

## PSALM LXXXV.

**TITLE.**—To the Chief Musician, A Psalm for the Sons of Korah. *There is no need to repeat our observations upon a title which is of so frequent occurrence; the reader is referred to notes placed in the headings of preceding Psalms. Yet it may not be out of place to quote the forty-sixth verse of Nehemiah XII.—“In the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.”*

**SUBJECT AND OCCASION.**—*It is the prayer of a patriot for his afflicted country, in which he pleads the Lord's former mercies, and by faith foresees brighter days. We believe that David wrote it, but many question that assertion. Certain interpreters appear to grudge the Psalmist David the authorship of any of the Psalms, and refer the sacred songs by wholesale to the times of Hezekiah, Josiah, the Captivity, and the Maccabees. It is remarkable that, as a rule, the more sceptical a writer is, the more resolute is he to have done with David; while the purely evangelic annotators are for the most part content to leave the royal poet in the chair of authorship. The charms of a new theory also operate greatly upon writers who would have nothing at all to say if they did not invent a novel hypothesis, and twist the language of the Psalm in order to justify it. The present Psalm has of course been referred to the Captivity, the critics could not resist the temptation to do that, though, for our part, we see no need to do so: it is true a captivity is mentioned in the first verse, but that does not necessitate the nation's having been carried away into exile, since Job's captivity was turned, and yet he had never left his native land: moreover, the text speaks of the captivity of Jacob as brought back, but, had it referred to the Babylonian emigration, it would have spoken of Judah; for Jacob or Israel, as such, did not return. The first verse in speaking of “the land” proves that the author was not an exile. Our own belief is that David penned this national hymn when the land was oppressed by the Philistines, and in the spirit of prophecy he foretold the peaceful years of his own reign and the repose of the rule of Solomon, the Psalm having all along an inner sense of which Jesus and his salvation are the key. The presence of Jesus the Saviour reconciles earth and heaven, and secures to us the golden age, the balmy days of universal peace.*

**DIVISIONS.**—*In the first four verses the poet sings of the Lord's former mercies and begs him to remember his people; from 5 to 7 he pleads the cause of afflicted Israel; and then, having listened to the sacred oracle in verse 8, he publishes joyfully the tidings of future good, 9—13.*

### EXPOSITION.

**L**ORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

4 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

1. “**LORD**, thou hast been favourable unto thy land.” The self-existent, all-sufficient **JEHOVAH** is addressed: by that name he revealed himself to Moses when his people were in bondage, by that name he is here pleaded with. It is wise to dwell upon that view of the divine character which arouses the sweetest memories of his love. Sweeter still is that dear name of “Our Father,” with which Christians have learned to commence their prayers. The Psalmist speaks of Canaan as the Lord's land, for he chose it for his people, conveyed it to them by covenant, conquered it by his power, and dwelt in it in mercy; it was meet therefore that he should smile upon a land so peculiarly his own. It is most wise to plead the

Lord's union of interest with ourselves, to lash our little boat as it were close to his great barque, and experience a sacred community in the tossings of the storm. It is *our* land that is devastated, but O Jehovah, it is also *thy* land. The Psalmist dwells upon the Lord's favour to the chosen land, which he had shewed in a thousand ways. God's past doings are prophetic of what he will do: hence the encouraging argument—"Thou hast been favourable unto thy land," therefore deal graciously with it again. Many a time had foes been baffled, pestilence stayed, famine averted, and deliverance vouchsafed, because of the Lord's favour; that same favourable regard is therefore again invoked. With an immutable God this is powerful reasoning; it is because he changes not that we are not consumed, and know we never shall be if he has once been favourable to us. From this example of prayer let us learn how to order our cause before God.

It is clear that Israel was not in exile, or the prayer before us would not have referred to *the land* but to the nation.

"*Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*" When down-trodden and oppressed through their sins, the Ever-merciful One had looked upon them, changed their sad condition, chased away the invaders, and given to his people rest: this he had done not once, nor twice, but times without number. Many a time have we also been brought into soul-captivity by our backslidings, but we have not been left therein; the God who brought Jacob back from Padan-aram to his father's house, has restored us to the enjoyment of holy fellowship;—will he not do the like again? Let us appeal to him with Jacob-like wrestlings, beseeching him to be favourable, or sovereignly gracious to us notwithstanding all our provocations of his love. Let declining churches remember their former history, and with holy confidence plead with the Lord to turn their captivity yet again.

2. "*Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people.*" Often and often had he done this, pausing to pardon even when his sword was bared to punish. Who is a pardoning God like thee, O Jehovah? Who is so slow to anger, so ready to forgive? Every believer in Jesus enjoys the blessing of pardoned sin, and he should regard this priceless boon as the pledge of all other needed mercies. He should plead it with God—"Lord hast thou pardoned me, and wilt thou let me perish for lack of grace, or fall into thine enemies' hands for want of help. Thou wilt not thus leave thy work unfinished." "*Thou hast covered all their sin.*" All of it, every spot, and wrinkle, the veil of love has covered all. Sin has been divinely put out of sight. Hiding it beneath the propitiatory, covering it with the sea of the atonement, blotting it out, making it to cease to be, the Lord has put it so completely away that even his omniscient eye sees it no more. What a miracle is this! To cover up the sin would be easy work compared with the covering up of sin. Not without a covering atonement is sin removed, but by means of the great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, it is most effectually put away by one act, for ever. What a covering does his blood afford!

3. "*Thou hast taken away all thy wrath.*" Having removed the sin, the anger is removed also. How often did the longsuffering of God take away from Israel the punishments which had been justly laid upon them! How often also has the Lord's chastising hand been removed from us when our waywardness called for heavier strokes! "*Thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.*" Even when judgments had been most severe, the Lord had in mercy stayed his hand. In mid volley he had restrained his thunder. When ready to destroy, he had averted his face from his purpose of judgment and allowed mercy to interpose. The book of Judges is full of illustrations of this, and the Psalmist does well to quote them while he intercedes. Is not our experience equally studded with instances in which judgment has been stayed and tenderness has ruled? What a difference between the fierce anger which is feared and deprecated here, and the speaking of peace which is foretold in verse 8. There are many changes in Christian experience, and therefore we must not despair when we are undergoing the drearier portion of the spiritual life, for soon, very soon, it may be transformed into gladness.

"The Lord can clear the darkest skies,  
Can give us day for night,  
Make drops of sacred sorrow rise  
To rivers of delight."

4. "*Turn us, O God of our salvation.*" This was the main business. Could theerring tribes be rendered penitent all would be well. It is not that God needs

turning from his anger so much as that we need turning from our sin ; here is the hinge of the whole matter. Our trials frequently arise out of our sins, they will not go till the sins go. We need to be turned from our sins, but only God can turn us : God the Saviour must put his hand to the work ; it is indeed a main part of our salvation. Conversion is the dawn of salvation. To turn a heart to God is as difficult as to make the world revolve upon its axis. Yet when a man learns to pray for conversion there is hope for him, he who turns to prayer is beginning to turn from sin. It is a very blessed sight to see a whole people turn unto their God ; may the Lord so send forth his converting grace on our land that we may live to see the people flocking to the loving worship of God as the doves to their cotes. "*And cause thine anger toward us to cease.*" Make an end of it. Let it no longer burn. When sinners cease to rebel, the Lord ceases to be angry with them ; when they return to him he returns to them ; yea, he is first in the reconciliation and turns them when otherwise they would never turn of themselves. May all those who are now enduring the hidings of Jehovah's face seek with deep earnestness to be turned anew unto the Lord, for so shall all their despondencies come to an end.

Thus the sweet singer asks for his nation priceless blessings, and quotes the best of arguments. Because the God of Israel has been so rich in favour in bygone years, therefore he is entreated to reform and restore his backsliding nation.

5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever ? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations ?

6 Wilt thou not revive us again : that thy people may rejoice in thee ?

7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.

5. "*Wilt thou be angry with us for ever ?*" See how the Psalmist makes bold to plead. We are in time as yet and not in eternity, and does not time come to an end, and therefore thy wrath ! Wilt thou be angry always as if it were eternity ? Is there no boundary to thine indignation ? Will thy wrath never have done ? And if for ever angry, yet wilt thou be angry "*with us,*" thy favoured people, the seed of Abraham, thy friend ? That our enemies should be always wroth is natural but wilt thou, our God, be always incensed against us ? Every word is an argument. Men in distress never waste words. "*Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations ?*" Shall sons suffer for their fathers' faults, and punishment become an entailed inheritance ? O merciful God, hast thou a mind to spin out thine anger, and make it as long as the ages ? Cease thou, as thou hast ceased aforetime, and let grace reign as it has done in days of yore. When we are under spiritual desertion we may beg in the like manner that the days of tribulation may be shortened, lest our spirit should utterly fail beneath the trial.

6. "*Wilt thou not revive us again ?*" Hope here grows almost confident. She feels sure that the Lord will return in all his power to save. We are dead or dying, faint and feeble, God alone can revive us, he has in other times refreshed his people, he is still the same, he will repeat his love. Will he not ? Why should he not ? We appeal to him—"Wilt thou not ?" "*That thy people may rejoice in thee.*" Thou lovest to see thy children happy with that best of happiness which centres in thyself, therefore revive us, for revival will bring us the utmost joy. The words before us teach us that gratitude has an eye to the giver, even beyond the gift—"thy people may rejoice in thee." Those who were revived would rejoice not only in the new life but in the Lord who was the author of it. Joy in the Lord is the ripest fruit of grace, all revivals and renewals lead up to it. By our possession of it we may estimate our spiritual condition, it is a sure gauge of inward prosperity. A genuine revival without joy in the Lord is as impossible as spring without flowers, or daydawn without light. If, either in our own souls or in the hearts of others, we see declension, it becomes us to be much in the use of this prayer, and if on the other hand we are enjoying visitations of the Spirit and bedewings of grace, let us abound in holy joy and make it our constant delight to joy in God.

7. "*Shew us thy mercy, O LORD.*" Reveal it to our poor half-blinded eyes. We cannot see it or believe it by reason of our long woes, but thou canst make it plain to us. Others have beheld it, Lord shew it to us. We have seen thine anger, Lord let us see thy mercy. Thy prophets have told us of it, but, O Lord, do thou thyself display it in this our hour of need. "*And grant us thy salvation.*" This includes deliverance from the sin as well as the chastisement, it reaches from the

depth of their misery to the height of divine love. God's salvation is perfect in kind, comprehensive in extent, and eminent in degree ; grant us this, O Lord, and we have all.

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak : for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints : but let them not turn again to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him ; that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

11 Truth shall spring out of the earth ; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good* ; and our land shall yield her increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him ; and shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

Having offered earnest intercession for the afflicted but penitent nation, the sacred poet in the true spirit of faith awaits a response from the sacred oracle. He pauses in joyful confidence, and then in ecstatic triumph he gives utterance to his hopes in the richest form of song.

8. "*I will hear what God the LORD will speak.*" When we believe that God hears us, it is but natural that we should be eager to hear him. Only from him can come the word which can speak peace to troubled spirits ; the voices of men are feeble in such a case, a plaister far too narrow for the sore ; but God's voice is power, he speaks and it is done, and hence when we hear him our distress is ended. Happy is the suppliant who has grace to lie patiently at the Lord's door, and wait until his love shall act according to its old wont and chase all sorrow far away. "*For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints.*" Even though for a while his voice is stern with merited rebuke, he will not always chide, the Great Father will reassume his natural tone of gentleness and pity. The speaking of peace is the peculiar prerogative of the Lord Jehovah, and deep, lasting, ay, eternal, is the peace he thus creates. Yet not to all does the divine word bring peace, but only to his own people, whom he means to make saints, and those whom he has already made so. "*But let them not turn again to folly.*" For if they do so, his rod will fall upon them again, and their peace will be invaded. Those who would enjoy communion with God must be jealous of themselves, and avoid all that would grieve the Holy Spirit ; not only the grosser sins, but even the follies of life must be guarded against by those who are favoured with the delights of conscious fellowship. We serve a jealous God, and must needs therefore be incessantly vigilant against evil. Backsliders should study this verse with the utmost care, it will console them and yet warn them, draw them back to their allegiance, and at the same time inspire them with a wholesome fear of going further astray. To turn again to folly is worse than being foolish for once ; it argues wilfulness and obstinacy, and it involves the soul in sevenfold sin. There is no fool like the man who will be a fool cost him what it may.

9. "*Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him.*" Faith knows that a saving God is always near at hand, but *only* (for such is the true rendering) to those who fear the Lord, and worship him with holy awe. In the gospel dispensation this truth is conspicuously illustrated. If to seeking sinners salvation is nigh, it is assuredly very nigh to those who have once enjoyed it, and have lost its present enjoyment by their folly ; they have but to turn unto the Lord and they shall enjoy it again. We have not to go about by a long round of personal mortifications or spiritual preparations, we may come to the Lord, through Jesus Christ, just as we did at the first, and he will again receive us unto his loving embrace. Whether it be a nation under adversity, or a single individual under chastisement, the sweet truth before us is rich with encouragement to repentance, and renewed holiness.

"*That glory may dwell in our land.*" The object of the return of grace will be a permanent establishment of a better state of things, so that gloriously devout worship shall be rendered to God continuously, and a glorious measure of prosperity shall be enjoyed in consequence. Israel was glorious whenever she was faithful—

her dishonour always followed her disloyalty ; believers also live glorious lives when they walk obediently, and they only lose the true glory of their religion when they fall from their stedfastness.

In these two verses we have, beneath the veil of the letter, an intimation of the coming of THE WORD OF GOD to the nations in times of deep apostasy and trouble, when faithful hearts would be looking and longing for the promise which had so long tarried. By his coming, salvation is brought near, and glory, even the glory of the presence of the Lord, tabernacles among men. Of this the succeeding verses speak without obscurity.

10. "*Mercy and truth are met together.*" In answer to prayer, the exulting Psalmist sees the attributes of God confederating to bless the once afflicted nation. Mercy comes hand-in-hand with Truth to fulfil the faithful promise of their gracious God ; the people recognise at once the grace and the veracity of Jehovah, he is to them neither a tyrant nor a deceiver. "*Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*" The Lord whose just severity inflicted the smart, now in pity sends peace to bind up the wound. The people being now made willing to forsake their sins, and to follow after righteousness, find peace granted to them at once. "The war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled ;" for idolatry was forsaken, and Jehovah was adored.

This appears to be the immediate and primary meaning of these verses ; but the inner sense is Christ Jesus, the reconciling Word. In him, the attributes of God unite in glad unanimity in the salvation of guilty men, they meet and embrace in such a manner as else were inconceivable either to our just fears or to our enlightened hopes. God is as true as if he had fulfilled every letter of his threatenings, as righteous as if he had never spoken peace to a sinner's conscience ; his love in undiminished splendour shines forth, but no other of his ever-blessed characteristics is eclipsed thereby. It is the custom of modern *thinkers* (?) to make sport of this representation of the result of our Lord's substitutionary atonement, but had they ever been themselves made to feel the weight of sin upon a spiritually awakened conscience, they would cease from their vain ridicule. Their doctrine of atonement has well been described by Dr. Duncan as the admission "that the Lord Jesus Christ did something or other, which somehow or other, was in some way or other connected with man's salvation." This is their substitute for substitution. Our facts are infinitely superior to their dreams, and yet they sneer. It is but natural that natural men should do so. We cannot expect animals to set much store by the discoveries of science, neither can we hope to see unspiritual men rightly estimate the solution of spiritual problems—they are far above and out of their sight. Meanwhile it remains for those who rejoice in the great reconciliation to continue both to wonder and adore.

11. "*Truth shall spring out of the earth.*" Promises which lie unfulfilled, like buried seeds, shall spring up and yield harvests of joy ; and men renewed by grace shall learn to be true to one another and their God, and abhor the falsehood which they loved before. "*And righteousness shall look down from heaven,*" as if it threw up the windows and leaned out to gaze upon a penitent people, whom it could not have looked upon before without an indignation which would have been fatal to them. This is a delicious scene. Earth yielding flowers of truth, and heaven shining with stars of holiness ; the spheres echoing to each other, or being mirrors of each other's beauties. "Earth carpeted with truth and canopied with righteousness," shall be a nether heaven. When God looks down in grace, man sends his heart upward in obedience.

The person of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ explains this verse most sweetly. In Him truth is found in our humanity, and his deity brings divine righteousness among us. His Spirit's work even now creates a hallowed harmony between his church below, and the sovereign righteousness above ; and in the latter day, earth shall be universally adorned with every precious virtue, and heaven shall hold intimate intercourse with it. There is a world of meaning in these verses, only needing meditation to draw it out. Reader, "the well is deep," but if thou hast the Spirit, it cannot be said, that "thou hast nothing to draw with."

12. "*Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good.*" Being himself pure goodness, he will readily return from his wrath, and deal out good things to his repenting people. Our evil brings evil upon us, but when we are brought back to follow that which is good, the Lord abundantly enriches us with good things. Material good will always be bestowed where it can be enjoyed in consistency with spiritual good.

"*And our land shall yield her increase.*" The curse of barrenness will fly with the curse of sin. When the people yielded what was due to God, the soil would recompense their husbandry. See at this day what sin has done for Palestine, making her gardens a wilderness; her wastes are the scars of her iniquities: nothing but repentance and divine forgiveness will reclaim her desolations. The whole world also shall be bright with the same blessing in the days yet to come,—

"Freed from the curse, the grateful garden gives  
Its fruits in goodly revenue. Nor frost,  
Nor blight, nor mildew fall, nor cankerworm,  
Nor caterpillar, mar one ripening hope.  
The clouds drop fatness. The very elements  
Are subject to the prayerful will of those  
Whose pleasure is in unison with God's."

13. "*Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.*" God's march of right will leave a track wherein his people will joyfully follow. He who smote in justice will also bless in justice, and in both will make his righteousness manifest, so as to affect the hearts and lives of all his people. Such are the blessings of our Lord's first advent, and such shall be yet more conspicuously the result of his second coming. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—This beautiful Psalm, like some others, has come down to us without name or date; the production of some unknown poetic genius, touched, purified, and exalted by the fire of celestial inspiration; a precious relic of that golden age, when the Hebrew music was instinct with a spirit such as never breathed on Greece or Rome. It is interesting to reflect on the anonymous origin of some of the Psalms: to remember how largely the church of God is indebted to some nameless worthies who wrote for us hymns and spiritual songs, full of richer strains than were ever poured forth by the most illustrious of pagan name. These holy men are passed away, they have left no record of their history; but they have bequeathed legacies of rich, varied, and inspired sentiments, which will render the church debtors to them to the end of time.—*John Stoughton.* 1852.

*Whole Psalm.*—This Psalm may be thus divided: verses 1, 2, 3, express the thanks of the people for their return from captivity; verses 4, 5, 6, their prayer for their own reformation; in verse 7, they pray for the coming of the *Messiah*; verse 8 contains the words of the *High-priest*, with *God's gracious answer*; which answer is followed by the grateful acclamations of the people, to the end of the Psalm.

To prepare for this interpretation, let us observe, how very strangely the words are expressed at present—"I will hear what God the Lord will say: for he shall speak peace unto his people." But surely, God could not be consulted, because it was unnecessary; nor could the High-priest possibly say, that he would ask of God, because he knew what God would answer; especially, as we have now a *question to God* proposed, and yet no *answer from God* given at all. Under these difficulties we are happily relieved; since it appears, on satisfactory authorities, that, instead of the particle rendered "*for*," the word here originally signified *in* or *by me*, which slight variation removes the obscurity, and restores that very light which has long been wanted.

The people having prayed for the speedy arrival of their great salvation; the *High-priest* says, (as it should be here expressed), "*I will hear what the Almighty sayeth.*"—*Jehovah BY ME sayeth, PEACE unto his people, even unto his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.*" Whereupon, as the Jews understood *peace* to comprehend every blessing, and of course their greatest blessing, they at once acknowledged the certainty of this salvation, the *glory* of their land—they proclaim it as *nigh* at hand—and then, in rapture truly prophetic, they see this glory as actually arrived, as already dwelling in Judea—they behold God in fulfilling most strictly what he had promised most graciously—they see therefore the *mercy* of God, and the *truth*

of God met together—they see that scheme perfected, in which the *righteousness* (i.e., the justice) of God harmonizes with the *peace* (i.e. the happiness) of man ; so that righteousness and peace *salute* each other with the tenderest affection. In short, they see TRUTH *flourishing out of the earth* ; i.e. they see *him*, who is *the way, the truth, and the life*, born here *on earth* ; and they even see the *righteousness*, or justice of God, looking down from *heaven*, as being well pleased.

Verse the 12th is at present translated so unhappily, that it is quite despoiled of all its genuine glory. For, could the prophet, after all the rapturous things said before, coldly say here, that God *would give what was good*—and that *Judea* should have a *plentiful harvest* ? No ; consistency and good sense forbid it ; and truth confirms their protest against it. The words here express the reasons of all the preceding energies, and properly signify—*Yea, Jehovah granteth THE BLESSING ; and our land granteth HER OFFSPRING*. And what can be the  *blessing*—what, amidst these sublime images, can be *Judea's offspring*—but HE, and HE only, who was the  *blessing of all lands* in general, and the  *glory of Judea* in particular ? And what says the verse following ? “ *Righteousness goeth before HIM*—certainly, not before the  *fruits of the earth*—but certainly before that illustrious person, even the MESSIAH ” —“ *Righteousness goeth before HIM, and directeth his goings in the way.* ”

As to the word rendered the  *blessing*, and applied to the redemption ; the same word is so used by Jeremiah, thus : “ Behold, the days come, that I will perform that  *good thing* (the blessing) which I have promised . . . at that time will I cause to grow up unto David the Branch of righteousness ” (ch. xxxiii. 14, 15). And as to the Messiah being here described, partly as springing up from the earth ; so says Isaiah : “ In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious ; and the  *fruits of the earth* shall be excellent and comely.” But this evangelical prophet, in another place, has the very same complication of images with that found in the Psalm before us. For Isaiah also has the  *heavens*, with their  *righteousness* ; and the  *earth*, with its  *salvation* : “ Drop down, ye  *heavens* from above, and let the skies pour down  *righteousness* ; let the  *earth* open, and let them bring forth  *salvation*.” But, “ let them bring forth ”—who, or what can be here meant by  *them*, but the  *heavens* and the  *earth* ? It is heaven and earth which are here represented as  *bringing forth*, and introducing the Saviour of the world. For what else can be here meant as  *brought forth by them* ? What, but HE alone ; who, deriving his  *divine* nature from heaven, and his  *human* from the earth, was (what no other being ever was) both GOD and MAN.—*Benjamin Kennicott.*

Verse 1.—“ *Thy land.* ” The land of Jehovah the poet calls it, in order to point out the close relation of God to it, and to the people thereof, and so confirm the  *favour* of God towards it. For this land God has chosen as the dwelling-place of his people, true religion, and his own presence ; this also in his own time He himself had trodden in the person of his Son, and in it He first gathered and founded his Church.—*Venema.*

Verse 1.—“ *The captivity of Jacob.* ” All true believers are the sons of Jacob, and the seed of Abraham ; as well the believing Gentiles, who are the sons of Jacob according to the Spirit, as the believing Jews the sons of Jacob according to the flesh ; and the Church of these true Jacobins and Israelites is the land of the Lord, and the  *captivity* here mentioned is bondage under sin. In this captivity Satan is the gaoler, the flesh is our prison, ungodly lusts are the manacles, a bad conscience the tormentor, all of them against us ; only Christ is  *Emmanuel*, God with us ; he turneth away the captivity of Jacob in forgiving all his offences, and in covering all his sins.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 2.—“ *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity.* ” נָשָׂאתָ אֲוֹן, *nasatha avon*, *Thou hast borne, or carried away, the iniquity.* An allusion to the ceremony of the scape-goat.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—“ *Thou hast covered all their sin.* ” When God is said to  *cover sin*, he does so not as one would cover a sore with a plaster, thereby merely hiding it only ; but he covers it with a plaster that effectually cures and removes it altogether.—*Bellarmino.*

Verse 2.—“ *Selah.* ” Rabbi Kimchi regards it as a sign to elevate the voice. The authors of the Septuagint translation appear to have regarded it as a musical or rythmical note. Herder regarded it as indicating a change of note ; Mathewson as a musical note, equivalent, perhaps, to the word  *repeat*. According to Luther

and others, it means *silence*. Gesenius explains it to mean, "Let the instruments play and the singers stop." Wocher regards it as equivalent to *sursum corda*—up, my soul! Sommer, after examining all the seventy-four passages in which the word occurs recognises in every case "an actual appeal or summons to Jehovah." They are calls for aid and prayers to be heard, expressed either with entire directness, or if not in the imperative, "Hear, Jehovah!" or Awake, Jehovah! and the like, still earnest addresses to God that he would remember and hear, etc. The word itself he regards as indicating a blast of the trumpets by the priests. Selah, itself, he thinks an abridged expression, used for Higgsaion Selah—Higgsaion indicating the sound of the stringed instruments, and Selah a vigorous blast of trumpets.—From the "*Bibliotheca Sacra*," quoted by Plumer.

Verse 3.—"Thou hast taken away all thy wrath." Or gathered it; sin occasions wrath, and the people of God are as deserving of it as others; but the Lord has gathered it up, and poured it forth upon his Son, and their Surety; hence nothing of this kind shall ever fall upon them, either here or hereafter; and it is taken away from them, so as to have no sense, apprehension, or conscience of it, which before the law had wrought in them, when pardon is applied unto them, which is what is here meant.—John Gill.

Verse 3.—"Thou hast turned thyself." Here are six *hasts* drawing in the next turn, verse 4. God hath, and therefore God will, is a strong medium of hope, if not a demonstration of Scripture-logic. See 2 Cor. i. 10.—John Trapp.

Verse 4.—"Cause thine anger toward us to cease." The phrase, *break thine indignation towards us*, (that is, wherewith thou art angry with us, in order that it may cease of itself,) comprehends the abolition of the signs and the effects of anger. The word *ἄρα*, for this is the root to be taken, properly denotes a *breaking* by means of *notches* and *gaps*, as when the *edge* of anything is broken by many notches and gaps, and it is made utterly worn and useless. *Indignation*, so long as it is vigorous and spreads its effects, has an *edge*, which smites and pierces; but it is considered blunt and broken, when it ceases to exert itself, and produces evils no longer; this they affirm of the *anger* of God.—Venema.

Verse 6.—"Wilt thou not revive us again?" The Hebrew is, *Wilt thou not return and revive us?* We translate the verb *return* by the adverb *again*: "*Wilt thou not revive us again?*" Thou hast given us many *revives*: when we were as *dead men*, and like carcases rotting in the grave, thou didst revive us, wilt thou not revive us once more, and act over those powerfully merciful works and strong salvations once more, or again?—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 6.—"That thy people may rejoice in thee." Bernard in his 15th Sermon on Canticles says, Jesus is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, joy in the heart. Is any among us sad? Let Jesus enter the heart, and thence spring to the countenance, and behold, before the rising brightness of his name, every cloud is scattered, serenity returns. Origen in his 10th Hom. on Genesis, has the remark, Abraham rejoiced not in present things, neither in the riches of the words, nor deeds of time. But do you wish to hear, whence he drew his joy? Listen to the Lord speaking to the Jews, John viii. 56: "Your father, Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad:" hope heaped up his joys.—Le Blanc.

Verse 6.—"That thy people may rejoice in thee." When God changeth the cheer of his people, their joy should not be in the gift, but in the Giver.—David Dickson.

Verse 6.—It is the most natural thing, the most delightful thing, for the people of God to rejoice in God. God is the fountain of joy, and whom should he fill with it but his people? And whom should his people breathe it into again but him? This posture God delights to have them in; this posture they delight to be in; but this cannot be in that estate of death and captivity wherein God for a long season shutteth them up. "The living, the living shall praise thee," but alas, the dead cannot.—John Pennington, 1656.

Verse 6.—Truly sin kills. Men are dead in trespasses and sins, dead in law, dead in their affections, dead in a loss of comfortable communion with God. Probably the greatest practical heredity of each age is a low idea of our undone condition under the guilt and dominion of sin. While this prevails we shall be slow to cry for *reviving* or *quicken*g. What sinners and churches need is quickening by the Holy Ghost.—William S. Plumer.



Verses 6—7.—“*Will thou not revive us,*” by the first and spiritual resurrection, and so thy people, quickened from a life of sin to a life of grace, will rejoice in thee, not in themselves, presuming nothing on their own power. And in order that these things may be fulfilled in us, “*Shew us, O Lord, thy mercy,*” that is, Christ, through whom thou hast pitied the human race, shew him to us after this exile that we may see him face to face.—*Richardus Hampolus.*

Verse 7.—“*Thy mercy.*” It is not merely of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, but all is mercy, from first to last,—mercy that met us by the way,—mercy that looked upon us in our misery,—mercy that washed us from our sins in his own blood,—mercy that covered our nakedness and clad us in his own robe of righteousness,—mercy that led and guided us by the way,—and mercy that will never leave nor forsake us till mercy has wrought its perfect work in the eternal salvation of our souls through Jesus Christ.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 8.—“*I will hear,*” etc. The true attitude for a sinner to take in the presence of divine revelation, is that of a *listener*. To enter the place of a *doer* before you have occupied that of a *listener*, is to reverse God’s order, and throw everything into confusion. Adam tried this plan, and found it a failure. He tried “works.” He “sewed fig leaves together,” but it was no use. He could not even satisfy his own conscience, or remove his guilty fear. He had to listen to the voice of God—to hearken to divine revelation.—“*Things New and Old.*” 1859.

Verse 8.—“*I will hear,*” etc. The eye as a mere organ of sense must give place to the ear. Therefore it is wittily observed, that our Saviour commanding the abscission of the offending hand, foot, and eye, (Mark ix. 43—47), yet never spake of the ear. If thy hand, thy foot, or thine eye, cause thee to offend, deprive thyself of them; but part not with thine ear, for that is an organ to derive unto thy soul’s salvation. As Christ says there, a man may enter into heaven, lamed in his feet, as Mephibosheth, blind in his sight, as Barzillai, maimed in his hand, as the dry-handed man in the gospel; but if there be not an ear to hear of the way, there will be no foot to enter into heaven. If God be not first in the ear, he is neither sanctifiedly in the mouth, nor comfortably in the heart. The Jews had eyes to see Christ’s miracles, but because they had no ears to hear his wisdom, therefore they had no feet to enter into his kingdom. The way into the house is by the door, not by the window: the eye is but the window of the heart, the ear is the door. Now Christ stands knocking at the door, not at the window. Rev. iii. 20. And he will not come in at the window, but at the door: “He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.” John x. 2. He comes now in by his oracles, not by his miracles. “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice,” ver. 3. The way to open and let him in is by the door; to hear his voice. There was a man in the gospel blind and deaf: blind eyes is ill; but deaf ears, worse. It is bad to have the eyes seeled,\* but worse to have the ears sealed up. Open your ears therefore to this heavenly voice. Bernard hath this description of a good ear: Which willingly hears what is taught, wisely understands what it heareth, and obediently practises what it understandeth. O give me such an ear, and I will hang on it jewels of gold, ornaments of praise.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 8.—“*I will hear,*” etc. My text carries in it a poetical allusion to the consulting of the cloud of glory, which was between the cherubims, and to the receiving answer from it, upon all critical occasions. David turned his thoughts from all the other views he might have, to this, “*I will hear what God the Lord will speak*”; that so he might depend wholly on the assurances that he should receive of God’s favour, upon the repentance and prayers of the people; and in consideration of God’s covenant with them, he knew the answer would be “*peace*”; which being the form of salutation in those ages, among friends, imported an entire reconciliation. So that by *speaking peace* is to be understood an assurance of God’s love and favour “*to his people, and to his saints*”: that is, to the people that was sanctified, and dedicated to the service of God by so many federal rites.—*Gilbert Burnet, 1643—1714—5.*

Verse 8.—“*I will hear what God the Lord will speak.*” Carnal men speak peace to themselves on account of some supposed goodness in themselves. And unsound professors steal peace from God’s promises, such as Isa. lv. 7; Hosea xiv. 4. But

\* Seel, to close up: a term in falconry.

an upright heart will not be satisfied without hearing God speak peace to his heart by his Spirit. And for this he will pray, and wait, and hearken, and when God speaks peace, there comes such sweetness with it, and such discovery of his love, as lays a powerful influence on the soul not to turn again to folly. This peace is an humbling, melting peace, which brings humiliation to the soul as well as joy; but this never happens when men speak peace to themselves.—*John Berridge, 1716—1793.*

Verse 8.—“*I will hear what God the LORD will speak,*” etc. His prayer being finished, and he having spoke, he now stands and listens, as you use to do when you expect an echo, what echo he should have, what answer would be returned from heaven, whether his prayer had already come: “*I will hear what the Lord will speak;*” or, as some read it, “*I will hear what the Lord doth speak:*” for sometimes there is a present echo, a speedy answer returned to a man’s heart, even ere the prayer is half finished. “*He will speak peace.*” When the child of God wants peace, he can have no peace till God speak it. . . . Let God’s people be in never so great distress, yet it is an easy thing for God to give peace to them. Mark the expression here used: it is but *speaking* peace, that is, it is as easy for him to give peace as it is for you to speak a word; it is no more to him. Then our comfort is, that as he only must do it, so he easily can do it, even with a word.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—“*He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints,*” etc. The voice of the Lord is comfortable, and his words are sweet to those that fear him. It is a plain sign that all is not well with us, when the voice of God doth cast us into fear, when we are afraid to hear the word preached, when just reproofs of our sins are unwelcome to us, and anger us, and make us think the less of our minister that chideth and threateneth us.

A good life and a well-governed conversation doth not fear the voice of God; the word of God is the light which God hath set up in his church, to guide her feet in the ways of peace. They that do evil hate the light, and will not come near it, lest their works should be reprov’d; the children of the light resort to it, and call upon God: “*Search my reins and my heart, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me.*”—*Edward Marbury.*

Verse 8.—“*To his people and to his saints.*” He will give prosperity to the people in general; and to his saints—his followers, in particular.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 8.—“*To his saints.*” It is remarkable that we have the suffrage of a celebrated Jewish writer, Kimchi, to understand the word rendered “*saints*” in this place, of the godly among the Gentiles, as distinguished from the Lord’s people, the Jews.—*John Fry.*

Verse 8.—“*He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not return again to folly.*” This imports that if his saints turn again to folly, which by woeful experience we find too frequently done, God may change his voice, and turn his peace, formerly spoken, into a warlike defiance to their conscience.—*Thomas Fuller.*

Verse 8.—“*But let them not turn again to folly.*” If God did not in the end speak peace, they would indeed return to folly. For his end of speaking peace is, that they might not return to folly: Ps. cxxv. 3, “*The rod of the wicked shall not always be upon the righteous, lest they put forth their hand to iniquity;*” therefore, at the last verse, “*peace shall be upon Israel*” . . . .

As it is a rule in physic still to maintain nature, and therefore when that shall be in hazard to be destroyed, they leave giving purging physic, and give cordials; so doth God with his people: though with purging physic he often brings their spirits very weak and low, yet he will uphold and maintain their spirits, so as they shall not fail and be extinguished, but then he will give cordials to raise them up again.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 8.—It is hard to know, in spiritual exercises, whether it be more difficult to attain some good frame, or to keep and maintain it when it is attained; whether more seriousness is required for making peace with God, or for keeping of it when made; whether more diligence should be in preparing for a communion, or more watchfulness after it: sure both are required; and it was our blessed Lord’s word, Matt. xxvi. 41, after the first celebration of his supper, “*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*” Here that saying holds eminently: “*Non minor est virtus, quam quæerere, parva tueri*: no less virtue and valour is requisite to maintain, than to make a purchase or conquest. In the words there are, 1. A great mercy promised from the Lord to his people, viz., “*He will speak peace to them.*” 2. A

special caveat and advertisement given them, pointing at their hazard: "*But let them not turn again to folly*:" that is, let not his people and saints to whom he hath spoken peace, return to sin; let them beware of bounding\* and dallying with God's mercy, and of turning his grace into wantonness, of cooling in their affections to him, of slipping back to their old way, and of embracing their old lovers and idols; for that is folly, even in folio, to speak so.—James Durham, in "*The Unsearchable Riches of Christ*."

Verse 9.—"*That glory may dwell in our land.*" What land the true church of Christ, the saints and they that fear God, do dwell in; there doth *glory* dwell: there God, there Christ by his Spirit bringing righteousness and salvation to such a society, is glorious; and for his presence the people are glorious; and the land glorious above all other lands whatsoever.—David Dickson.

Verse 10.—"*Mercy and truth; righteousness and peace.*" Note, four virtues stand out prominently in the incarnation; namely, mercy, truth, righteousness and peace, or love producing peace. These were like four steps of the throne of Christ, or four princes standing near and accompanying Him. 1. On the right hand, is mercy presenting the olive. 2. On the left, truth holding the white lily. 3. Before Him walks justice bearing the balance. 4. Peace follows Him, having a *cornucopiæ* full of flowers, and scattering the flowers around.—Le Blanc.

Verse 10.—"*Mercy and truth; righteousness and peace.*" These four divine attributes parted at the fall of Adam, and met again at the birth of Christ. Mercy was ever inclined to save man, and Peace could not be his enemy; but Truth exacted the performance of God's threat,—"*The soul that sinneth, it shall die*;" and Righteousness could not but give to every one his due, Jehovah must be true in all his ways, and righteous in all his works. Now, there is no religion upon earth, except the Christian, which can satisfy the demands of all these claimants, and restore an union between them; which can show how God's word can be true, and his work just, and the sinner, notwithstanding, find mercy, and obtain peace.—George Horne.

Verse 10.—This is a remarkable text, and much has been said on it; but there is a beauty in it which, I think, has not been noticed. *Mercy* and *peace* are on one side; *truth* and *righteousness* on the other. *Truth* requires *righteousness*; *mercy* calls for *peace*. They meet together on the way; one going to make inquisition for sin, the other to plead for reconciliation. Having met, their differences on certain considerations, not here particularly mentioned, are adjusted; and their mutual claims are blended together in one common interest; on which *peace* and *righteousness* immediately embrace. Thus, *righteousness* is given to *truth*, and *peace* is given to *mercy*. Now, where did these meet? In Christ Jesus. When were they reconciled? When he poured out his life on Calvary.—Adam Clarke.

Verse 10.—"*Mercy and truth are met together.*" 1. They meet together in God; "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth," Ps. xxv. 9; *mercy* in making, and *truth* in keeping his promise to his people. Paul saith, Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the *truth* of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his *mercy*. Rom. xv. 8. God promised his Son unto the Jews; and he gave him in the fulness of time to be both a light to the Gentiles, and glory of his people Israel; herein shewing his *mercy* more principally to the Gentiles, his *truth* unto the Jews, and so his *mercy* and *truth* embraced each other, so that he made both people but one, to wit, one flock, in one sheepfold, under one shepherd.

If we take *truth* and *righteousness* for God's justice in punishing, *mercy* and *peace* for his graciousness in pardoning; yet they meet together in all his ways, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies. For as the mercies of the wicked are full of cruelty, so the very judgments of God upon his servants are full of mercy. In his wrath he remembers pity; punishing a little, that he may pardon a great deal; destroying the flesh only, to save the spirit, 1 Cor. v. 5. *Misericordiæ est aliquando subtrahere misericordiam*. It was good for Joseph that he was a captive; good for Naaman that he was a leper; good for Bartimæus that he was blind, and for David that he was in trouble. Bradford thanked God more of his prison, than of any parlour or pleasure. All things are for the best unto the faithful, and so

\* *Bounding*=jesting.

God's "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," his mercy being just, and his justice being merciful; but God in giving his only Son into the world, more abundantly shewed his *mercy* and *justice* kissing one another. His *justice* that every soul that sins should die; but his *mercy* desires not the death of a sinner. Ezekiel xxxiii. 11 . . . . .

2. Righteousness and peace meet together *in man*; so Augustine expounds it: an unjust man is full of quarrels, like Ishmael, "every man's hand is against him, and his hand against every man"; but he who is righteous, and giveth every man his due, shall have peace, so much as is possible with all men, especially with his own self and soul. Righteousness and peace are so near, so dear, that thou canst not have the one without the other.

3. Righteousness and peace meet *in Christ*, God's man; for by these two, some divines understand the Old Testament and the New. The Law doth exact *justice*, requiring of a malefactor "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot"; but the Gospel is full of *mercy* and *peace*, saying unto the sinner, who truly repenteth him of his sins, and unfeignedly believes the word of promise, "Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee;" "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole;" "Go thy way, thy belief hath saved thee;" "Behold, thou art now made whole, sin no more." These two testaments meet together in Christ, as in their proper centre, they "*kissed each other*" on this [Christmas] day, because the gospel performed what the law promised.—*John Boys*.

*Verse 10*.—When our Lord spake that parable of the prodigal son, and represented the Father as seeing his child afar off in his misery, and how he had compassion on him, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him, one cannot but feel what a touching and tender illustration he has given of this most exquisite passage of his own word: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."—*Barton Bouchier*.

*Verses 10, 11*.—Mercy and Peace, if they had met, or Truth and Righteousness, either of the two, it had not been strange. But for these that seem to be in opposition to do it, that makes this meeting marvellous in our eyes.

Will you stay a little and take a view of the parties? Four they are. These four, 1. Mercy, and 2. Truth, 3. Righteousness, and 4. Peace. Which quaternion at the first sight divides itself into two and two. Mercy and Peace, they two pair well; they be *collectanæ*, as Bernard saith of them in one place, 'bed-fellows,' sleep together; *collectanæ*, as in another place, 'sucked one milk, one breast' both. And as these two, so the other two, Truth and Righteousness seem to be of one complexion and disposition, and commonly take part together. Of these Mercy seems to favour us; and Peace no enemy to us or to any (seeing we must speak of them as of persons); mild and gentle persons both. For Righteousness I know not well what to say: *gestat gladium*, (bears the sword), and I fear *non frustra* (not in vain). Nor of Truth, who is *vera* and *severa*, 'severe' too otherwhile. These I doubt are not like affected. The reason of my doubt. One of them, Righteousness, it is told here for great news, that she but "looked down hitherwards from heaven." Before then she would not have done that. A great sign it is of heart-burning, when one will not do so much as look at another—not endure his sight. We cannot promise ourselves much of her. No, nor of Truth. One was so bold in a place to say, *omnis homo mendax* (Rom. iii. 4), and feared no challenge for it. By that it seems all stands not well with her neither. So then two for us, two against us.

For their order. Mercy is first, and Peace last. With both ends we shall do well enough. God sends us to do but so with the midst! Yet this is not amiss that they which favour us less are in the midst; hemmed in on both sides, closed about with those that wish us well; and they between us and them. On the one side, Mercy before; on the other, Peace behind another; that in this double meeting Mercy sorts not herself, goes not to Righteousness; nor Righteousness to her, but to Peace. A kind of cross meeting, as it were, there is—the better hope of accord. Mercy and Righteousness have no symbolizing quality at all, no hope of them; but Truth with Mercy hath. There is truth as well in the promise of Mercy as in the threat of justice.—*Lancelot Andrewes*.

*Verse 11*.—"Truth shall spring." The literal sense is, that the promises which for a long time are not fulfilled, and seem like seeds or roots hidden and concealed under ground, when they shall be fulfilled, shall be considered to spring up, to grow, etc.—*Lorinus*.

Verse 11.—“*Spring.*” The Metaphor is taken from flowers and trees. In the Greek the expression is ἀνέειλε, that is, *has sprung* like the morning, for ἀνατέλλω and ἀνατολή are properly said of the rising of the sun and moon.—*Le Blanc.*

Verse 11.—“*Shall look down.*” This *looking down*, ἑσπεί; rendered generally παρακίπτω in the Greek, implies such a look as in 1 Pet. i. 12, angels give into the things of salvation, and such a look as the disciples gave into the sepulchre. It is really the *Righteous One* who is resting over them in complacent love, not as in Psa. xiv. 2, and liii. 2, but fulfilling Ps. cii. 19, 20.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 12.—It has sometimes been objected that the Christian doctrine of a Millennium cannot be true, for the earth could not support the teeming millions that would naturally be found upon it, if wars and vices should cease to waste its population. But omitting other and pertinent answers that have been given, we find one here that covers the whole ground, *the earth shall yield her increase.* Now and then the season is unusually propitious, and we have a specimen of what God can do when he chooses. He can without any miracle make it many times more fruitful than it has ever been.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 13.—“*Righteousness shall go before him,*” etc. The meaning of this difficult verse may probably be as follows :—Righteousness shall go before Him (Jehovah), and shall make his footsteps a pathway for his servants to walk in.—*Ernest Hawkins.*

Verse 13.—“*Shall set us in the way of his steps.*” It is reported in the Bohemian History, that St. Wenceslaus, their king, one winter night going to his devotions, in a remote church, barefooted in the snow and sharpness of unequal and pointed ice, his servant Podavivus who waited upon his master’s piety, and endeavoured to imitate his affections, began to faint through the violence of the snow and cold; till the king commanded him to follow him, and set his feet in the same footsteps, which his feet should mark for him: the servant did so, and either fancied a cure, or found one; for he followed his prince, helped forward with shame and zeal to his imitation, and by the forming footsteps for him in the snow. In the same manner does the blessed Jesus; for, since our way is troublesome, obscure, full of objection and danger, apt to be mistaken, and to affright our industry, he commands us to mark his footsteps, to tread where his feet have stood, and not only invites us forward by the argument of his example, but he hath trodden down much of the difficulty, and made the way easier and fit for our feet. For he knows our infirmities, and himself hath felt their experience in all things but in the neighbourhood of sin; and therefore he hath proportioned a way and a path to our strength and capacities, and, like Jacob, hath marched softly and in evenness with the children and the cattle, to entertain us by the comforts of his company, and the influence of a perpetual guide.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Verse 13 (*last clause*).—The sinner who feels his need of salvation, is *set—in the way of his steps*; as Bartimæus sat by the way-side begging, by which way Jesus walked; and when he came where he was, heard his prayer, and restored him his sight.—*Adam Clarke.*

#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—There is, I. Captivity. 1. Of the people of God. 2. Although they are the people of God. 3. Because they are the people of God. “You only have I known,” etc. II. Restoration from Captivity: “Thou hast brought back,” etc. 1. The fact. 2. The Author: “Thou: by thine own power; in thine own manner; at thine own time. III. The cause of the Restoration; the favour of God: “Thou hast been favourable.” 1. On account of favour past. “Thou hast.” 2. On account of favour in reserve.

Verse 2.—I. The subjects of forgiveness: “Thy people.” 1. By choice. 2. By redemption. 3. By effectual calling. II. The time of forgiveness: “Thou hast forgiven,” etc. III. The method of forgiveness. 1. Forgiven. Heb. borne, same word as in Lev. xvi. 22: “The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities.” 2. Covered; as the mercy seat covered the law that had been broken. IV. The extent of forgiveness: “all their sin.”

*Verse 3.*—I. The language of penitence. It is implied here that the wrath was, 1. Great : 2. Just : “*thy* wrath.” II. The language of faith. 1. In the grace of pardon : “*Thou* hast turned away wrath.” We could not, by anything we could do or suffer. 2. In the method of pardon : “*Turned away.*” Turned it from us to our Surety. III. The language of praise : “*Thou* hast—*thou* hast.”

*Verse 4.*—I. In what salvation consists. 1. In the removal of God’s enmity from us. 2. In the removal of our enmity to him. II. By whom it is accomplished. By the God of salvation. 1. He causes his anger toward us to cease, and 2. Our anger toward him. III. How is it obtained ? By prayer : “*Turn us,*” etc.

*Verse 6.*—I. Revivals imply decline. 1. That there is grace to be revived, 2. That this grace has declined. II. Revivals are from God : “*Wilt not thou,*” etc. : they cannot be got up by men. III. Revivals are frequently needed : “*Wilt not thou revive us again.*” IV. Revivals are in answer to prayer : “*Wilt thou not,*” etc. V. Revivals are occasions for great joy. 1. *To* the saints. 2. *In* God.

*Verse 7.*—I. Salvation is God’s work : “*Thy* salvation.” 1. The plan is his. 2. The provision is his. 3. The condition is his. 4. The application is his. 5. The consummation is his. II. Salvation is God’s gift. 1. Of his mercy : “*Show us thy* mercy.” 2. Of his grace : “*Grant us,*” etc. III. Salvation is God’s answer to prayer. 1. It is the first object of prayer. 2. It includes every other.

*Verse 8.*—I. We should look for an answer to prayer. Having spoken to God, we should hear what he has to say to us in reply. 1. In his word. 2. In his providence. 3. By his Spirit in our own souls. II. We should look for an answer of peace : “*He* will speak peace.” III. We should avoid whatever might deprive us of that peace : “*But* let them not turn,” etc.

*Verse 10.*—I. The attributes displayed in man’s salvation. 1. Mercy in the promise. 2. Truth in its fulfilment. 3. Righteousness in the manner of its fulfilment. 4. Peace in its results. II. These attributes harmonized in man’s salvation. 1. How ? “*Met* together—kissed each other.” 2. Why ? Each on its own account. All on each others’ account. 3. Where ? Met and kissed, (1.) In the covenant. (2.) At the incarnation. (3.) At the cross. (4.) At the conversion of every sinner. (5.) At the completion of the saints in heaven.

*Verse 12.*—I. All spiritual good is from God : “*The* Lord will give,” etc. 1. Is repentance a good thing ? The Lord will give repentance. 2. Is pardon ? “*The* Lord,” etc. 3. Is faith ? 4. Is justification ? 5. Is regeneration ? 6. Is growth in grace ? 7. Is preservation unto the end ? 8. Is eternal glory ? “*The* Lord will give,” etc. II. All temporal good is from God. “*Our* land,” etc. 1. In a lawful manner *our* land. 2. In the use of appointed means : “*Shall* yield her increase,” etc. 3. In dependence upon the divine blessing. “*Who* giveth fruitful seasons,” etc. Spiritual good is not less given in the use of appointed means.

*Verse 13.*—I. The righteousness by which we are justified long precedes our justification : this righteousness is “*gone* before,” etc. II. Our justification by that righteousness precedes our sanctification. III. The righteousness of sanctification invariably follows that of justification.

[All the above are by the Rev. Geo. Rogers.]

*Verse 8.*—*Thomas Goodwin* has three sermons upon this verse, (*First clause*), entitled *The Return of Prayers*. (*Second clause*).—*Tidings of Peace*. (*Last clause*).—*The Folly of Relapsing after Peace* spoken.

*Verse 8 (last clause).*—They should not turn again to folly, I. Because it will be a greater aggravation in sinning. It is made the aggravation of Solomon’s sin (1 Kings xi. 9), that “*God* had appeared to him twice.” II. The second reason is intimated in the word “*folly* : ” as if the Lord should have said, Set aside the unkindness and wrong you do to me, yet therein you befool yourselves ; you will have the worst of it.—*T. Goodwin*.

*Verse 6.*—Joy in the Lord the best evidence of revived piety.

*Verse 12.*—The fertility of our spheres of labour the gift of God.

*Verse 10.*—The Pulpit, vol. XXVIII, 1836, contains a sermon by R. W. Sibthorpe, in which the preacher, I. Considers the harmony of the divine perfections in the redemption of a sinner. II. The wisdom of the divine dealings in the calling and guidance of the believer ; so that mercy, truth, etc., each becomes in turn conspicuous in our experience. III. The completeness of the divine image in the sanctified soul so that the perfected saint abounds in mercy and truth, is filled with peace, and is conformed to his righteous Lord.