

PSALM LXXVI.

TITLE.—To the chief Musician on Neginoth. *The Precentor is here instructed to perform this song to the music of stringed instruments. The Master of the harpers was called upon for his most skilful minstrelsy, and truly the song is worthy of the sweetest sounds that strings can yield. A Psalm or Song of Asaph. The style and matter indicate the same hand as that which wrote the preceding; and it is an admirable arrangement which placed the two in juxtaposition. Faith in the 75th Psalm sung of victories to come, and here it sings of triumphs achieved. The present Psalm is a most jubilant war song, a pæan to the King of kings, the hymn of a theocratic nation to its divine ruler. We have no need to mark divisions in a song where the unity is so well preserved.*

EXPOSITION.

IN Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

2 In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.

3 There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

4 Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

5 The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.

9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

11 Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

1. "In Judah is God known." If unknown in all the world beside, he has so revealed himself to his people by his deeds of grace, that he is no unknown God to them. "His name is great in Israel." To be known, in the Lord's case, is to be honoured: those who know his name admire the greatness of it. Although Judah and Israel were unhappily divided politically, yet the godly of both nations were agreed concerning Jehovah their God; and truly whatever schisms may mar the visible church, the saints always "appear as one" in magnifying the Lord their God. Dark is the outer world, but within the favoured circle Jehovah is revealed, and is the adoration of all who behold him. The world knows him not and therefore blasphemes him, but his church is full of ardour to proclaim his fame unto the ends of the earth.

2. "In Salem also is his tabernacle." In the peaceful city he dwells, and the peace is perpetuated, because there his sacred tent is pitched. The church of God is the place where the Lord abides, and he is to her the Lord and giver of peace. "And his dwelling place in Zion." Upon the chosen hill was the palace of Israel's Lord. It is the glory of the church that the Redeemer inhabits her by his Holy Spirit. Vain are the assaults of the enemy, for they attack not us alone, but the

Lord himself. Immanuel, God with us, finds a home among his people, who then shall work us ill?

3. "*There brake he the arrows of the bow.*" Without leaving his tranquil abode, he sent forth his word and snapped the arrows of his enemies before they could shoot them. The idea is sublime, and marks the ease, completeness, and rapidity of the divine action. "*The shield, and the sword, and the battle.*" Every weapon, offensive and defensive, the Lord dashed in pieces; death-bearing bolts and life-preserving armour were alike of no avail when the Breaker sent forth his word of power. In the spiritual conflicts of this and every age, the like will be seen; no weapon that is formed against the church shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against her in judgment she shall condemn. "*Selah.*" It is meet that we should dwell on so soul-stirring a theme, and give the Lord our grateful adoration,—hence a pause is inserted.

4. "*Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*" Far more is Jehovah to be extolled than all the invading powers which sought to oppress his people, though they were for power and greatness comparable to mountains. Assyria had pillaged the nations till it had become rich with mountains of spoil, this was talked of among men as glory, but the Psalmist despises such renown, and declares that the Lord was far more illustrious. What are the honours of war but brags of murder? What the fame of conquerors but the reek of manslaughter? But the Lord is glorious in holiness, and his terrible deeds are done in justice for the defence of the weak and the deliverance of the enslaved. Mere power may be glorious, but it is not excellent: when we behold the mighty acts of the Lord, we see a perfect blending of the two qualities.

5. "*The stouthearted are spoiled.*" They came to spoil, and lo! they are spoiled themselves. Their stouthearts are cold in death, the angel of the pestilence has dried up their life-blood, their very heart is taken from them. "*They have slept their sleep.*" Their last sleep—the sleep of death. "*And none of the men of might have found their hands.*" Their arms are palsied, they cannot lift a finger, for the rigor of death has stiffened them. What a scene was that when Sennacherib's host was utterly destroyed in one night. The hands which were furious to pull down Jerusalem, could not even be raised from the sod, the most valiant warriors were as weak as the palsied cripples at the temple gate, yea, their eyes they could not open, a deep sleep sealed their vision in everlasting darkness. O God, how terrible art thou! Thus shalt thou fight for us, and in the hour of peril overthrow the enemies of thy gospel. Therefore in thee will we trust and not be afraid.

6. "*At thy rebuke.*" A word accomplished all, there was no need of a single blow. "*O God of Jacob.*" God of thy wrestling people, who again like their father supplant their enemy; God of the covenant and the promise, thou hast in this gracious character fought for thine elect nation. "*Both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*" They will neither neigh nor rattle again; still are the trappings of the horses and the crash of the cars; the cavalry no more creates its din. The Israelites always had a special fear of horses and scythed chariots; and, therefore, the sudden stillness of the entire force of the enemy in this department is made the theme of special rejoicing. The horses were stretched on the ground, and the chariots stood still, as if the whole camp had fallen asleep. Thus can the Lord send a judicial sleep over the enemies of the church, a premonition of the second death, and this he can do when they are in the zenith of power; and, as they imagine, in the very act of blotting out the remembrance of his people. The world's Rabshakehs can write terrible letters, but the Lord answers not with pen and ink, but with rebukes, which bear death in every syllable.

7. "*Thou, even thou, art to be feared.*" Not Sennacherib, nor Nisroch his god, but Jehovah alone, who with a silent rebuke had withered all the monarch's host.

"Fear him, ye saints, and then ye shall
Have nothing else to fear."

The fear of man is a snare, but the fear of God is a great virtue, and has great power for good over the human mind. God is to be feared profoundly, continually, and alone. Let all worship be to him only. "*And who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*" Who indeed? The angels fell when their rebellion provoked his justice; Adam, lost his place in Paradise in the same manner; Pharaoh and other proud monarchs passed away at his frown; neither is there in earth or hell any who can abide the terror of his wrath. How blest are they who are sheltered

in the atonement of Jesus, and hence have no cause to fear the righteous anger of the Judge of all the earth.

8. "*Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven.*" So complete an overthrow was evidently a judgment from heaven; those who saw it not, yet heard the report of it, and said, "This is the finger of God." Man will not hear God's voice if he can help it, but God takes care to cause it to be heard. The echoes of that judgment executed on the haughty Assyrian are heard still, and will ring on adown all the ages, to the praise of divine justice. "*The earth feared, and was still.*" All nations trembled at the tidings, and sat in humbled awe. Repose followed the former turmoils of war, when the oppressor's power was broken, and God was revered for having given quiet to the peoples. How readily can Jehovah command an audience! It may be that in the latter days he will, by some such miracles of power in the realms of grace, constrain all earth's inhabitants to attend to the gospel, and submit to the reign of his all-glorious Son. So be it, good Lord.

9. "*When God arose to judgment.*" Men were hushed when he ascended the judgment-seat and actively carried out the decrees of justice. When God is still the people are in tumult; when he arises they are still as a stone. "*To save all the meek of the earth.*" The Ruler of men has a special eye towards the poor and despised; he makes it his first point to right all their wrongs. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." They have little enough of it now, but their avenger is strong and he will surely save them. He who saves his people is the same God who overthrew their enemies; he is as omnipotent to save as to destroy. Glory be unto his name. "*Selah.*" Here pause, and let devout contemplations adore the God of Jacob.

10. "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.*" It shall not only be overcome but rendered subservient to thy glory. Man with his breath of threatening is but blowing the trumpet of the Lord's eternal fame. Furious winds often drive vessels the more swiftly into port. The devil blows the fire and melts the iron, and then the Lord fashions it for his own purposes. Let men and devils rage as they may, they cannot do otherwise than subserve the divine purposes. "*The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*" Malice is tethered and cannot break its bounds. The fire which cannot be utilised shall be damped. Some read it "thou shalt gird," as if the Lord girded on the wrath of man as a sword to be used for his own designs, and certainly men of the world are often a sword in the hand of God, to scourge others. The verse clearly teaches that even the most rampant evil is under the control of the Lord, and will in the end be overruled for his praise.

11. "*Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God.*" Well may we do so in memory of such mercies and judgments. To vow or not is a matter of choice, but to discharge our vows is our bounden duty. He who would defraud God, his own God, is a wretch indeed. He keeps his promises, let not his people fall in theirs. He is their faithful God and deserves to have a faithful people. "*Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*" Let surrounding nations submit to the only living God, let his own people with alacrity present their offerings, and let his priests and Levites be leaders in the sacred sacrifice. He who deserves to be praised as our God does, should not have mere verbal homage, but substantial tribute. Dread Sovereign, behold I give myself to thee.

12. "*He shall cut off the spirit of princes.*" Their courage, skill, and life are in his hands, and he can remove them as a gardener cuts off a slip from a plant. None are great in his hand. Cæsars and Napoleons fall under his power as the boughs of the tree beneath the woodman's axe. "*He is terrible to the kings of the earth.*" While they are terrible to others he is terrible to them. If they oppose themselves to his people, he will make short work of them; they shall perish before the terror of his arm, "for the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name." Rejoice before him all ye who adore the God of Jacob.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—No Psalm has a greater right to follow Ps. lxxv. than this, which is inscribed *To the Precentor, with accompaniment of stringed instruments* (vid. iv. 1), a Psalm by Asaph, a song. Similar expressions (*God of Jacob*, lxxv. 10, lxxvii. 7; *saints, wicked of the earth*, lxxv. 9, lxxvi. 10), and the same impress throughout speak in favour of unity of authorship. In other respects too, they form a pair: Ps. lxxv. prepares the way for the divine deed of judgment as imminent, which Ps. lxxvi. celebrates as having taken place.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 1.—"In Judah is God known." God is truly and savingly known only in and through his Son; God indeed is obscurely and darkly known in his works, as a God of power; in his providence, as a God of authority, wisdom, and order; in his common mercies, as a God of bounty; and in his punishments and judgments, as a God of justice; but in Christ opened and preached in the gospel, God is known with a clear, a comfortable, and saving knowledge, as a father of grace and singular mercy and lovingkindness. "In Judah" (saith the Psalmist) "is God known: his name is great in Israel." "In Judah," in his church, where his word and ordinances are, where Christ is preached, and the mystery of man's salvation is opened, there God is known truly without error, perspicuously without obscurities, and savingly without uncertainties; there he is known as a King in his courts, for the glory and beauty which he there manifesteth; as a teacher in his school, for the wisdom and knowledge which he there dispenseth; as a dweller in his house, for the holy orders he there prescribeth, and gracious rule and dominion he there erecteth and beareth in the souls of his servants; as a bridegroom in the banqueting house, for the spiritual dainties he there maketh, for the clear and open manifestation of himself, and love and comforts he there ministereth to his spiritual friends and guests; "and his name is great in Israel;" his power, wisdom, truth, love, and goodness is much magnified and very glorious in their apprehensions who know him in Christ Jesus.—*Alexander Grosse.*

Verse 1.—"His name." By the "name" of God here, God himself is understood; for in so many good effects as God uttereth himself toward his kirk, so many names he giveth to himself whereby he may be praised of her. As for example, when he promiseth unto his kirk freely grace and mercy, his kirk giveth him a name, and calleth him merciful. When he keepeth his promise, and uttereth himself a faithful God to his kirk, his kirk giveth him a name, and calleth him a true God. When he delivereth his kirk out of danger, and sheweth him a mighty God, and terrible against his enemies, the kirk giveth him a name, and calleth him a potent God, and so forth in the rest of his effects: so that by the name of God is understood here God himself, as God maketh himself to be known in his wonderful works.—*Robert Bruce.*

Verse 1.—"His name is great in Israel." Properly the great name in Israel, that is, the church, is the name of Jesus, which is great, first, by its efficacy: for it signifies Saviour. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. Secondly, it is great in dignity: for it is the name that is above every name. . . . Thirdly, it is great in the breadth of its range, Ps. viii. 1: "How excellent is thy name in all the earth."—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 2.—"In Salem also is his tabernacle." It is not without meaning that Jerusalem has the appellation of Salem; for it is thereby insinuated that the tabernacle of God, notwithstanding the assaults of foes, in the very heart of the tumults of war remained in peace. How much more now that the invaders had been overthrown, would prosperity be enjoyed?—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—"In Salem also is his tabernacle." God the Holy Ghost is a spirit of peace, he is the comforter; he seals up peace (2 Corinthians i. 22). This blessed dove brings the olive branch of peace in his mouth: now a peaceable disposition evidenceth something of God in a man, therefore God loves to dwell there. "In Salem is God's tabernacle:" Salem signifies peace; God dwells in a peaceable spirit.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 2.—"In Salem also is his tabernacle," etc. All the old versions, as well as the two English ones, have missed one especial force of this passage. There is no direct reference in words to any human habitation, but to the lair of the Lion of Judah. The word *tabernacle* does not only mean his tabernacle, but his covert, and is so

translated in another place (Jer. xxv. 38): "He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion:" and the vaguer word יחבא which succeeds may well be translated by "den," or some equivalent phrase. Ps. x. 9.—*Simon De Muis.*

Verses 2, 3.—The care of Salem, or Zion, lies at the bottom of all God's powerful actings and workings among the sons of men. Every mighty work of God throughout the world may be prefaced with these two verses. The whole course of affairs in the world is steered by Providence in reference to the good of Salem.—*John Owen.*

Verse 3.—"There." Observe how it is said, "There he brake," namely, in his temple, his habitation there. For unto that his temple doth the coherence in the verse afore carry it, for that was last in mention, and with the greatest emphasis. In the story we read how that Sennacherib's overthrow was from Hezekiah's prayer in the temple; for upon Sennacherib's letter, and Hezekiah's hearsay of the blasphemy, he took himself thither, went instantly into the temple, and began his prayer thus: "O thou God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims." He invokes him under that style of his dwelling in the holiest, and so hearing prayers there. Thus you have it recorded both in Isaiah and in 2 Kings xxix. 15. And how suitably, in answer hereunto, it is said here in the Psalm, that God gave forth sentence presently out of his tabernacle: yea, and that so suddenly too, as that the very execution is said to be done there, that is, from thence. And yet again, in the eighth verse of the Psalm, it is said to be a sentence from heaven too; "*Thou didst cause judgment*" (so called because it was the sentence of God as a judge) "*to be heard from heaven.*" Thus Hezekiah prayed, and thus God heard; and both as in the temple.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 3.—"There." These men, to wit the King of Asshur and his accomplices, came to cast out God out of his dwelling place; but he stood to the defence of his own house, and showed them that he would not remove for their pleasure.—*Robert Bruce.*

Verse 4.—God was not known in Babylon, in Egypt, in other nations; his tabernacle and dwelling place was not amongst them, therefore they were not glorious. But see what is in the 4th verse, "*Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey;*" thou Judah, thou Israel, thou Salem, thou Zion, that hast spiritual mercies and blessings, art more glorious than they, whatever their glory be. Have the nations abroad goodly towers? thou hast the temple; have they stately cities? thou hast Jerusalem, the city of God; have they wise men? thou hast the prophets; have they gods of gold, silver, and stones? thou hast the true living God, Jehovah, to be thy God; have they human laws that are good? thou hast divine laws that excel; have they temporal excellencies? thou hast spiritual; have they the glory of the world? thou hast the glory of heaven.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 4.—"The mountains of prey." Why are they called the mountains of prey? There is a reference to the lairs of the lions in the mountains, whence they rush forth upon those who come that way, and tear them in pieces. In the same way the dwelling place of God was represented above under the title of a tabernacle or lair. Moreover, this is a mystic epithet of the mountains of Judah, by which it is hinted that the enemies who venture to approach that lair are wont to be torn in sunder: a terrible example of which had just been shown in the case of the Assyrian, there overthrown, torn, and spoiled. Compare Isaiah xxxi. 4.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"The stouthearted are spoiled." There is indicated in these words that consternation of mind which deprives of judgment and power. *The valiant are spoiled of their heart:* that is, they who at other times were wise and courageous have now lost their heart, and have been reduced to foolishness and stupidity.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 5.—"The stouthearted are spoiled." After the breaking of their weapons their spoilation is recorded, for that follows the slaughter of foes. Nor is mention made of that without reason. They had come to spoil, therefore are they deservedly spoiled.—*Musculus.*

Verse 5.—"The stouthearted are spoiled." Some translate it, "*They are spoiled of their stout heart.*" The stouthearted, the strong, are spoiled. The strong man may be spoiled by a stronger; that's a good sense, but it is more elegantly rendered, "*they are spoiled of their stout heart;*" that is, the Lord takes their heart out of their bosom. Daring men, who fear nothing, are turned into *Magor-missabibs*—

fear round about; their stout hearts are taken from them, and then they are so far from being a terror to other men, that they run from the shadow of a man; their courage is down; they cannot give a child a confident look, much less look dangers or enemies in the face.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 5 (last clause).—The strength and power of a man is in his hands; if they be gone, all his hope is gone. If a man's sword be taken from him, he will do what he can with his hands; but if his hands be gone, he may go to sleep for any disturbance he will work. For men not to find their hands, is not to have that power for the execution of their designs which formerly they had.—*John Owen*.

Verse 5 (last clause).—As we say of a man that goes lamely or lazily, "he cannot find his feet;" so of a man that acts lamely or lazily, or of a soldier that fights faintly and cowardly, "*he cannot find his hands.*"—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verses 5, 6.—

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever were still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

—*George Gordon, Lord Byron*.

Verse 6.—"Cast into a deep sleep." It is observable, that the verb here used is the same as is used in the narrative of the act of Jael, and of the death of the proud enemy of Israel, Sisera, "*cast into a deep sleep,*" by God's power, working by the hand of a woman.—*Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 7.—"Thou, even thou, art to be feared." The emphasis in the word "thou," redoubled, implies as much as if he had said, Not principalities, not powers, not hell, not death, nor anything for themselves, but thou, O Lord, alone art to be feared. Arguments and reasons to confirm it are two, here laid down in the text: the first is drawn from God's anger, who hath decreed, and accordingly executes vengeance upon all the proud. The second is drawn from his power; not princes, not armies, not men, not angels, are able to endure the breath of his fury; for, "*Who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*" . . . The anger of God is a terrible, unspeakable, unsupportable, intolerable burden. Every word in the text hath a special emphasis to prove this. "*Who may stand?*" Who? Shall angels? They are but like refracted beams or rays, if God should hide his face, they would cease to shine. Shall man? His glory and pomp, like the colours in the rainbow, vanish away, when God puts forth in anger the brightness of his face. Shall devils? If he speak the word they are tumbled down from heaven like lightning. "*Stand in thy sight.*" "*Stand.*" What! a reed against a cedar, a thistle in Lebanon against a cedar in Lebanon; a feather against a flame, a grasshopper against an Almighty, a head of glass against a rod of brass? "*When once thou art angry?*" "*Angry.*" By sending out his wrath, that it wounds like arrows; angry, in pouring it out, that it drowns like water; angry, in kindling of it, that it burns like fire; a consuming fire, but you tell me such a fire may be quenched; an unquenchable fire, but since that may cease to burn, when it lacks matter, it is in one word an everlasting fire, that never goes out. That, that's it; such anger as is never fully shown, but in punishment of reprobates; in no punishment, but that in hell; in none in hell, but that eternal.—*John Cragge's "Cabinet of Spiritual Jewels."* 1657.

Verse 9.—"God arose to judgment." This great judgment was wrought upon the enemies when God rose: it was not done when God sat; for the whole time when he sat his enemies were aloft, stirring their time, raging in murder, oppression, and blood. . . . He bringeth in God here after the manner of earthly judges

after the custom of our judges ; for first they sit down, they try, seek out, and advise, and after consideration they resolve, and after resolution they rise up, give forth judgment, and pronounce the sentence ; even so the prophet bringeth in God after the same manner ; sitting, and after sitting, rising and pronouncing the sentence.—*Robert Bruce.*

Verse 9.—“*To save all the meek.*” We see from this passage what care God takes of the afflicted. When he is angry with the ungodly, he is angry with them chiefly because they have oppressed the poor and the innocent. Although he detests all iniquity, yet he is most indignant with that which is committed against the needy and guiltless. So in Ps. xii. “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord.” So in this verse, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth.—*Musculus.*

Verse 9.—Is not this the day when the Saviour comes to reign ? the day when the results of things shall best be seen ; the day when every saint with anointed eye shall see that events all tended to the glory of God ; the day when they shall sing better far than now.

“Surely the wrath of man praiseth thee.
Thou girdest thyself with the remnant of wrath.”

—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 10.—“*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee.*” Persecutions tend to correct the failings of good men, and to exercise and illustrate their several graces and virtues. By these, good men are usually made much better and more approved, while they tend to exercise our patience, to quicken our devotion, to evidence our zeal and Christian fortitude, and to show to the whole world what love we bear to the truth, and how much we are willing to undergo for the honour of God. Till they have suffered something for it, truth is too apt to grow cheap and be less prized many times, even by those that are good men in the main ; whereas we are apt on the contrary, never to value it at a higher rate, or to be more zealous for it, or to make better use of it, than when it is opposed and persecuted. What more truly beneficial therefore, or tending to the divine glory, than for God, who useth to bring good out of evil, to make use also of the opposers of his truth, to rouse up his servants whom he sees growing more remiss and negligent than they should be, and to suffer such temptations to assault them, by which their drowsy minds may be spurred on into a greater love and zeal for the truth, and a deeper sense of the divine benefit in it, and, in general, excited to the more diligent performance of their duty.—*Richard Pearson.* 1684.

Verse 10.—“*The wrath of man shall praise thee.*” In the Septuagint it is, The wrath of man shall keep holy-day to thee, shall increase a festival for thee. God many times gets up in the world on Satan’s shoulders. When matters are ravelled and disordered, he can find out the right end of the thread, and how to disentangle us again ; and when we have spoiled a business, he can dispose it for good, and make an advantage of those things which seem to obscure the glory of his name.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 10.—“*The wrath of man shall praise thee.*” The wrath of wicked men against the people of God is very tributary to his praise. 1. It puts them upon many subtil devices and cunning stratagems, in frustrating of which the wisdom of God and his care of his Church is very much illustrated. 2. The wrath of wicked men impels them to many violent and forcible attempts upon the people of God to destroy them, and so gives him occasion to manifest his power in their defence. 3. It makes them sometimes fit to be his instruments in correcting his people, and so he vindicates himself from the suspicion of being a patron to sin in them that are nearest to him, and makes them that hate holiness promote it in his people, and them that intend them the greatest hurt, to do them the greatest good. 4. It administers occasion to him for the manifestation of the power of his grace in upholding the spirits of his people and the being of his church in despite of all that enemies can do against them. 5. It serves very much to adorn God’s most signal undertakings for his people in the world. 6. It serves to manifest the glory of God’s justice upon his people’s enemies in the day when he rises up to avenge himself upon them, when he shall stand over them, lashing them with scorpions, and at every blow mind their former cruelties. Here, take that for your inhuman rage against my people at such a place, and that for your barbarous usage of them at

such a time. Now see how good it is to be imprisoned, beaten, tortured, burnt, and sawn asunder. Thus the enemies themselves are often constrained to acknowledge with Adoni-Bezek the righteous hand of God upon them in the day of inquisition.—*Condensed from John Warren's Sermon before Parliament.* 1656.

Verse 10.—"The wrath of man." Wrath is anger accented unto the highest pitch, or blown up into a flame. "The wrath of man," (in the original it is *The wrath of Adam, or the wrath of clay, weak, impotent man*) "shall praise thee," i.e., it shall turn to the praise and glory of God through his overruling providence, though quite otherwise intended. God will bring honour to himself, and serve his own holy and wise designs out of it. . . . This expression, "*the wrath of man,*" imports the weakness and impotence of it; it is but the wrath of Adam, or of red clay. How contemptibly doth the Spirit of God speak of man, and of the power of man, in Scripture? "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" The wrath of man, when it is lengthened out to its utmost boundaries, can only go to the length of killing the body or of the breaking the sheath of clay in which the soul lodges, and then it can do no more.—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verse 10.—"Shall praise thee." God turns the wrath of man to the praise of his adorable sovereignty. Never have the Lord's people had such awful impressions of the sovereignty of God, as when they have been in the furnace of man's wrath, then they became dumb with silence. When the Chaldean and Sabeen robbers are let loose to plunder and spoil the substance of Job, he is made to view adorable sovereignty in it, saying, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." It is in such a case as this that God says to his own people, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen." What work of God about the church is advanced by the wrath of men? 1. His *discovering* work; for by the wind of man's wrath he separates between the precious and the vile, betwixt the chaff and the wheat. In the day of the church's prosperity and quiet hypocrites and true believers are mingled together, like the chaff and the wheat in the barn floor: but the Lord, like the husbandman, opens the door of his barn, and puts the wind of man's wrath through it, that the world may know which is which. O, sirs, much chaff is cast up already, both among ministers and professors; but it is like the wind and sieve, may cast up much more yet ere all be done. 2. God's *purging* work is advanced among his own children by the wrath of men: there is much of the dross of corruption cleaves to the Lord's people while in the wilderness. Now, the Lord heats the furnace of man's wrath, and casts his people into it, that when he has tried them, he may bring them forth as gold. 3. God's *uniting* work is thereby advanced. In a time of peace and external tranquility the sheep of Christ scatter and divide among themselves; but God lets loose the dogs upon them, and then the flock runs together; or like pieces of metal cast into the fire, they run together in a lump. 4. God's *enlarging* work, or his work of spreading the gospel, is sometimes advanced by the wrath of man. Acts viii. 1—5. The gospel, like the chamomile, the more it is trodden upon, the more it spreads.—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verse 10.—"The remainder of wrath shall thou restrain." "The remainder of wrath," i.e., what is left behind of the wrath of men, when God has glorified himself thereby. Even after God has defeated the purposes of wicked men, and made them contribute to his glory, yet there is abundance of wrath remaining. But what becomes of that wrath that is left? God shall "*restrain*" it. The word signifies to *gird up*. However God may see fit to slacken the bridle of his providence, and suffer wicked men to vent their wrath and enmity, as far as it shall contribute to his glory; yet the superplus and the remainder of his wrath that is not for his glory and his people's profit, God will gird it up, that they shall not get it vented. . . . If any wrath of man remain beyond what shall bring in a revenue of praise unto God, he will *restrain it*, and bind it up like the waters of a mill: he will suffer as much of the current of water to run upon the wheel, as serves to carry it about and grind his corn, but the remainder of the water he sets it off another way: so God will let out as much of the current of man's wrath as shall serve the ends of his glory and our good, but the remainder of the stream and current he will *restrain*, and turn another way. In Isai. xxviii. we are told that God will not be aye "threshing his corn, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." All this comfort is sure and certain, there

is not the least peradventure about it, that the flame of man's wrath shall praise the Lord, and the superfluous fire shall be quenched, or hemmed in; for here we have God's parole of honour for it: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verse 10.—"The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain," ^{כִּמּוֹת} *Chemoth* "wrath," in the plural number, seems to be put in opposition to *chamoth*, the single wrath of man in the former part of the verse; to shew there is more wrath which God is to restrain, than merely that of man. There is also more pride which needs a like restraint; namely, that of the first *Lucifer*, who sinned, and, as is thought, fell by aspiring to ascend, and to be like the Most High. There are finally, other counsels also, as well as other *wrath* and *pride*, besides human, which God confounds. There is a wisdom that descendeth not from above (no, nor grows on earth) but is devilish, James iii. 15. And both *wrath*, *pride*, and *wisdom*, of devils as well as men, shall God restrain, when he pleases not to turn them to his praise. Let there be hellish plots, yet our God shall confound them.—*From "A Sermon preached. . . . before the Queen. . . . By Edward [Wetenhall] Lord Bishop of Corke and Rosse. 1691."*

Verse 10.—"Thou shalt restrain." This, in the Hebrew, is expressed in one word, ^{מִכָּל} which imports the begirding or binding of it in on every side, that it shall by no means break out, but shall be kept in, as a dog in a chain, as a lion in his den, how violent soever.—*Cornelius Burges*, in "Another Sermon preached to the Honourable House of Commons. . . . November the fifth, 1641."

Verse 11.—"Round about him." A description of his people, as the twelve tribes pitched about the tabernacle, Num. ii. 2; and the four-and-twenty elders were round about God's throne, Rev. iv. 4. So the Chaldee expoundeth it;—*Ye that dwell about his sanctuary.*—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 12.—"Cut off." He deals with princes as men deal with a vine. An axe is too strong for a cluster of grapes, or a sprig of a vine; it easily cuts them off; so God by a judgment easily cuts off the spirit of princes; they are not able to stand against the least judgments of God: when he puts strength into worms, or any other creatures they fall.—*William Greenhill*, in a Sermon, entitled, "The Axe at the Root."

Verse 12.—The Lord cuts off the spirit of princes; the word is, *he slips off*, as one should slip off a flower between one's fingers, or as one should slip off a bunch of grapes from a vine, so soon is it done. How great uncertainty have many great ones, by their miserable experience, found in their outward glory and worldly felicity! What a change hath a little time made in all their honours, riches, and delights! That victorious emperor Henry the Fourth, who had fought two-and-fifty pitched battles, fell to that poverty before he died, that he was forced to petition to be a prebend in the church of Spier, to maintain him in his old age. And Procopius reports of King Gillimer, who was a potent king of the Vandals, who was so low brought, as to intreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and a harp; a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and a harp to solace himself in his misery. Philip de Comines reports of a Duke of Exeter, who thought he had married Edward the Fourth's sister, yet he saw him in the Low Countries begging barefoot. Bellisarius, the chief man living in his time, having his eyes put out, was led at last in a string, crying, "give a halfpenny to Bellisarius."—*Jeremiah Burroughs.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—Reverence for God's name proportionate to true knowledge of it.

Verse 2.—The peculiar relation of God to his church.

Verse 2 (first clause).—A peaceful church the tabernacle of God. The benefits peace confers, the evils of strife, the causes of dissension, and the means of promoting unity.

Verse 3.—Christian glories, or the victories vouchsafed to the church over heathenism, heresy, persecution, etc.

Verse 3.—I. Where enemies are conquered ; “ There ; ” not on the battle-field so much as in the house of God ; as Amalek by Moses on the Mount ; Sennacherib by Hezekiah in the Sanctuary. II. How there ? 1. By faith. 2. By prayer. “ *The weapons of our warfare,* ” etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 4.—The Lord, our portion, compared with the treasures of empires.

Verse 4.—I. What the world is, compared with the church : “ Mountains of prey.” 1. Cruelty instead of love. 2. Violence instead of peace. II. What the church is, compared with the world. 1. “ More glorious,” because “ more excellent.” 2. “ More excellent,” because “ more glorious.” Both are more real and abiding.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—“ *They have slept their sleep.* ” Divers kinds of deaths or sleeps for the various classes of men.

Verse 7.—The anger of God. A very suggestive subject.

Verses 8, 9.—I. The characters described : “ the meek of the earth.” II. The need implied. 1. To be vindicated. 2. To be saved. III. The divine interposition on their behalf : “ Thou didst cause,” etc. “ When God arose,” etc. IV. The effect of their deliverance : “ The earth feared,” etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 10.—I. Evil permitted for good : “ The wrath,” etc. II. Restrained for good : “ The remainder,” etc. Or, I. Ruled. II. Overruled.—*G. R.*

Verse 11.—I. To whom vows may be made. Not to man, but God. II. What vows should be thus made. 1. Of self-dedication. 2. Of self-service. 3. Of self-sacrifice. III. How kept : “ Vow and pay.” 1. From duty. 2. From fear of his displeasure.—*G. R.*

Verse 11.—The propriety, obligation, pleasure, and profit of presenting gifts unto the Lord.

