xix. 35. II. It is a time of life in which the troubles of life are often known to increase. III. Old age is a time in which the troubles of life not only increase, but become less tolerable. IV. Old age is a time that ought to command respect, and does so among dutiful children and all serious Christians: but it is often known to be attended with neglect.

This is the case especially where they are poor and dependent. It has been the case where public characters have lost their youthful vivacity, and the brilliancy of their talents.—*A. Fuller.*

Verse 9.—There is, I. Fear, mixed with faith. 1. Natural to old age. 2. Suggested by the usage of the world. II. Faith, mixed with fear: "Cast me not," etc. 1. Old age is not a sin. 2. It is a crown of glory if found, etc.

Verses 11, 12.—Two great lies and two sweet prayers.

Verses 13, 14.—I. What the wicked gain by opposing the righteous: "Let them," etc., *verse 13.*—II. What the righteous gain from being opposed by them,—*verse 14*: "But I," etc.

Verse 14.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 998: "More and More."

Verse 15.—I. The determination avowed. 1. To recount the instances of the divine faithfulness in his deliverances. 2. To recount them publicly: "My mouth," etc. 3. Constantly: "All the day." II. The reason assigned: "For I know not," etc. "Eternity's too short to utter all thy praise." Therefore, I begin it now, and will continue it.

Verse 16.—I. The resolution: "I will go." II. The reservation: "Thy strength only—thy righteousness only."

Verse 17.—"O God, thou hast taught me." None but God can teach us experimentally; and the lessons he teaches are always useful and important. He teaches all his scholars to know themselves—their depravity, poverty, and slavery. He teaches them his law—its purity, claims and penalty. He teaches them his gospel—its fulness, freeness, and sensibility. He teaches them to know himself; as a reconciled God, as their Father and faithful friend. His teaching is accompanied with power and authority. We may know divine teaching by its effects: it always produces humility—they sit at his feet; dependence upon him; abhorrence of sin; love to God as a teacher; obedience to the lessons taught; thirst for further attainments; and it brings us daily to Jesus.—*James Smith.*

Verse 18.—The peculiar testimony of pious old age, what it is based upon, to whom it should be directed, and what we may hope from it.

Verse 19.—A sermon might be instructively worked out upon "the high things of God."

Verse 20.—I. The future benefit of present trials: "Hereafter," said Æneas to his shipwrecked companions, "it will delight us to think of these things." II. The present benefit of future mercies: "Glory to thee for all the grace we have not tasted yet."

Verse 22.—A choice subject for song—"thy truth," which may mean either doctrinal truth, or the attribute of faithfulness, its manifestation in history, and in our own experience.

Verses 22, 23.—I. The soul of music: Not in the instrument, or the voice, but in the soul. "I will sing with the understanding also." "Making melody in the heart," etc. II. The music of the soul. The "soul which thou hast redeemed." Redemption is the music of souls once lost. Their only song in heaven.

Verse 24.—How to make familiar talk edifying and useful.