

PSALM XCII.

TITLE.—A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day. *This admirable composition is both a Psalm and a Song, full of equal measures of solemnity and joy ; and it was intended to be sung upon the day of rest. The subject is the praise of God ; praise is Sabbatic work, the joyful occupation of resting hearts. Since a true Sabbath can only be found in God, it is wise to meditate upon him on the Sabbath day. The style is worthy of the theme and of the day, its inspiration is from the "fount of every blessing" ; David spake as the Spirit gave him utterance. In the church of Christ, at this hour, no Psalm is more frequently sung upon the Lord's day than the present. The delightful version of Dr. Watts is familiar to us all—*

*" Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise thy name, give thanks, and sing ;
To shew thy love by morning light,
And talk of all thy truth at night."*

The Sabbath was set apart for adoring the Lord in his finished work of creation, hence the suitableness of this Psalm ; Christians may take even a higher flight, for they celebrate complete redemption. No one acquainted with David's style will hesitate to ascribe to him the authorship of this divine hymn : the ravings of the Rabbis who speak of its being composed by Adam, only need to be mentioned to be dismissed. Adam in Paradise had neither harps to play upon, nor wicked men to contend with.

EXPOSITION.

IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High :

2 *To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,*

3 *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery ; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

4 *For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work : I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

1. "*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,*" or JEHOVAH. It is good ethically, for it is the Lord's right ; it is good emotionally, for it is pleasant to the heart ; it is good practically, for it leads others to render the same homage. When duty and pleasure combine, who will be backward ? To give thanks to God is but a small return for the great benefits wherewith he daily loadeth us ; yet as he by his Spirit calls it a good thing, we must not despise it, or neglect it. We thank men when they oblige us, how much more ought we to bless the Lord when he benefits us. Devout praise is always good, it is never out of season, never superfluous, but it is especially suitable to the Sabbath ; a Sabbath without thanksgiving is a Sabbath profaned. "*And to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.*" It is good to give thanks in the form of vocal song. Nature itself teaches us thus to express our gratitude to God ; do not the birds sing, and the brooks warble as they flow ? To give his gratitude a tongue is wise in man. Silent worship is sweet, but vocal worship is sweeter. To deny the tongue the privilege of uttering the praises of God involves an unnatural strain upon the most commendable promptings of our renewed manhood, and it is a problem to us how the members of the Society of Friends can deprive themselves of so noble, so natural, so inspiring a part of sacred worship. Good as they are, they miss one good thing when they decline to sing praises unto the name of the Lord. Our personal experience has confirmed us in the belief that it is good to sing unto the Lord ; we have often felt like Luther when he said, "Come, let us sing a Psalm, and drive away the devil."

2. "*To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning.*" The day should begin with praise : no hour is too early for holy song. Lovingkindness is a most appropriate theme for those dewy hours when morn is sowing all the earth with orient pearl.

Eagerly and promptly should we magnify the Lord ; we leave unpleasant tasks as long as we can, but our hearts are so engrossed with the adoration of God that we would rise betimes to attend to it. There is a peculiar freshness and charm about early morning praises ; the day is loveliest when it first opens its eyelids, and God himself seems then to make distribution of the day's manna, which tastes most sweetly if gathered ere the sun is hot. It seems most meet that if our hearts and harps have been silent through the shades of night, we should be eager again to take our place among the chosen choir who ceaselessly hymn the Eternal One. "*And thy faithfulness every night.*" No hour is too late for praise, the end of the day must not be the end of gratitude. When nature seems in silent contemplation to adore its Maker, it ill becomes the children of God to refrain their thanksgiving. Evening is the time for retrospect, memory is busy with the experience of the day, hence the appropriate theme for song is the divine *faithfulness*, of which another day has furnished fresh evidences. When darkness has settled down o'er all things, "a shade immense," then there comes over wise men a congenial, meditative spirit, and it is most fitting that they should take an expanded view of the truth and goodness of Jehovah—

"This sacred shade and solitude, what is it ?
'Tis the felt presence of the Deity."

"*Every night*," clouded or clear, moonlit or dark, calm or tempestuous, is alike suitable for a song upon the faithfulness of God, since in all seasons, and under all circumstances, it abides the same, and is the mainstay of the believer's consolation. Shame on us that we are so backward in magnifying the Lord, who in the daytime scatters bounteous love, and in the night season walks his rounds of watching care.

3. "*Upon an instrument of ten strings ;*" with the fullest range of music, uttering before God with the full compass of melody the richest emotions of his soul. "*And upon the psaltery ;*" thus giving variety to praise : the Psalmist felt that every sweet-sounding instrument should be consecrated to God. George Herbert and Martin Luther aided their private devotions by instrumental music ; and whatever may have been the differences of opinion in the Christian church, as to the performance of instrumental music in public, we have met with no objection to its personal and private use. "*Upon the harp with a solemn sound,*" or upon *meditation with a harp ;* as much as to say, my meditative soul is, after all, the best instrument, and the harp's dulcet tones come in to aid my thoughts. It is blessed work when hand and tongue work together in the heavenly occupation of praise.

"Strings and voices, hands and hearts,
In the concert bear your parts :
All that breathe, your God adore,
Praise him, praise him, evermore."

It is, however, much to be feared that attention to the mere mechanism of music, noting keys and strings, bars and crochets, has carried many away from the spiritual harmony which is the soul and essence of praise. Fine music without devotion is but a splendid garment upon a corpse.

4. "*For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work.*" It was natural for the Psalmist to sing, because he was glad, and to sing unto the Lord, because his gladness was caused by a contemplation of the divine work. If we consider either creation or providence, we shall find overflowing reasons for joy ; but when we come to review the work of redemption, gladness knows no bounds, but feels that she must praise the Lord with all her might. There are times when in the contemplation of redeeming love we feel that if we did not sing we must die ; silence would be as horrible to us as if we were gagged by inquisitors, or stifled by murderers. "*I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*" I cannot help it, I must and I will rejoice in the Lord, even as one who has won the victory and has divided great spoil. In the first sentence of this verse he expresses the unity of God's *work*, and in the second the variety of his *works* ; in both there is reason for gladness and triumph. When God reveals his work to a man, and performs a work in his soul, he makes his heart glad most effectually, and then the natural consequence is continual praise.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works ! *and* thy thoughts are very deep.
6 A brutish man knoweth not ; neither doth a fool understand this

5. "O Lord, how great are thy works!" He is lost in wonder. He utters an exclamation of amazement. How vast! How stupendous are the doings of Jehovah! Great for number, extent, and glory and design are all the creations of the Infinite One. "And thy thoughts are very deep." The Lord's plans are as marvellous as his acts; his designs are as profound as his doings are vast. Creation is immeasurable, and the wisdom displayed in it unsearchable. Some men think but cannot work, and others are mere drudges working without thought; in the Eternal the conception and the execution go together. Providence is inexhaustible, and the divine decrees which originate it are inscrutable. Redemption is grand beyond conception, and the thoughts of love which planned it are infinite. Man is superficial, God is inscrutable; man is shallow, God is deep. Dive as we may we shall never fathom the mysterious plan, or exhaust the boundless wisdom of the all-comprehending mind of the Lord. We stand by the fathomless sea of divine wisdom, and exclaim with holy awe, "O the depth!"

6. "A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this." In this and the following verses the effect of the Psalm is heightened by contrast; the shadows are thrown in to bring out the lights more prominently. What a stoop from the preceding verse; from the saint to the brute, from the worshipper to the boor, from the Psalmist to the fool! Yet, alas, the character described here is no uncommon one. The boorish or boarish man, for such is almost the very Hebrew word, sees nothing in nature; and if it be pointed out to him, his foolish mind will not comprehend it. He may be a philosopher, and yet be such a brutish being that he will not own the existence of a Maker for the ten thousand matchless creations around him, which wear, even upon their surface, the evidences of profound design. The unbelieving heart, let it boast as it will, does not know; and with all its parade of intellect, it does not understand. A man must either be a saint or a brute, he has no other choice; his type must be the adoring seraph, or the ungrateful swine. So far from paying respect to great thinkers who will not own the glory or the being of God, we ought to regard them as comparable to the beasts which perish, only vastly lower than mere brutes, because their degrading condition is of their own choosing. O God, how sorrowful a thing it is that men whom thou hast so largely gifted, and made in thine own image, should so brutify themselves that they will neither see nor understand what thou hast made so clear. Well might an eccentric writer say, "God made man a little lower than the angels at first, and he has been trying to get lower ever since."

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; *it is* that they shall be destroyed for ever:

8 But thou, LORD, *art most high* for evermore.

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

7. "When the wicked spring as the grass," in abundance, and apparent strength, hastening on their progress like verdant plants, which come to perfection in a day, "and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish;" flowering in their prime and pride, their pomp and their prosperity; "*it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.*" They grow to die, they blossom to be blasted. They flower for a short space to wither without end. Greatness and glory are to them but the prelude of their overthrow. Little does their opposition matter, the Lord reigns on as if they had never blasphemed him; as a mountain abides the same though the meadows at its feet bloom or wither, even so the Most High is unaffected by the fleeting mortals who dare oppose him: they shall soon vanish for ever from among the living. But as for the wicked—how can our minds endure the contemplation of their doom "*for ever.*" Destruction "*for ever*" is a portion far too terrible for the mind to realise. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the full terror of the wrath to come!

8. "But thou, Lord, *art most high for evermore.*" This is the middle verse of the Psalm, and the great fact which this Sabbath song is meant to illustrate. God is at once the highest and most enduring of all beings. Others rise to fall, but he is the Most High to eternity. Glory be to his name! How great a God we worship! Who would not fear thee, O thou High Eternal One! The ungodly are destroyed for ever, and God is most high for ever; evil is cast down, and the Holy One reigns supreme eternally.

9. "*For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord.*" It is a wonder full of instruction and warning, observe it, O ye sons of men; "*for, lo, thine enemies shall perish;*" they shall cease from among men, they shall be known no more. In that the thing is spoken twice it is confirmed by the Lord, it shall surely be, and that speedily. "*All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered;*" their forces shall be dispersed, their hopes broken, and themselves driven hither and thither like chaff before the tempest. They shall scatter like timid sheep pursued by the lion, they will not have the courage to remain in arms, nor the unity to abide in confederacy. The grass cannot resist the scythe, but falls in withering ranks, even so are the ungodly cut down and swept away in process of time, while the Lord whom they despised sits unmoved upon the throne of his infinite dominion. Terrible as this fact is, no true-hearted man would wish to have it otherwise. Treason against the great Monarch of the universe ought not to go unpunished; such wanton wickedness richly merits the severest doom.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of an unicorn*: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies, *and* mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.

10. "*But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn.*" The believer rejoices that he shall not be suffered to perish, but shall be strengthened and enabled to triumph over his enemies, by the divine aid. The unicorn may have been some gigantic ox or buffalo now unknown, and perhaps extinct—among the ancients it was the favourite symbol of unconquerable power; the Psalmist adopts it as his emblem. Faith takes delight in foreseeing the mercy of the Lord, and sings of what he will do as well as of what he has done. "*I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*" Strengthening shall be attended with refreshment and honour. As guests were anointed at feasts with perfumed unguents, so shall the saints be cheered and delighted by fresh outpourings of divine grace; and for this reason they shall not pass away like the wicked. Observe the contrast between the happiness of the brutish people and the joy of the righteous, the brutish men grow with a sort of vegetable vigour of their own, but the righteous are dealt with by the Lord himself, and all the good which they receive comes directly from his own right hand, and so is doubly precious in their esteem. The Psalmist speaks in the first person, and it should be a matter of prayer with the reader that he may be enabled to do the same.

11. "*Mine eye also shall see MY DESIRE on mine enemies.*" The words, "*my desire,*" inserted by the translators, had far better have been left out. He does not say what he should see concerning his enemies, he leaves that blank, and we have no right to fill in the vacant space with words which look vindictive. He would see that which would be for God's glory, and that which would be eminently right and just. "*And mine ears shall hear MY DESIRE of the wicked that rise up against me.*" Here, again, the words "*my desire*" are not inspired, and are a needless and perhaps a false interpolation. The good man is quite silent as to what he expected to hear; he knew that what he should hear would vindicate his faith in his God, and he was content to leave his cruel foes in God's hands, without an expression concerning his own desire one way or the other. It is always best to leave Scripture as we find it. The broken sense of inspiration is better let alone than pieced out with additions of a translator's own invention; it is like repairing pure gold with tinsel, or a mosaic of gems with painted wood. The holy Psalmist had seen the beginning of the ungodly, and expected to see their end; he felt sure that God would right all wrongs, and clear his Providence from the charge of favouring the unjust; this confidence he here expresses, and sits down contentedly to wait the issues of the future.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To shew that the LORD *is* upright : *he is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him.

12. The song now contrasts the condition of the righteous with that of the graceless. The wicked "spring as the grass," but "*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,*" whose growth may not be so rapid, but whose endurance for centuries is in fine contrast with the transitory verdure of the meadow. When we see a noble palm standing erect, sending all its strength upward in one bold column, and growing amid the dearth and drought of the desert, we have a fine picture of the godly man, who in his uprightness aims alone at the glory of God ; and, independent of outward circumstances, is made by divine grace to live and thrive where all things else perish. The text tells us not only what the righteous is, but what he shall be ; come what may, the good man shall flourish, and flourish after the noblest manner. "*He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*" This is another noble and long-lived tree. "As the days of a tree are the days of my people," saith the Lord. On the summit of the mountain, unsheltered from the blast, the cedar waves its mighty branches in perpetual verdure, and so the truly godly man under all adversities retains the joy of his soul, and continues to make progress in the divine life. Grass, which makes hay for oxen, is a good enough emblem of the unregenerate ; but cedars, which build the temple of the Lord, are none too excellent to set forth the heirs of heaven.

13. "*Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.*" In the court-yards of Oriental houses trees were planted, and being thoroughly screened, they would be likely to bring forth their fruit to perfection in trying seasons ; even so, those who by grace are brought into communion with the Lord, shall be likened to trees planted in the Lord's house, and shall find it good to their souls. No heart has so much joy as that which abides in the Lord Jesus. Fellowship with the stem begets fertility in the branches. If a man abide in Christ he brings forth much fruit. Those professors who are rooted to the world do not flourish ; those who send forth their roots into the marshes of frivolous pleasure cannot be in a vigorous condition ; but those who dwell in habitual fellowship with God shall become men of full growth, rich in grace, happy in experience, mighty in influence, honoured and honourable. Much depends upon the soil in which a tree is planted ; everything, in our case, depends upon our abiding in the Lord Jesus, and deriving all our supplies from him. If we ever really grow in the courts of the Lord's house we must be planted there, for no tree grows in God's garden self-sown ; once planted of the Lord, we shall never be rooted up, but in his courts we shall take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward to his glory for ever.

14. "*They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.*" Nature decays but grace thrives. Fruit, as far as nature is concerned, belongs to days of vigour ; but in the garden of grace, when plants are weak in themselves, they become strong in the Lord, and abound in fruit acceptable with God. Happy they who can sing this Sabbath Psalm, enjoying the rest which breathes through every verse of it ; no fear as to the future can distress them, for their evil days, when the strong man faileth, are the subject of a gracious promise, and therefore they await them with quiet expectancy. Aged believers possess a ripe experience, and by their mellow tempers and sweet testimonies they feed many. Even if bedridden, they bear the fruit of patience ; if poor and obscure, their lowly and contented spirit becomes the admiration of those who know how to appreciate modest worth. Grace does not leave the saint when the keepers of the house do tremble ; the promise is still sure though the eyes can no longer read it ; the bread of heaven is fed upon when the grinders fail ; and the voice of the Spirit in the soul is still melodious when the daughters of music are brought low. Blessed be the Lord for this ! Because even to hoar hairs he is the I AM, who made his people, he therefore bears and carries them.

"*They shall be fat and flourishing.*" They do not drag out a wretched, starveling existence, but are like trees full of sap, which bear luxuriant foliage. God does not pinch his poor servants, and diminish their consolations when their infirmities grow upon them ; rather does he see to it that they shall renew their strength, for their mouths shall be satisfied with his own good things. Such an one as Paul the aged would not ask our pity, but invite our sympathetic gratitude ; however feeble his outward man may be, his inner man is so renewed day by day that we may well envy his perennial peace.

15. This mercy to the aged proves the faithfulness of their God, and leads them "*to shew that the Lord is upright*" by their cheerful testimony to his ceaseless goodness.

We do not serve a Master who will run back from his promise. Whoever else may defraud us, he never will. Every aged Christian is a letter of commendation to the immutable fidelity of Jehovah. "*He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*" Here is the Psalmist's own seal and sign manual: still was he building upon his God, and still was the Lord a firm foundation for his trust. For shelter, for defence, for indwelling, for foundation, God is our rock; hitherto he has been to us all that he said he would be, and we may be doubly sure that he will abide the same even unto the end. He has tried us, but he has never allowed us to be tempted above what we are able to bear: he has delayed our reward, but he has never been unrighteous to forget our work of faith and labour of love. He is a friend without fault, a helper without fail. Whatever he may do with us, he is always in the right; his dispensations have no flaw in them, no, not the most minute. He is true and righteous altogether, and so we weave the end of the Psalm with its beginning, and make a coronet of it, for the head of our Beloved. "*It is a good thing to sing praises unto the Lord,*" for "*he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*"

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Title.—This is entitled "*A Psalm to be sung on the day of the Sabbath.*" It is known that the Jews appropriated certain Psalms to particular days. R. Selomo thinks that it refers to the future state of the blessed, which is a perpetual sabbath. Others pretend that it was composed by Adam, on the seventh day of the creation. It might, with more probability, have been supposed to be put, by a poetic fiction, into the mouth of Adam, beholding, with wonder and gratitude, the recent creation. But ver. 2 seems to refer to the morning and evening sacrifice, which the Psalmist considers as most proper for prayer and praise.—*D. Cresswell.*

Title.—"*For the Sabbath day.*" Perchance, as *Lud. de Dieu* remarks on this place, every day of the week had its allotted Psalms, according to what is said in the *Talmud*, lib. קט"ט. The songs which the Levites formerly sang in the sanctuary are these: on the first day, Ps. xxiv.; on the second, Ps. xlviii.; on the third, Ps. lxxxii.; on the fourth, the 104th; on the fifth, the 81st; on the sixth, the 93rd; on the seventh, the 92nd, the beginning of which is, *a Psalm or a Canticle for the Sabbath day*, that is to say, for the future age, which will be altogether a sabbath.—*Martin Geier.*

Title.—"*For the Sabbath.*"—It is observable that the name JEHOVAH occurs in the Psalm seven times—the sabbatical number (1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 15).—*C. Wordsworth.*

Verse 1.—"*It is a good thing.*" It is *bonum, honestum, jucundum, utile*; an honest, pleasant, and profitable good. The altar of incense was to be overlaid with pure gold, and to have a crown of gold round about it. Which (if we may allegorically apply it) intimateth unto us, that the spiritual incense of prayers and praises is rich and precious, a golden, and a royal thing.—*Henry Jeanes*, in "*The Works of Heaven upon Earth*," 1649.

Verse 1.—"*It is a good thing to give thanks,*" etc. Giving of thanks is more noble and perfect in itself than petition; because in petition often our own good is eyed and regarded, but in giving of thanks only God's honour. The Lord Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Now, a subordinate end of petition is to receive some good from God, but the sole end of thanks is to give glory unto God.—*William Ames* (1576—1633), in "*Medulla Theologica.*"

Verse 1.—"*Give thanks;*" "*praises.*" We thank God for his benefits, and praise him for his perfections.—*Filliucius, out of Aquinas.*

Verse 1.—"*To sing praises.*" 1. *Singing is the music of nature.* The Scriptures tell us, the mountains sing (Isai. xlv. 23); the valleys sing (Psalm lxxv. 13); the trees of the wood sing (1 Chron. xvi. 33). Nay, the air is the birds' music-room, where they chant their musical notes.

2. *Singing is the music of ordinances.* Augustine reports of himself, that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses, that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing Ps. xci., he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The Rabbis tell us, that the

Jews, after the feast of the Passover was celebrated, sang Psalm cxi., and the five following Psalms; and our Saviour and his apostles "sang an hymn" immediately after the blessed supper, (Matt. xxvi. 30).

3. *Singing is the music of saints.* (1.) They have performed this duty in their greatest numbers, (Psalm cxlix. 1). (2.) In their greatest straits, (Isai. xxvi. 19). (3.) In their greatest flight, (Isai. xlii. 10, 11). (4.) In their greatest deliverances, (Isai. lxxv. 14). (5.) In their greatest plenties. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty; every attribute of him can set both their song and their tune.

4. *Singing is the music of angels.* Job tells us, "The morning stars sang together," (Job xxxviii. 7). Now these morning stars, as Pineda tells us, are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, *aciem angelorum*, "a host of angels." Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they delivered their message in this raised way of duty, (Luke ii. 13). They were *αἰνοῦντων*, delivering their messages in a "laudatory singing," the whole company of angels making a musical choir. Nay, in heaven, there is the angels' joyous music, they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne, (Rev. v. 11, 12).

5. *Singing is the music of heaven.* The glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness; and this is the music of the bride-chamber, (Rev. xv. 3). The saints who were tuning here their Psalms, are now singing hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction. Here they laboured with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyous celebrations.—*John Wells* (—1676), in "*The Morning Exercises*."

Verse 2.—"In the morning." When indeed the mind after the rest of the night is more active, devoted and constant. In other parts of the day, as at noon, or in the afternoon, many sounds of business disturb, and greater lassitude oppresses. Compare Pss. v. 4, lix. 17, lxiii. 2, lxxxviii. 14, cxix. 147, 148, where this same part of the day is celebrated as the fittest for sacred meditations. However, this ought not to be taken exclusively, as if, in the morning alone, and not also at noon or in the evening, it was suitable to celebrate divine grace.—*Martin Geier*.

Verse 2.—"In the morning." The Brahmins rise three hours before the sun, to pray. The Indians would esteem it a great sin to eat in the morning before praying to their gods. The ancient Romans considered it impious if they had not a little chamber in their house, appropriated to prayer. Let us take a lesson from these Turks and heathen; their zealous ardour ought to shame us. Because we possess the true light, should their zeal surpass ours?—*Frederic Arndt*, in "*Lights of the Morning*," 1861.

Verse 2.—"To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning." Our praise ought to be suitably arranged. In the time of prosperity or the *morning* we should declare thy lovingkindness, because whatever of prosperity we have proceeds from the mercy and grace of God; and in the time of adversity or *night*, we should declare thy justice or faithfulness, because whatever adversity happens to us is ordained by the just judgment of God.—*J. Turrecremata*.

Verse 2.—God's "*mercy*" is itself the *morning ray*, which scatters away darkness (xxx. 5, lix. 16); his "*faithfulness*" the guardian, that assures us against *night peril*.—*F. Delitzsch*.

Verse 2.—"In the morning, and . . . every night." God is Alpha and Omega. It is fit we should begin and end the day with his praise, who begins and ends it for us with mercy. Well, thou seest thy duty plainly laid before thee. As thou wouldst have God prosper thy labour in the day, and sweeten thy rest in the night, clasp them both together with thy morning and evening devotions. He that takes no care to set forth God's portion of time in the morning, doth not only rob God of his due, but is a thief to himself all the day after, by losing the blessing which a faithful prayer might bring from heaven on his undertakings. And he that closeth his eyes at night without prayer, lies down before his bed is made.—*William Gurnall*.

Verse 2.—"Thy faithfulness (Vulg. '*veritas*,') every night." Truth can be taken in its proper signification. Thus St. Jerome on our Psalm takes it, and says: "The truth of the Lord is announced in the night, as if it were wrapped up in some verbal

obscurities. In an enigma it is spoken, and in parables; that seeing, they should not see, and hearing, they should not understand. Moses ascended mount Sinai, Exod. xxiv., and passed into the tempest and into the blackness and darkness, and there spake with the Lord." Thus Jerome. Christ brings back the light to us, as Lactantius teaches. Shall we wait, says he, till Socrates shall know something? Or Anaxagoras find light in the darkness? Or Democritus draw forth the truth from a well? Or till Empedocles expands the paths of his soul? Or Ascesilas and Carneades see, feel, and perceive? Behold a voice from heaven teaches us the truth, and reveals it more clearly to us than the sun himself. . . . In the night truth is to be shown forth, that the night may be turned into day.—*Le Blanc*.

Verse 3.—"Upon an instrument of ten strings." Eusebius, in his comment on this Psalm, says: "The psaltery of ten strings is the worship of the Holy Spirit performed by means of the five senses of the body, and by the five powers of the soul." And to confirm this interpretation, he quotes the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. 15: "I will pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also." "As the mind has its influence by which it moves the body, so the spirit has its own influence by which it moves the soul." Whatever may be thought of this gloss, one thing is pretty evident from it, that *instrumental music* was not in use in the church of Christ in the time of Eusebius, which was near the middle of the *fourth* century. Had any such thing then existed in the Christian Church, he would have doubtless alluded to or spiritualized it; or, as he quoted the words of the apostle above, would have shown that *carol usages* were substituted for *spiritual exercises*.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 3.—In Augustine to Ambrose there is the following passage bearing on this same subject:—"Sometimes, from over jealousy, I would entirely put from me and from the church the melodies of the sweet chants that we use in the Psalter, lest our ears seduce us; and the way of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, seems the safe one, who, as I have often heard, made the reader chant with so slight a change of voice, that it was more like speaking than singing. And yet, when I call to mind the tears I shed when I heard the chants of thy church in the infancy of my recovered faith, and reflect that I was affected, not by the mere music, but by the subject brought out as it were by clear voices and appropriate tune, then, in turn, I confess how useful is the practice."

Verse 3.—We are not to conceive that God enjoyed the harp as feeling a delight like ourselves in mere melody of sounds; but the Jews, who were yet under age, were restricted to the use of such childish elements. The intention of them was to stimulate the worshippers, and stir them up more actively to the celebration of the praise of God with the heart. We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people, as yet weak and rude in knowledge, in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the Gospel, should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation. From this, it appears that the Papists, in employing instrumental music, cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people, as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was figurative, and terminated with the gospel.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 3.—Chrysostom says, "Instrumental music was only permitted to the Jews, as sacrifice was, for the heaviness and grossness of their souls. God condescended to their weakness, because they were lately drawn off from idols; but now instead of organs, we may use our own bodies to praise him withal." Theodoret has many like expressions in his comments upon the Psalms and other places. But the author under the name of Justin Martyr is more express in his determination, as to matter of fact, telling us plainly, "that the use of singing with instrumental music was not received in the Christian churches as it was among the Jews in their infant state, but only the use of plain song."—*Joseph Bingham*.

Verse 3.—Instrumental music, the more I think of it, appears with increasing evidence to be utterly unsuited to the genius of the gospel dispensation. There was a glare, if I may so express it, which characterized even the divine appointments of Judaism. An august temple, ornamented with gold and silver, and precious stones, golden candlesticks, golden altars, priests in rich attire, trumpets, cymbals,

harps; all of which were adapted to an age and dispensation when the church was in a state of infancy. But when the substance is come, it is time that the shadows flee away. The best exposition of harps in singing is given by Dr. Watts—

“Oh may my heart in tune be found,
Like David's harp of solemn sound.”

—Andrew Fuller.

Verse 3 (last clause).—“*On meditation with a harp.*” [New translation.] By a bold but intelligible figure, *meditation* is referred to as an instrument, precisely as the lyre and harp are, the latter being joined with it as a mere accompaniment.—*J. A. Alexander.*

Verse 3.—“*With a solemn sound.*” Let Christians abound as much as they will in the holy, heavenly exercise of singing in God's house and in their own houses; but let it be performed as a holy act, wherein they have immediately and visibly to do with God. When any social open act of devotion or solemn worship of God is performed, God should be revered as present. As we would not have the ark of God depart from us, nor provoke God to make a breach upon us, we should take heed that we handle the ark with reverence.—*Jonathan Edwards*, in “*Errors connected with singing praises to God.*”

Verse 4.—“*Thou Lord hast made me glad through thy work.*” One of the parts of the well-spending of the Sabbath, is the looking upon, and consideration of the works of creation. The consideration of the Lord's works will afford us much sweet refreshment and joy when God blesses the meditation; and when it is so we ought to acknowledge our gladness most thankfully and lift up our heart in his ways.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 4.—“*Thy work.*” The “work of God” here is one no less marvellous than that of creation, which was the original ground of hallowing the Sabbath (see *title* of this Psalm)—namely, the final redemption of his people.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 4.—“*Made me glad through thy work,*” etc. Surely there is nothing in the world, short of the most undivided reciprocal attachment, that has such power over the workings of the human heart as the mild sweetness of Nature. The most ruffled temper, when emerging from the town, will subside into a calm at the sight of an extended landscape reposing in the twilight of a fine evening. It is then that the spirit of peace settles upon the heart, unfetters the thoughts, and elevates the soul to the Creator. It is then that we behold the Parent of the universe in his works; we see his grandeur in earth, sea, sky; we feel his affection in the emotions which they raise, and half-mortal, half-etherealized, forget where we are in the anticipation of what that world must be, of which this lovely earth is merely the shadow.—*Miss Porter.*

Verse 4.—“*I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*” Here it will be most fitting to remind the reader of those three great bursts of adoring song, which in different centuries have gushed forth from souls enraptured with the sight of nature. They are each of them clear instances of triumphing in the works of God's hands. How majestically Milton sang when he said of our unfallen parents,—

“Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounc'd or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
More tunable than needed lute or harp
To add more sweetness.”

Then he gives us that noble hymn, too well-known for us to quote, the reader will find it in the fifth book of the *Paradise Lost*, commencing—

“These are thy glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty!”

Thomson also, in his *Seasons*, rises to a wonderful height, as he closes his poem with a hymn—

“These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God.”

Coleridge in his "Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni," equally well treads the high places of triumphant devotion, as he cries—

"Awake my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn."

Verse 5.—"Thy thoughts." The plural of רָצַח, from the verb רָצַח, to meditate, to count, to weave; and this last word gives a good idea of what is here made the subject of admiration and praise, the wonderful intricacy and contrivance with which the Divine Mind designs and executes his plans, till at length the result is seen in a beautifully woven tissue of many delicately mingled and coloured threads.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 5.—"Thy thoughts are very deep." Verily, my brethren, there is no sea so deep as these thoughts of God, who maketh the wicked flourish, and the good suffer: nothing so profound, nothing so deep: therein every unbelieving soul is wrecked, in that depth, in that profundity. Dost thou wish to cross this depth? Remove not from the wood of Christ's cross; and thou shalt not sink: hold thyself fast to Christ.—*Augustine.*

Verse 6.—Expressively he wrote: "The man-brute will not know; the fool will not understand this," viz., that when the wicked spring up with rapid and apparently vigorous growth as the summer flowers in Palestine, it is that they may ripen soon for a swift destruction. The man-brute precisely translates the Hebrew words; one whom God has endowed with manhood, but who has debased himself to bruteness; a man as being of God's creation in his own image, but a brute as being self-moulded (shall we say self-made?) into the image of the baser animals!—*Henry Coules.*

Verse 6.—"A brutish man knoweth not," etc. A sottish sensualist who hath his soul for sale only, to keep his body from putrefying (as we say of swine) he takes no knowledge of God's great works, but grunts and goes his ways, contenting himself with a natural use of the creatures, as beasts do.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 6.—"A brutish man knoweth not," etc. That is, he being a beast, and having no sanctified principle of wisdom in him, looks no further than a beast into all the works of God and occurrences of things; looks on all blessings as things provided for man's delight by God; but he extracts seldom holy, spiritual, and useful thoughts out of all, he wants the art of doing it.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 6.—"A brutish man knoweth not." How universally do men strive, by the putrid joys of sense and passion, to destroy the fineness of the sensibilities which God has given them! This mind, which might behold a world of glory in created things, and look through them as through a transparent veil to things infinitely more glorious, signified or contained within the covering, is as dull and heavy as a piece of anthracite coal. Who made it so? Alas, habits of sense and sin have done this. If from childhood the soul had been educated for God, in habits accordant with its spiritual nature, it would be full of life, love, and sensibility, in harmony with all lovely things in the natural world, beholding the spiritual world through the natural, alive to all excitement from natural and intellectual beauty, and as ready to its duty as a child to its play. What a dreadful destruction of the mind's inner sensibilities results from a sensual life! What a decline, decay, and paralysis of its intuitive powers, so that the very existence of such a thing as spiritual intuition, in reference to a spiritual world, may be questioned, if not denied!

A man may be frightfully successful in such a process of destruction if long enough continued, upon his own nature. "Who can read without indignation of Kant," remarks De Quincey, "that at his own table, in social sincerity and confidential talk, let him say what he would in his books, he exulted in the prospect of absolute and ultimate annihilation; that he planted his glory in the grave, and was ambitious of rotting for ever! The King of Prussia, though a personal friend of Kant's, found himself obliged to level his State thunders at some of his doctrines, and terrified him in his advance; else I am persuaded that Kant would have formally delivered Atheism from the Professor's chair, and would have enthroned the horrid ghoulish creed, which privately he professed, in the University of Königsberg. It required the artillery of a great king to make him pause. The fact is, that as the

stomach has been known by means of its natural secretion, to attack not only whatsoever alien body is introduced within it, but also (as John Hunter first showed), sometimes to attack itself and its own organic structure; so, and with the same preternatural extension of instinct, did Kant carry forward his destroying functions, until he turned them upon his own hopes, and the pledges of his own superiority to the dog, the ape, the worm."—*George B. Cheever, in "Voices of Nature," 1852.*

Verse 6.—"A fool." The simpleton is an automaton, he is a machine, he is worked by a spring; mere gravity carries him forward, makes him move, makes him turn, and that unceasingly and in the same way, and exactly with the same equable pace: he is uniform, he is never inconsistent with himself; whoever has seen him once, has seen him at all moments, and in all periods of his life; he is like the ox who bellows, or the blackbird which whistles: that which is least visible in him is his soul; it does not act, it is not exercised, it takes its rest.—*Jean de la Bruyère (1639—1696), quoted by Ramage.*

Verse 6.—"Neither doth a fool understand this."

He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day,
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

At noon, when by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky!

There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye.
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky.

—*W. Wordsworth, 1770—1850.*

Verse 7.—"When the wicked spring as the grass," etc. Their felicity is the greatest infelicity.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 7.—Little do they think that they are suffered to prosper that like *beasts* they may be fatter for slaughter. The fatter they are, the fitter for slaughter, and the sooner slain: "He slew the fattest of them," Ps. lxxviii., 31.—*Zachary Bogan.*

Verse 8.—Here is the central pivot of the Psalm. "But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore," *lit.*, "art height," &c., the abstract used for the concrete, to imply that the essence of all that is *high* is concentrated in Jehovah. When God and the cause of holiness *seem low*, God is *really* never higher than then; for out of seeming weakness he perfects the greatest strength. When the wicked *seem high*, they are then on the verge of being cast down for ever. The believer who can realize this will not despair at the time of his own depression, and of the seeming exaltation of the wicked. If we can feel "*Jehovah most high for evermore*," we can well be unruffled, however low we lie.—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 9.—"Lo thine enemies;" "lo thine enemies." He represents their destruction as present, and as certain, which the repetition of the words implies.—*Matthew Pool.*

Verse 9.—“*Thine enemies shall perish.*” This is the only Psalm in the Psalter which is designated a Sabbath-song. The older Sabbath was a type of our rest in Christ from sin; and therefore the final extirpation of sin forms one of the leading subjects of the Psalm.—*Joseph Francis Thrupp.*

Verse 9.—“*All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.*” The wicked may unite and confederate together, but the bands of their society are feeble. It is seldom that they long agree together; at least as to the particular object of their pursuit. Though they certainly harmonize in the general one, that of working iniquity. But God will soon by his power, and in his wrath, confound and scatter them even to destruction.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 10.—“*Thou shalt lift up, as a rēēm, my horn,*” seems to point to the mode in which the *bovidæ* use their horns, lowering the head and then tossing it up.—*William Houghton, in Smith's Bible Dictionary.*

Verse 10.—“*The horn of an unicorn.*”—After discussing the various accounts which are given of this animal by ancient and modern writers, Winer says, I do not hesitate to say, it is the *Antelope Leucoryx*, a species of goat with long and sharp horns.—*William Walford.*

Verse 10.—“*I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*” Montanus has, instead of “*fresh oil,*” given the literal meaning of the original *virido oleo*, “*with green oil.*” Ainsworth also renders it: “*fresh or green oil.*” The remark of Calmet is: “The plants imparted somewhat of their colour, as well as of their fragrance, hence the expression, “*green oil.*” Harmer says, “I shall be anointed with green oil.” Some of these writers think the term *green*, as it is in the original, signifies “precious fragrant oil;” others, literally “green” in colour; and others, “fresh” or newly-made oil. But I think it will appear to mean “cold-drawn oil,” that which has been expressed or squeezed from the nut or fruit without the process of boiling. The Orientals prefer this kind to all others for anointing themselves; it is considered the most precious, the most pure and efficacious. Nearly all their medicinal oils are thus extracted; and because they cannot gain so much by this method as by the boiling process, oils so drawn are very dear. Hence their name for the article thus prepared is also *patche*, that is, “*green oil.*” But this term, in Eastern phraseology, is applied to other things which are unboiled or raw; thus unboiled water is called *patche-tameer*, “*green water:*” *patche-pal*, likewise, “*green milk,*” means that which has not been boiled, and the butter made from it is called “*green butter;*” and uncooked meat or yams are known by the same name. I think, therefore, the Psalmist alludes to that valuable article which is called “*green oil,*” on account of its being expressed from the nut or fruit, without the process of boiling.—*Joseph Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.*

Verse 10.—“*Anointed with fresh oil.*” Every kind of benediction and refreshment I have received, do receive, and shall receive, like one at a feast, who is welcomed as a friend, and whose head is copiously anointed with oil or fragrant balm. In this way, the spirits are gently refreshed, an inner joyousness excited, the beauty of the face and limbs, according to the custom of the country, brought to perfection. Or, there is an allusion to the custom of anointing persons at their solemn installation in some splendid office. Compare Ps. xxiii. 5, “*Thou anointest my head with oil,*” and Ps. xlv. 7, “*God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness.*”—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 10 (last clause).—The phrase is not “I am anointed,” *קָיַם*; but *בִּיחַי*, *imbutus sum—perfusus sum*; apparently in reference to the abundance of perfume employed on the occasion, viz., his being elected King over all the tribes, as indicative of the greater popularity of the act, or the higher measure of Jehovah's blessing on his people. The difference, indeed, between the first anointing of David and that of Saul, as performed by Samuel, is well worthy of notice on the present occasion. When Samuel was commanded to anoint Saul, he “took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head,” in private, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. Here we find the horn again made use of, and apparently full to the brim—*David was soaked or imbued with it.*—*John Mason Good.*

Verse 11.—“*Mine enemies.*”—The word here used *שׁוּר* *shur*—occurs nowhere else. It means, properly, a *lie-in-wait*, one who *watches*; one who is in ambush; and refers to persons who *watched* his conduct; who *watched* for his ruin.—*A. Barnes.*

Verse 12.—“*Like the palm tree.*” Look now at those stately palm-trees, which stand here and there on the plain, like military sentinels, with feathery plumes nodding gracefully on their proud heads. The stem, tall, slender, and erect as Rectitude herself, suggests to the Arab poets many a symbol for their lady-love; and Solomon, long before them, has sung, “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like a palm-tree,” (S. Song vii. 6, 7). Yes; and Solomon’s father says, “*The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree,*” etc. The royal poet has derived more than one figure from the customs of men, and the habits of this noble tree, with which to adorn his sacred ode. The palm grows slowly, but steadily, from century to century uninfluenced by those alternations of the seasons which affect other trees. It does not rejoice over much in winter’s copious rain, nor does it droop under the drought and the burning sun of summer. Neither heavy weights which men place upon its head, nor the importunate urgency of the wind, can sway it aside from perfect uprightness. There it stands, looking calmly down upon the world below, and patiently yielding its large clusters of golden fruit from generation to generation. They “*bring forth fruit in old age.*”

The allusion to being “*planted in the house of the Lord*” is probably drawn from the custom of planting beautiful and long-lived trees in the courts of temples and palaces, and in all “*high places*” used for worship. This is still common; nearly every palace, and mosque, and convent in the country has such trees in the courts, and being well protected there, they flourish exceedingly.

Solomon covered all the walls of the “*Holy of Holies*” round about with palm-trees. They were thus planted, as it were, within the very house of the Lord; and their presence there was not only ornamental, but appropriate and highly suggestive. The very best emblem, not only of patience in well-doing, but of the rewards of the righteous—a fat and flourishing old age—a peaceful end—a glorious immortality.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 12.—“*The palm tree.*” The palms were entitled by Linnæus, “the princes of the vegetable world;” and Von Martius enthusiastically says, “The common-world atmosphere does not become these vegetable monarchs: but in those genial climes where nature seems to have fixed her court, and summons around her of flowers, and fruits, and trees, and animated beings, a galaxy of beauty,—there they tower up into the balmy air, rearing their majestic stems highest and proudest of all. Many of them, at a distance, by reason of their long perpendicular shafts, have the appearance of columns, erected by the Divine architect, bearing up the broad arch of heaven above them, crowned with a capital of gorgeous green foliage.” And Humboldt speaks of them as “the loftiest and stateliest of all vegetable forms.” To these, above all other trees, the prize of beauty has always been awarded by every nation, and it was from the Asiatic palm world, or the adjacent countries, that human civilization sent forth the first rays of its early dawn.

On the northern borders of the Great Desert, at the foot of the Atlas mountains, the groves of date palms form the great feature of that parched region, and few trees besides can maintain an existence. The excessive dryness of this arid tract, where rain seldom falls, is such that wheat refuses to grow, and even barley, maize, and Caffre corn, (*Holcus sorghum*,) afford the husbandman only a scanty and uncertain crop. The hot blasts from the south are scarcely supportable even by the native himself, and yet here forests of date palms flourish, and form a screen imperious to the rays of the sun, beneath the shade of which the lemon, the orange, and the pomegranate, are cherished, and the vine climbs up by means of its twisted tendrils; and although reared in constant shade, all these fruits acquire a more delicious flavour than in what would seem a more favourable climate. How beautiful a comment do these facts supply to the words of Holy Writ, “*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree!*” Unmoved by the scorching and withering blasts of temptations or persecutions, the Christian sustained by the secret springs of Divine grace, lives and grows in likeness to his Divine Master, when all others are overcome, and their professions wither. How striking is the contrast in the Psalm. The wicked and worldlings are compared to grass, which is at best but of short duration, and which is easily withered; but the emblem of the Christian is the palm tree, which stands for centuries. Like the grateful shade of the palm groves, the Christian extends around him a genial, sanctified, and heavenly influence; and just as the great value of the date palm lies in its abundant, wholesome, and delicious fruit, so do those who are the true disciples of Christ abound in “fruits of righteousness,” for, said our Saviour, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so

shall ye be my disciples.”—“*The Palm Tribes and their Varieties.*” R. T. Society's *Monthly Volume.*

Verse 12.—“*The righteous shall flourish.*” David here tells us *how* he shall flourish. “He shall flourish like the palm tree : he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” Of the wicked he had said just before, “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish ; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.” They flourish as the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. What a contrast with the worthlessness, the weakness, transitoriness, and destiny, of grass—in a warm country too—are the palm tree and cedar of Lebanon ! They are evergreens. How beautifully, how firmly, how largely, they grow ! How strong and lofty is the cedar ! How upright, and majestic, and tall, the palm tree. The palm also bears fruit, called dates, like bunches of grapes. It sometimes yields a hundredweight at once.

He tells us *where* he shall flourish. “Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” The allusion is striking. It compares the house of God to a garden, or fine well-watered soil, favourable to the life, and verdure, and fertility, of the trees fixed there. The reason is, that in the sanctuary we have the communion of saints. *There* our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. *There* are dispensed the ordinances of religion, and the word of truth. *There* God commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore.

He also tells us *when* he shall flourish. “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.” This is to show the permanency of their principles, and to distinguish them from natural productions.

“The plants of grace shall ever live ;
Nature decays, but grace must thrive ;
Time, that doth all things else impair,
Still makes them flourish strong and fair.”

The young Christian is lovely, like a tree in the blossoms of spring : the aged Christian is valuable, like a tree in autumn, bending with ripe fruit. We therefore look for something superior in old disciples. More deadness to the world, the vanity of which they have had more opportunities to see ; more meekness of wisdom ; more disposition to make sacrifices for the sake of peace ; more maturity of judgment in divine things ; more confidence in God ; more richness of experience.

He also tells us *why* he shall flourish. “They shall be fat and flourishing ; to shew that the Lord is upright.” We might rather have supposed that it was necessary to shew that *they* were upright. But by the grace of God they are what they are—not they, but the grace of God which is in them. From *him* is their fruit found. Their preservation and fertility, therefore, are to the praise and glory of God ; and as what he does for them he had *engaged* to do, it displays his truth as well as his mercy, and proves that he is upright.—*William Jay.*

Verse 12.—“*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.*”

1. *The palm tree grows in the desert.* Earth is a desert to the Christian ; true believers are ever refreshed in it as a palm is in the Arabian desert. So *Lot* amid Sodom's wickedness, and *Enoch* who walked with God amongst the antediluvians.

2. *The palm tree grows from the sand, but the sand is not its food ;* water from below feeds its tap roots, though the heavens above be brass. Some Christians grow, not as the lily, Hos. xiv. 5, by green pastures, or the willow by water-courses, Isai. xliv. 4, but as the palm of the desert ; so *Joseph* among the Cat-worshippers of Egypt, *Daniel* in voluptuous Babylon. Faith's penetrating root reaches the fountains of living waters.

3. *The palm tree is beautiful,* with its tall and verdant canopy, and the silvery flashes of its waving plumes ; so the Christian virtues are not like the creeper or bramble, tending downwards, their palm branches shoot upwards, and seek the things above where Christ dwells, Col. iii. 1 : some trees are crooked and gnarled, but the Christian is a tall palm as a son of the light, Matt. iii. 12 ; Phil. ii. 15. The Jews were called a crooked generation, Deut. xxxii. 5, and Satan a crooked serpent, Isai. xxvii., but the Christian is upright like the palm. Its beautiful, unfading leaves make it an emblem of victory ; it was twisted into verdant booths at the feast of Tabernacles ; and the multitude, when escorting Christ to his coronation in Jerusalem, spread leaves on the way, Matt. xxi. 8 ; so victors in heaven are represented as having palms in their hands, Rev. vii. 9. No dust adheres to the leaf as it does with the *date* tree ; the Christian is in the world, not of it ; the dust of earth's desert adheres

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The allusion to being “*planted in the house of the Lord*” is probably drawn from the custom of planting beautiful and long-lived trees in the courts of temples and palaces, and in all “*high places*” used for worship. This is still common; nearly every palace, and mosque, and convent in the country has such trees in the courts, and being well protected there, they flourish exceedingly.

Solomon covered all the walls of the “*Holy of Holies*” round about with palm-trees. They were thus planted, as it were, within the very house of the Lord; and their presence there was not only ornamental, but appropriate and highly suggestive. The very best emblem, not only of patience in well-doing, but of the rewards of the righteous—a fat and flourishing old age—a peaceful end—a glorious immortality.—*W. M. Thomson.*

Verse 12.—“*The palm tree.*” The palms were entitled by Linnæus, “the princes of the vegetable world;” and Von Martius enthusiastically says, “The common-world atmosphere does not become these vegetable monarchs: but in those genial climes where nature seems to have fixed her court, and summons around her of flowers, and fruits, and trees, and animated beings, a galaxy of beauty,—there they tower up into the balmy air, rearing their majestic stems highest and proudest of all. Many of them, at a distance, by reason of their long perpendicular shafts, have the appearance of columns, erected by the Divine architect, bearing up the broad arch of heaven above them, crowned with a capital of gorgeous green foliage.” And Humboldt speaks of them as “the loftiest and stateliest of all vegetable forms.” To these, above all other trees, the prize of beauty has always been awarded by every nation, and it was from the Asiatic palm world, or the adjacent countries, that human civilization sent forth the first rays of its early dawn.

On the northern borders of the Great Desert, at the foot of the Atlas mountains, the groves of date palms form the great feature of that parched region, and few trees besides can maintain an existence. The excessive dryness of this arid tract, where rain seldom falls, is such that wheat refuses to grow, and even barley, maize, and Caffre corn, (Holcus sorghum,) afford the husbandman only a scanty and uncertain crop. The hot blasts from the south are scarcely supportable even by the native himself, and yet here forests of date palms flourish, and form a screen impervious to the rays of the sun, beneath the shade of which the lemon, the orange, and the pomegranate, are cherished, and the vine climbs up by means of its twisted tendrils; and although reared in constant shade, all these fruits acquire a more delicious flavour than in what would seem a more favourable climate. How beautiful a comment do these facts supply to the words of Holy Writ, “*The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree!*” Unmoved by the scorching and withering blasts of temptations or persecutions, the Christian sustained by the secret springs of Divine grace, lives and grows in likeness to his Divine Master, when all others are overcome, and their professions wither. How striking is the contrast in the Psalm. The wicked and worldlings are compared to grass, which is at best but of short duration, and which is easily withered; but the emblem of the Christian is the palm tree, which stands for centuries. Like the grateful shade of the palm groves, the Christian extends around him a genial, sanctified, and heavenly influence; and just as the great value of the date palm lies in its abundant, wholesome, and delicious fruit, so do those who are the true disciples of Christ abound in “fruits of righteousness,” for, said our Saviour, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so

shall ye be my disciples."—" *The Palm Tribes and their Varieties.*" R. T. Society's Monthly Volume.

Verse 12.—" *The righteous shall flourish.*" David here tells us *how* he shall flourish. "He shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Of the wicked he had said just before, "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." They flourish as the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven. What a contrast with the worthlessness, the weakness, transitoriness, and destiny, of grass—in a warm country too—are the palm tree and cedar of Lebanon! They are evergreens. How beautifully, how firmly, how largely, they grow! How strong and lofty is the cedar! How upright, and majestic, and tall, the palm tree. The palm also bears fruit, called dates, like bunches of grapes. It sometimes yields a hundredweight at once.

He tells us *where* he shall flourish. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." The allusion is striking. It compares the house of God to a garden, or fine well-watered soil, favourable to the life, and verdure, and fertility, of the trees fixed there. The reason is, that in the sanctuary we have the communion of saints. *There* our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. *There* are dispensed the ordinances of religion, and the word of truth. *There* God commandeth the blessing, even life for evermore.

He also tells us *when* he shall flourish. "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age." This is to show the permanency of their principles, and to distinguish them from natural productions.

"The plants of grace shall ever live;
Nature decays, but grace must thrive;
Time, that doth all things else impair,
Still makes them flourish strong and fair."

The young Christian is lovely, like a tree in the blossoms of spring: the aged Christian is valuable, like a tree in autumn, bending with ripe fruit. We therefore look for something superior in old disciples. More deadness to the world, the vanity of which they have had more opportunities to see; more meekness of wisdom; more disposition to make sacrifices for the sake of peace; more maturity of judgment in divine things; more confidence in God; more richness of experience.

He also tells us *why* he shall flourish. "They shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright." We might rather have supposed that it was necessary to shew that *they* were upright. But by the grace of God they are what they are—not they, but the grace of God which is in them. From *him* is their fruit found. Their preservation and fertility, therefore, are to the praise and glory of God; and as what he does for them he had *engaged* to do, it displays his truth as well as his mercy, and proves that he is upright.—*William Jay.*

Verse 12.—" *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.*"

1. *The palm tree grows in the desert.* Earth is a desert to the Christian; true believers are ever refreshed in it as a palm is in the Arabian desert. So *Lot* amid Sodom's wickedness, and *Enoch* who walked with God amongst the antediluvians.

2. *The palm tree grows from the sand, but the sand is not its food;* water from below feeds its tap roots, though the heavens above be brass. Some Christians grow, not as the lily, Hos. xiv. 5, by green pastures, or the willow by water-courses, Isai. xlv. 4, but as the palm of the desert; so *Joseph* among the Cat-worshippers of Egypt, *Daniel* in voluptuous Babylon. Faith's penetrating root reaches the fountains of living waters.

3. *The palm tree is beautiful,* with its tall and verdant canopy, and the silvery flashes of its waving plumes; so the Christian virtues are not like the creeper or bramble, tending downwards, their palm branches shoot upwards, and seek the things above where Christ dwells, Col. iii. 1: some trees are crooked and gnarled, but the Christian is a tall palm as a son of the light, Matt. iii. 12; Phil. ii. 15. The Jews were called a crooked generation, Deut. xxxii. 5, and Satan a crooked serpent, Isai. xxvii., but the Christian is upright like the palm. Its beautiful, unfading leaves make it an emblem of victory; it was twisted into verdant booths at the feast of Tabernacles; and the multitude, when escorting Christ to his coronation in Jerusalem, spread leaves on the way, Matt. xxi. 8; so victors in heaven are represented as having palms in their hands, Rev. vii. 9. No dust adheres to the leaf as it does with the *dattree*; the Christian is in the world, not of it; the dust of earth's desert adheres

And the Psalmist, in the next words, declares the greatness of the privilege: "To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Consider the oppositions that lie against the flourishing of believers in old age, the difficulties of it, the temptations that must be conquered, the actings of the mind above its natural abilities which are decayed, the weariness that is apt to befall us in a long spiritual conflict, the cries of the flesh to be spared, and we shall see it to be an evidence of the faithfulness, power, and righteousness of God in covenant; nothing else could produce this mighty effect. So the prophet, treating of the same promise, Hosea xiv. 4—8, closeth his discourse with that blessed remark, ver. 9, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them." Spiritual wisdom will make us to see that the faithfulness and power of God are exerted in this work of preserving believers flourishing and fruitful unto the end.—*John Owen*.

Verse 14.—Constancy is an ingredient in the obedience Christ requires. His trees bring forth fruit in old age. Age makes other things decay, but makes a Christian flourish. Some are like hot horses, mettlesome at the beginning of a journey, and tired a long time before they come to their journey's end. A good disciple, as he would not have from God a temporary happiness, so he would not give to God a temporary obedience; as he would have his glory last as long as God lives, so he would have his obedience last as long as he lives. Judas had a fair beginning, but destroyed all in the end by betraying his Master.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 14.—"Flourishing." Here is not only mention of growing but of flourishing, and here's flourishing three times mentioned, and 'tis growing and flourishing not only like a tree, but like a "palm tree," (which flourisheth under oppression), and like a "cedar" (not growing in ordinary places, but) "in Lebanon," where were the goodliest cedars. Nor doth the Spirit promise here a flourishing in boughs and leaves only (as some trees do, and do no more), but in fruit; and this not only fruit for once in a year, or one year, but they "still bring forth fruit," and that not only in the years of their youth, or beginnings in grace, but "in old age," and that not only in the entrance of that state which is called *old age*, threescore years, but that which the Scripture calls the perfection of *old age*, threescore years and ten, as the learned Hebrews observe upon the word used in the Psalm. What a *divine climax* doth the Spirit of God make in this Scripture, to show that the godly man as to his state, is so far from declining, that he is still climbing higher and higher!—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 15.—"He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Implying that God can no more be moved or removed from doing righteously, than a rock can be removed out of its place.—*Joseph Caryl*.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. It is a good thing to have cause for gratitude. Every one has this. II. It is a good thing to have the principle of gratitude. This is the gift of God. III. It is a good thing to give expression to gratitude. This may excite gratitude in others.—*G. R.*

Verses 1—3.—The blessedness of praise, verse 1. The theme of praise, verse 2. The ingenuity of praise, verse 3—inanimate nature enlisted in the holy work.—*C. A. Davis*.

Verse 2.—I. Our praises of God should be *intelligent*, declaring his varied attributes. II. *Seasonable*, declaring each attribute in appropriate time. III. *Continual*, every night, and every day.

Verse 3.—I. All the powers of the soul should be praise. "Upon an instrument of ten strings," all the chords of the mind, affections, will, etc. II. All the utterances of the lips should be praise. III. All the actions of the life should be praise.

Verse 3.—In our praise of God there should be, I. *Preparation*—for instruments should be tuned. II. *Breadth of thought*—"upon an instrument of ten strings." III. *Absorption of the whole nature*—"ten strings." IV. *Variety*—psaltery, harp, etc. V. *Deep reverence*—"solemn sound."

Verse 4 (first sentence).—I. My state—"glad." II. How I arrived at it—"thou hast made me glad." III. What is the ground of it?"—"through thy work." IV. What, then, shall I do?—ascribe it all to God, and bless him for it.

Verse 4.—I. The divinest gladness—of God's creation, having God's work for its argument. II. The divinest triumph—caused by the varied works of God in creation, providence, redemption, &c. The first is for our own hearts, the second is for the convincing of those around us.

Verse 5.—The unscalable mountains and the fathomless sea : or the divine works and the divine thoughts (God-revealed and hidden) equally beyond human apprehension.—*C. A. Davis.*

Verse 7.—Great prosperity the frequent forerunner of destruction to wicked men, for it leads them to provoke divine wrath—I. By hardness of heart, as Pharaoh. II. By pride, as Nebuchadnezzar. III. By haughty hatred of the saints, as Haman. IV. By carnal security, as the rich fool. V. By self-exaltation, as Herod.

Verses 7—10.—Contrasts. Between the wicked and God, verses 7, 8. Between God's enemies and his friends, verses 9, 10.—*C. A. Davis.*

Verses 7, 12—14.—The wicked and the righteous pourtrayed.—*C. A. Davis.*

Verse 10 (last clause).—Christian illumination, consecration, gladness, and graces, are all of them the anointing of the Spirit.—*William Garrett Lewis, 1872.*

Verse 10 (last clause).—The subject of David's confidence was—I. Very comprehensive, including renewed strength, fresh tokens of favour, confirmation in office, qualification for it, and new joys. II. Well grounded, since it rested in God and his promises. III. Calming all fears. IV. Exciting hopes. V. Causing pity for those who have no such confidence.

Verse 12.—I. The righteous flourish in all places. Palm in the valley, cedar on the mountain. II. In all seasons. Both trees are evergreen. III. Under all circumstances. Palm in drought, cedar in storm and frost.—*G. R.*

Verses 14—16.—I. Regeneration—"planted." II. Growth in grace—"flourish." III. Usefulness—"fruit." IV. Perseverance—"old age." V. The reason of it all—"to shew that the Lord," etc.

Verses 15, 16.—The reason and the pledge of final perseverance.—*C. A. Davis.*

