

PSALM CI.

TITLE.—A Psalm of David. *This is just such a Psalm as the man after God's own heart would compose when he was about to become king in Israel. It is David all over, straightforward, resolute, devout; there is no trace of policy or vacillation,—the Lord has appointed him to be king, and he knows it, therefore he purposes in all things to behave as becomes a monarch whom the Lord himself has chosen. If we call this the PSALM OF PIOUS RESOLUTIONS, we shall perhaps remember it all the more readily. After songs of praise a Psalm of practice not only makes variety, but comes in most fittingly. We never praise the Lord better than when we do those things which are pleasing in his sight.*

EXPOSITION.

I WILL sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.
2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.
4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked *person*.
5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.
6 Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.
8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

1. "*I will sing of mercy and judgment.*" He would extol both the love and the severity, the sweets and the bitters, which the Lord had mingled in his experience; he would admire the justice and the goodness of the Lord. Such a song would fitly lead up to godly resolutions as to his own conduct, for that which we admire in our superiors we naturally endeavour to imitate. Mercy and judgment would temper the administration of David, because he had adoringly perceived them in the dispensations of his God. Everything in God's dealings with us may fittingly become the theme of song, and we have not viewed it aright until we feel we can sing about it. We ought as much to bless the Lord for the judgment with which he chastens our sin, as for the mercy with which he forgives it; there is as much love in the blows of his hand as in the kisses of his mouth. Upon a retrospect of their lives instructed saints scarcely know which to be most grateful for—the comforts which have cheered them, or the afflictions which have purged them. "*Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*" Jehovah shall have all our praise. The secondary agents of either the mercy or the judgment must hold a very subordinate place in our memory, and the Lord alone must be hymned by our heart. Our soul's sole worship must be the lauding of the Lord. The Psalmist forsakes the minor key, which was soon to rule him in the one hundred and second Psalm, and resolves that, come what may, he will sing, and sing to the Lord too, whatever others might do.

2. "*I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way.*" To be holy is to be wise; a perfect way is a wise way. David's resolve was excellent, but his practice did not fully tally with it. Alas! he was not always wise or perfect, but it was well that it was in his heart. A king had need be both sage and pure, and, if he be not so in intent, when he comes to the throne, his after conduct will be a sad example to his people. He who does not even resolve to do well is likely to do very ill. Householders, employers, and especially ministers, should pray for both wisdom and holiness, for they will need them both. "*O when wilt thou come unto me?*"—an ejaculation, but not an interruption. He feels the need not merely of divine help,

but also of the divine presence, that so he may be instructed, and sanctified, and made fit for the discharge of his high vocation. David longed for a more special and effectual visitation from the Lord before he began his reign. If God be with us we shall neither err in judgment nor transgress in character; his presence brings us both wisdom and holiness: away from God we are away from safety. Good men are so sensible of infirmity that they cry for help from God, so full of prayer that they cry at all seasons, so intense in their desires that they cry with sighs and groanings which cannot be uttered, saying, "O when wilt thou come unto me?" "*I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*" Piety must begin at home. Our first duties are those within our own abode. We must have a perfect heart at home, or we cannot keep a perfect way abroad. Notice that these words are a part of a song, and that there is no music like the harmony of a gracious life, no Psalm so sweet as the daily practice of holiness. Reader, how fares it with your family? Do you sing in the choir and sin in the chamber? Are you a saint abroad and a devil at home? For shame! What we are at home, that we are indeed. He cannot be a good king whose palace is the haunt of vice, nor he a true saint whose habitation is a scene of strife, nor he a faithful minister whose household dreads his appearance at the fireside.

3. "*I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.*" I will neither delight in it, aim at it, nor endure it. If I have wickedness brought before me by others I will turn away from it, I will not gaze upon it with pleasure. The Psalmist is very sweeping in his resolve, he declines the least, the most reputable, the most customary form of evil—no wicked thing: not only shall it not dwell in his heart, but not even before his eyes, for what fascinates the eye is very apt to gain admission into the heart, even as Eve's apple first pleased her sight, and then prevailed over her mind and hand. "*I hate the work of them that turn aside.*" He was warmly against it; he did not view it with indifference, but with utter scorn and abhorrence. Hatred of sin is a good sentinel for the door of virtue. There are persons in courts who walk in a very crooked way, leaving the high road of integrity; and these, by short cuts, and twists, and turns, are often supposed to accomplish work for their masters which simple honest hearts are not competent to undertake; but David would not employ such, he would pay no secret service money, he loathed the practices of men who deviate from righteousness. He was of the same mind as the dying statesman who said, "Corruption wins not more than honesty." It is greatly to be deplored that in after years he did not keep himself clear in this matter in every case, though, in the main he did; but what would he have been if he had not commenced with this resolve, but had followed the usual crooked policy of Oriental princes? How much do we all need divine keeping! We are no more perfect than David, nay, we fall far short of him in many things; and, like him, we shall find need to write a Psalm of penitence very soon after our Psalm of good resolution. "*It shall not cleave to me.*" I will disown their ways, I will not imitate their policy: like dirt it may fall upon me, but I will wash it off, and never rest till I am rid of it. Sin, like pitch, is very apt to stick. In the course of our family history crooked things will turn up, for we are all imperfect, and some of those around us are far from being what they should be; it must, therefore, be one great object of our care to disentangle ourselves, to keep clear of transgression, and of all that comes of it: this cannot be done unless the Lord both comes to us, and abides with us evermore.

4. "*A froward heart shall depart from me.*" He refers both to himself and to those round about him; he would neither be crooked in heart himself, nor employ persons of evil character in his house; if he found such in his court he would chase them away. He who begins with his own heart begins at the fountain head, and is not likely to tolerate evil companions. We cannot turn out of our family all whose hearts are evil, but we can keep them out of our confidence, and let them see that we do not approve of their ways. "*I will not know a wicked person.*" He shall not be my intimate, my bosom friend. I must know him as a man, or I could not discern his character; but if I know him to be wicked, I will not know him any further, and with his evil I will have no communion. "To know" in Scripture means more than mere perception, it includes fellowship, and in that sense it is here used. Princes must disown those who disown righteousness; if they know the wicked they will soon be known as wicked themselves.

5. "*Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.*" He had known so bitterly the miseries caused by slanderers that he intended to deal severely with such vipers when he came into power, not to revenge his own ills, but to prevent

others from suffering as he had done. To give one's neighbour a stab in the dark is one of the most atrocious of crimes, and cannot be too heartily reprobated, yet such as are guilty of it often find patronage in high places, and are considered to be men of penetration, trusty ones who have a keen eye, and take care to keep their lords well posted up. King David would lop the goody tree of his state of all such superfluous boughs, "*Him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.*" Proud, domineering, supercilious gentlemen, who look down upon the poor as though they were so many worms crawling in the earth beneath their feet, the Psalmist could not bear. The sight of them made him suffer, and therefore he would not suffer them. Great men often affect aristocratic airs and haughty manners, David therefore resolved that none should be great in his palace but those who had more grace and more sense than to indulge in such abominable vanity. Proud men are generally hard, and therefore very unfit for office; persons of high looks provoke enmity and discontent, and the fewer of such people about a court the better for the stability of a throne. If all slanderers were now cut off, and all the proud banished, it is to be feared that the next census would declare a very sensible diminution of the population.

6. "*Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me.*" He would seek them out, engage their services, take care of them, and promote them to honour: this is a noble occupation for a king, and one which will repay him infinitely better than listening to the soft nothings of flatterers. It would be greatly for the profit of us all if we chose our servants rather by their piety than by their cleverness; he who gets a faithful servant gets a treasure, and he ought to do anything sooner than part with him. Those who are not faithful to God will not be likely to be faithful to men; if we are faithful ourselves, we shall not care to have those about us who cannot speak the truth or fulfil their promises; we shall not be satisfied until all the members of our family are upright in character. "*He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*" What I wish myself to be, that I desire my servant to be. Employers are to a great degree responsible for their servants, and it is customary to blame a master if he retains in his service persons of notorious character; therefore, lest we become partakers of other men's sins, we shall do well to decline the services of bad characters. A good master does well to choose a good servant; he may take a prodigal into his house for the sinner's good, but if he consults his own he will look in another quarter. Wicked nurses have great influence for evil over the minds of little children, and ungodly servants often injure the morals of the older members of the family, and therefore great care should be exercised that godly servants should be employed as far as possible. Even irreligious men have the sense to perceive the value of Christian servants, and surely their own Christian brethren ought not to have a lower appreciation of them.

7. "*He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house.*" He had power to choose his courtiers, and he meant to exercise it. Deceit among most Orientals is reckoned to be a virtue, and is only censured when it is not sufficiently cunning, and therefore comes to be found out; it was therefore all the more remarkable that David should have so determinedly set his face against it. He could not tell what a deceitful man might be doing, what plots he might be contriving, what mischief he might be brewing, and therefore he resolved that he would at any rate keep him out of his house, that his palace might not become a den of villainy. Cheats in the market are bad enough, but deceivers at our own table we cannot bear. "*He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*" He would not have a liar within sight or hearing; he loathed the mention of him. Grace makes men truthful, and creates in them an utter horror of everything approaching to falsehood. If David would not have a liar in his sight, much less will the Lord; neither he that loves nor he who makes a lie shall be admitted into heaven. Liars are obnoxious enough on earth; the saints shall not be worried with them in another world.

8. "*I will early destroy all the wicked of the land.*" At the very outset of his government he would promptly deal out justice to the worthless, he would leave them no rest, but make them leave their wickedness or feel the lash of the law. The righteous magistrate "bareth not the sword in vain." To favour sin is to discourage virtue; undue leniency to the bad is unkindness to the good. When our Lord comes in judgment, this verse will be fulfilled on a large scale; till then he sinks the judge in the Saviour, and bids men leave their sins and find pardon. Under the gospel we also are bidden to suffer long, and to be kind, even to the unthankful and the evil; but the office of the magistrate is of another kind, and he

must have a sterner eye to justice than would be proper in private persons. Is he not to be a terror to evil doers? "*That I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.*" Jerusalem was to be a holy city, and the Psalmist meant to be doubly careful in purging it from ungodly men. Judgment must begin at the house of God. Jesus reserves his scourge of small cords for sinners inside the temple. How pure ought the church to be, and how diligently should all those who hold office therein labour to keep out and chase out men of unclean lives. Honourable offices involve serious responsibilities; to trifle with them will bring our own souls into guilt, and injure beyond calculation the souls of others. Lord, come to us, that we, in our several positions in life, may walk before thee with perfect hearts.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The contents of this Psalm show that it was written at some remarkable period of David's life. Three different times have been fixed upon as respectively giving occasion for the solemn resolutions which are announced in it. The first is supposed to be when David, immediately after the death of Saul, succeeded to the government of a part of the kingdom; the second, when the whole kingdom was united under the dominion of David; and the third, when he removed the ark from the house of Obededom to Zion, and placed it in the vicinity of his own abode. It is certainly of little importance which of these periods we select, but the second verse of the Psalm has some appearance of relating to the last mentioned. The Psalmist here says, "*When wilt thou come to me?*" which seems to intimate that when he was to have the symbols of God's presence so near to him, he experienced a solemn sentiment respecting the holiness that was now more than ever incumbent upon him—a sentiment which induced him to form the sacred purposes and resolutions which he has specified. These purposes relate to the character of the persons whom he would select for his household, and those whom he would employ in carrying on his government, which appeared to be more firmly established by the divine condescension that was manifested to him, in having the earthly residence of God placed so near to himself. It was quite in agreement with David's character to form purposes of more fervent and steadfast obedience, in proportion to the advantages and favours which the divine goodness bestowed upon him.—*William Walford.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm has been appropriately called "*The Householder's Psalm;*" and assuredly if every master of a family would regulate his household by these rules of the conscientious Psalmist, there would be a far greater amount, not merely of domestic happiness and comfort, but of fulfilment of the serious and responsible duties which devolve on the respective members of a household. David in some measure may be supposed to speak of the regulation of a royal court and household; and of course with such we in our humbler sphere can have but little in common; yet though there may not be the same duties and the same requirements, yet the same principles should actuate all alike, and the same virtues that adorn the lowlier station may shed a radiance even on the highest.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Whole Psalm.—This is the Psalm which the old expositors used to designate "*The Mirror for Magistrates;*" and an excellent mirror it is. It would mightily accelerate the coming of the time when every nation shall be Christ's possession, and every capital a "*City of the Lord,*" if all magistrates could be persuaded to dress themselves by it every time they go forth to perform the functions of their godlike office. When Sir George Villiers became the favourite and prime minister of King James, Lord Bacon, in a beautiful Letter of Advice, counselled him to take this Psalm for his rule in the promotion of courtiers. "In those the choice had need be of honest and faithful servants, as well as of comely outsiders who can bow the knee and kiss the hand. King David (Psalm ci. 6, 7) propounded a rule to himself for the choice of his courtiers. He was a wise and a good king; and a wise and a good king shall do well to follow such a good example; and if he find any to be faulty, which perhaps cannot suddenly be discovered, let him take on him this resolution as King David did, '*There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house.*'"

It would have been well both for the Philosopher and the Favourite if they had been careful to walk by this rule.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—Eyring, in his "Life of Ernest the Pious" (Duke of Saxe-Gotha), relates that he sent an unfaithful minister a copy of the 101st Psalm, and that it became a proverb in the country when an official had done anything wrong: He will certainly soon receive the prince's Psalm to read.—*F. Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—The 101st Psalm was one beloved by the noblest of Russian princes, Vladimir Monomachos; and by the gentlest of English reformers, Nicholas Ridley. But it was its first leap into life that has carried it so far into the future. It is full of a stern exclusiveness, of a noble intolerance, not against theological error, not against uncourtly manners, not against political insubordination, but against the proud heart, the high look, the secret slanderer, the deceitful worker, the teller of lies. These are the outlaws from king David's court; these are the rebels and heretics whom he would not suffer to dwell in his house or tarry in his sight.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in "Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church," 1870.*

Whole Psalm.—Such a hymn of praise as the grand doxology of Psalm xcix. could not die away without an echo. Accordingly Psalm c. may be regarded as forming the chorus of the church, and this as taking up and applying that part of the doxology which celebrated the *present* manifestation of the "King in his beauty."—*Alfred Edersheim.*

Whole Psalm.—Mr. Fox reports that Bishop Ridley often read and expounded this Psalm to his household, hiring them with money to get it by heart.—*Thomas Lye, in "The Morning Exercises."*

Verse 1.—"I will sing." If thou bestowest mercies upon me; or if thou bringest any judgment upon me; before thee, O Lord, will I sing my hymn for all.—*Chaldee Paraphrase.*

Verse 1.—"I will sing." The manner of expression imports a *cordial* resolution; heart and will are engaged in it; there is twice *I will* in the text. The manner of expression imports a *humble* resolution; I cannot sing of merit; but I will sing of mercy and through mercy I will sing of mercy. To sing of mercy must be a humble song, for mercy towards a miserable sinner is a melting word; and to sing of judgment must be a humble song, for judgment in every sense is an awful word. The manner of the expression imports a *skilful* harper, a dexterous musician, even in a spiritual sense; he knew what should be the subject of the song, and he says, "I will sing of mercy and judgment;" and he knew what should be the object of the song, or to whom it should be sung, and therefore says, "To thee, O Lord, I will sing"; he knew who should be the singer, and therefore says, "I will" do it; he knew what should be the manner; and therefore says, "I will sing of mercy and judgment; to thee, O Lord, will I sing." It is before the Lord he resolves to sing, as he did before the ark, which was a type of Christ; and so is it a song to the praise of God in Christ. The manner of the expression imports a *firm, fixed, and constant* resolution; so the redoubling of it seems to import; "I will sing, I will sing." He had a mind this exercise of singing should not go down, but be his continual trade, "I will sing, I will sing;" I will sing on earth and I will sing in heaven; I will sing in time and I will sing in eternity. And, indeed, all on whom the spirit of praise and gratitude is poured out resolve never to give over singing. . . . David had heard once, yea, twice, that mercy as well as power belongs to the Lord; and therefore not only once, but twice in a breath he resolves to sing unto the Lord. The word hath a great deal of elegance and emphasis in it; I will sing of mercy, I will sing of judgment; O, I will sing, O Lord, I will sing; and I will sing unto thee.—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 1.—This song of the sweet singer of Israel is peculiar to earth; they do not sing of "judgment" in heaven, for there is no sin there; they do not sing of "mercy" in hell, for there is no propitiation for sin there. Time was when the song was not heard even on earth; for in Paradise man walked in innocence, and walking in innocence he walked in the light of his Father's face.—*Hugh Stowell, 1856.*

Verse 1.—"I will sing of mercy and judgment." It comes all to this, as if the Psalmist should say, "I will sing of merciful judgments;" for judgment is mercy, as it is the matter of the song: or, to take them separately, "I will sing of mercy in mercies, and, I will sing of mercy in judgment;" and so I will sing of my blinks and of my showers; I will sing both of my cloudy and my clear day; both of my ups and downs.—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 1.—“*Mercy and judgment.*” As the badge of the ship *S. Paul* sailed in was *Castor and Pollux*, twin brothers, so the badge of this Psalm is *Mercy and Judgment*, inseparable companions; of whom it may be said, as our prophet sometimes spake of Saul and Jonathan, “They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.” These are the two brightest stars in the firmament of majesty; the two fairest flowers, and choicest jewels in the imperial crown; like the carnation and the lily, the ruby and the sapphire, or the carbuncle and the diamond, yielding a mutual and interchangeable lustre each to other. They resemble not unfitly the two supporters of the king’s arms, or the two seraphim stretching out their golden wings over the propitiatory, or the white and red rose in the same escutcheon.

We read that Solomon set up two goodly pillars in the porch of the temple, the one called *Jachin*, the other *Boaz*, which signify stability and strength: such pillars of the state are *mercy and judgment*. The throne of the King is borne up by them, as Solomon’s was with lions of ivory on each side. Therefore, as in one place it is said that “the throne is established by justice” (Prov. xvi. 12); so in another that it is “upheld by mercy” (Prov. xx. 28); justice being as the bones and sinews in the body politic, and mercy as the veins and arteries. They are the two hands of action, the two eyes of virtue, and the two wings of honour. And as the eyes, if they be rightly set, do both look one way; so do *mercy and judgment*, however in the apprehension of the vulgar they seem to look contrary ways. And as the treble and the bass accord best in music; so do they in managing the commonwealth. Wherefore David promiseth to make them both sound tunable in his song without jar or discord: “*I will sing of mercy and judgment.*” . . .

As *mercy* is here set in the first place; so shall the sentence of *mercy* and *absolution* be first pronounced at the last day. And it is a laudable custom of princes, at their first entrance to their kingdoms, to shew *mercy*, by hearing the mourning of the prisoner, and delivering the children of death, by loosing the bands of wickedness, by taking off the heavy burdens, by letting the oppressed go free, and by breaking every yoke of former extortions. Thus, our prophet himself, as soon as the crown was settled on his head, made inquiry if there remained yet alive any of the house of Saul, on whom he might shew *mercy* (2 Sam. ix.). O how fair a thing is this *mercy* in the time of anguish and trouble! It is like a cloud of rain that cometh in the time of drought. But this *mercy*, here spoken of in the first part of our prophet’s song, stretcheth further; unfolding itself in *clemency*, in *courtesy*, and in *compassion*. In *clemency*, by pardoning malefactors; in *compassion*, by relieving the afflicted; in *courtesy*, towards all.—*George Hakewill, or Hakewell, 1579–1649.*

Verse 1.—“*Mercy and judgment.*” What is the history of every poor sinner, plucked as a brand from the fire, and brought to heaven in peace at last, but a history of “*mercy and judgment*”? Judgment first awakes to terror and to fear; *mercy* meets the poor, trembling, returning prodigal, and falls on his neck, and kisses, and forgives. Then, through all his chequered course, God hems up his way with judgment, that he may not wander, and yet brightens his path with *mercy*, that he may not faint. Is there a child of God that can look into the varied record of his heart or of his outward history, and not see goodness and severity, severity and goodness, tracking him all his journey through? Has he ever had a cup so bitter that he could say, “There is no *mercy* here”? Has he ever had a lot so bright that he could say, “There is no chastisement or correction here”? Has he ever had any bad tidings, and there have been no good tidings set over against them to relieve them? Has he ever had a sky so dark that he could see in it no star, or a cloud so unchequered that he could trace no rainbow of promise there? . . .

What a beautifully woven web of judgment and *mercy* does every man’s secret history, in his way through the wilderness of life to the land of promise, present! and how good, and how wholesome, and how kindly, and how gracious is this blessed intermingling of both! How do we need the judgment, to keep us humble and watchful and pure! and how do we need the *mercy*, to keep us hopeful, and to nerve our efforts, and to stir our hearts, and to sustain us in patience, amid life’s battle and struggle, and disappointment and vexation! Oh, how good it is for us, that we should thus, therefore, have the rod and staff together—the rod to chasten, and the staff to solace and sustain! How good it is for us, that we should have to “*sing of mercy and judgment*”! And yet, what is judgment itself, but *mercy* with a sterner aspect? And what are the chidings of judgment, but the sterner tones of the voice of a Father’s love? For even judgment is one of the “all things” that “work together for good

to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.”—*Hugh Stowell.*

Verse 1.—“*Mercy and judgment.*” God intermixeth mercy with affliction: he steeps his sword of justice in the oil of mercy; there was no night so dark, but Israel had a pillar of fire in it; there is no condition so dismal, but we may see a pillar of fire to give light. If the body be in pain, conscience is in peace,—there is mercy: affliction is for the prevention of sin,—there is mercy. In the ark there was a rod and a pot of manna, the emblem of a Christian’s condition, mercy interlined with judgment.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 2.—“*I will behave myself wisely.*” The first thing he vows touching himself, is wise behaviour; prudence, not sapience; not wise contemplation, but wise action. It is not wise thoughts, or wise speaking, or wise writing, or wise gesture and countenance, will serve the turn, but wise behaviour; the former are graceful, but the other needful. For as the apostle saith of godliness, “Having a show of godliness, but denying the power thereof;” so certainly there are those who in point of wisdom and sufficiency that do little or nothing thoroughly, but *magno conatu nugas*, they make much ado about small matters; using all the perspectives of shifting they can devise to make an empty *superficies* seem a body that hath depth and bulk.—*George Hakewill.*

Verse 2.—“*I will walk.*” Walking is a word often used in Holy Scripture, and especially by our prophet in this book of the Psalms; yet more often figuratively than properly. It shall not be amiss, then, out of the property and nature of it, to consider the duties included and implied in it. The natural acts of it, then, are three; *motion, progress, and moderation.* As it includes *motion*, so is it opposed to lying, or standing, or sitting; as it includes *progress in motion*, so is it opposed to jumping or capering up and down in the same place; as it includes *moderation in a progressive motion*, so is it opposed to violent running.—*George Hakewill.*

Verse 2.—“*I will walk within my house.*” Much, though not all of the power of godliness, lies within doors. It is in vain to talk of holiness if we can bring no letters testimonial from our holy walking with our relations. Oh, it is sad when they that have reason to know us best, by their daily converse with us, do speak least for our godliness! Few so impudent as to come naked into the streets: if men have anything to cover their naughtiness they will put it on when they come abroad. But what art thou within doors? What care and conscience to discharge thy duty to thy near relations? He is a bad husband that hath money to spend among company abroad, but none to lay in provisions to keep his family at home. And can he be a good Christian that spends all his religion abroad, and leaves none for his nearest relations at home? that is, a great zealot among strangers and little or nothing of God comes from him in his family? Yea, it were well if some that gain the reputation of Christians abroad, did not fall short of others that pretend not to profession in those moral duties which they should perform to their relations. There are some who are great strangers to profession, who yet are loving and kind in their way to their wives. What kind of professors then are they who are dogged and currish to the wife of their bosom? who by their tyrannical lording it over them embitter their spirit, and make them cover the Lord’s altar with tears and weeping? There are wives to be found that are not clamorous, peevish and froward to their husbands, who yet are far from a true work of grace in their hearts; do they then walk as becomes holiness who trouble the whole house with their violent passions? There are servants who from the authority of a natural conscience, are kept from railing and reviling language, when reproved by their masters, and shall not grace keep pace with nature? Holy David knew very well how near this part of a saint’s duties lies to the very heart of godliness; and therefore, when he makes his solemn vow to walk holily before God, he instanceth this, as one stage wherein he might eminently discover the graciousness of his spirit; “*I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*”—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 2.—“*Within my house.*” It is easier for most men to walk with a perfect heart in the church, or even in the world, than in their own families. How many are as meek as lambs among others, when at home they are wasps or tigers.—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 2.—“*Within my house with a perfect heart.*” Even in our best directed establishments, as well as in private families, cultivation is still in a great measure confined to intellect alone; and the direct exercise and training of the moral and religious sentiments and affections are rarely thought of as essential to their full

and vigorous development. Moral precepts are, no doubt, offered in abundance; but these address themselves chiefly to the intellect. We must not be satisfied with merely exclaiming, "Be kind, just, and affectionate," when perhaps at the very moment we are counteracting the effect of the advice by our own opposite conduct. "She told me not to lie," said Guy Rivers in speaking of his mother, "and she set me the example herself by frequently deceiving my father, and teaching me to disobey and deceive him." Conduct like this is more common in real life than is supposed, although generally less flagrant in degree. Parents and teachers indeed too often forget that the sentiments *feel* and *do not reason*, and that, consequently, even a stupid child may, by the instinctive operation of its moral nature at once detect and revolt at the immorality of practices, the true character of which its *reason* is unable to penetrate or expose. It is one of the most effectual methods of cultivating and exciting the moral sentiments in children, to set before them the manifestations of these in our habitual conduct. . . .

What kind of moral duties does the parent encourage, who, recommending kindness, openness, and justice, *tricks* the child into the confession of a fault, and then basely punishes it, having previously promised forgiveness? And how is openness best encouraged—by practising it in conduct, or by neglecting it in practice, and prescribing it in words? Is it to be cultivated by thrusting suspicions in the face of honest intentions? And how is justice to be cultivated by a guardian who *speaks* about it, recommends it, and *in practice* charges each of four pupils the whole fare of a hackney-coach? Or what kind of moral education is that which says, "Do as I bid you, and I will give you sweetmeats or money, or I will tell your mama how good you were," holding out the lowest and most selfish propensities as the motives to moral conduct? Did space permit, I might indeed pursue the whole round of moral and religious duties, and ask similar questions at each. But it is needless. These examples will suffice; and I give them, not as applicable generally either to parents or teachers, but simply as individual instances from among both, which have come within the sphere of my own knowledge, and which bear directly upon the principle under discussion.—*Andrew Combe*, in "*The Principles of Physiology*," 1836.

Verse 3.—"*Wicked thing.*" The original hath it, if we will render it word for word, "*I will set no word of Belial before mine eyes.*" But *word* is figuratively there put for *thing*; as likewise Ps. xli. 8; and so is it rendered both by *Montanus* in the margin, and in the text by *Junius*; howbeit, in his comment upon this Psalm, he precisely follows the original, applying it against sycophants and flatterers, the mice and moths of court.—*George Hakewill*.

Verse 3.—"*I hate the work of them that turn aside.*" Mr. Schultens hath shown in his commentary on Prov. vii. 25 that *תפס* hath a much stronger and more significant meaning than that of mere *turning aside*; and that it is used of an unruly horse, that champs upon the bit through his fiery impatience; and when applied to a bad man, denotes one impatient of all restraint, of unbridled passions, and that is headstrong and ungovernable in the gratification of them, trampling on all the obligations of religion and virtue. Such as these are the deserved objects of the hatred of all good men, whose criminal deviations and presumptuous crimes they detest; none of which "*shall cleave to them*;" they will not harbour the love of, or inclination to them, nor habitually commit them, nor encourage the practice of them. Persons of this character are too frequently about the courts of princes, but it is their honour and interest, as far as ever they can, to discountenance them.—*Samuel Chandler*.

Verse 3.—"*It shall not cleave to me.*" A bird may light upon a man's house, but he may choose whether she shall nestle or breed there, or no: and the devil or his instruments may represent a wicked object to a man's sight; but he may choose whether he will entertain or embrace it or no. For a man to set wicked things before his eyes is nothing else but to sin of set purpose, to set himself to sin, or to sell himself to sin, as Ahab did, 1 Kings xxi.—*George Hakewill*.

Verse 3.—"*It shall not cleave to me.*" A wicked plan or purpose is thus represented as having a tendency to fasten itself on a man, or to "*stick to him*"—as pitch or wax, or a *burr* does.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 4.—"*A froward heart.*" The original sense of *תפס* is *torsit, contorsit*, to twist together, and denotes, when applied to men, persons of a perverse, subtle

disposition, that can twist and twine themselves into all manner of shapes, and who have no truth and honour to be depended on.—*Samuel Chandler.*

Verse 4.—“*A froward heart.*” By which I understand “*from-wardness*”—giving way to sudden impulses of anger, or quick conception, and casting it forth in words or deeds of impetuous violence.—*Thomas Chalmers.*

Verse 5.—“*Privily slandereth*”—literally, he that *tongueth* his neighbour secretly. “*Will I not suffer,*” is properly, “*him I cannot,*” i.e., cannot live with, cannot bear about me, as the same verb is used in Isai. i. 13.—*Henry Cowles.*

Verse 5.—“*Him that hath an high look.*” Pride will sit and show itself in the eyes as soon as anywhere. A man is seen what he is *in oculis, in poculis, in loculis* (in his eyes, his cups, and his resorts) say the Rabbins. See Proverbs vi. 17.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 5.—“*Proud heart.*” From *רחב* *latus* or *dilatatus est*, is the noun *רחב* here, broad, or wide, or large; and being applied to the heart or soul, it notes largeness of desires.—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 5.—Detraction, ambition, and avarice are three weeds which spring and flourish in the rich soil of a court. The Psalmist declareth his resolution to undertake the difficult task of eradicating them for the benefit of his people, that Israelites might not be harassed by informers, or repressed by insolent and rapacious ministers. Shall we imagine these vices less odious in the eyes of that King whose character was composed of humility and charity; or will Christ admit those tempers into the court of heaven, which David determined to exclude from his court upon earth?—*George Horne.*

Verses 5—10.—Perfect, as prophetic of Christ, is the delineation of his associates and disciples. The perverse; the evil-doers; the slanderers, and the proud found no fellowship with him. There were no common principles; no bond of union between them. There was “a gulph” interposed, as in the parable, which they could not pass; and what they saw of Christ, they beheld only from a distance. Nor even now, as then, can “the deceitful” dwell in Christ’s “house”—his holy temple; nor the man of “lies be established” by his love and favour. They must renounce their vices before they can be admitted to his covenant; or, however they may claim communion with him, he in return can have no sympathy with them.—*William Hill Tucker.*

Verse 6.—“*Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful.*” There is an eye of search, and an eye of favour: the one is for the seeking and finding them out, that they may serve; the other for countenancing of their persons, and rewarding of their service.—*George Hakewill.*

Verse 6.—“*Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,*” etc. Christ’s eyes are upon faithful persons, or faithful ministers of the word, who preach the Gospel faithfully, administer the ordinances truly, are faithful to the souls of men in watching over them, reproving and exhorting them; his eyes are upon them to keep and preserve them, and to honour and reward them with a crown of life that fadeth not away. His eyes are also on faithful members of churches, such who truly believe in him, who hold fast the faithful word, and keep close to his worship and ordinances; his eyes are upon them, to show favour to them, to bestow blessings upon them, and to protect and defend them, and to preserve them from perishing: “*That they may dwell with me;*” or, *sit with me;* at his table, or at the council-board, or in judgment, and assist him in the affairs of government; so such as are faithful shall dwell with Christ both here and hereafter; they dwell in him and with him by faith, and have communion with him; they dwell in his house below, and shall dwell with him above for evermore.—*John Gill.*

Verse 6.—“*He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*” Art thou a godly master? When thou takest a servant into thy house, choose for God as well as thyself. Remember there is a work for God to be done by thy servant as well as by thyself: and shall he be fit for thy turn that is not for God’s? Thou desirest the work should prosper thy servant takes in hand, dost thou not? And what ground hast thou, from the promise, to hope that the work should prosper in his hand that sins all the while he is doing of it? “The ploughing of the wicked is sin,” Prov. xxi. 4. A godly servant is a greater blessing than we think on. He can work, and set God on work also, for his master’s good: Gen. xxiv. 12, “O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my

master." And sure he did his master as much service by his prayer as by his prudence in that journey. If you were but to plant an orchard, you would get the best fruit trees, and not cumber your ground with crabs. There is more loss in a graceless servant in the house than a fruitless tree in the orchard. Holy David observed, while he was at Saul's court, the mischief of having wicked and ungodly servants, for with such was that unhappy king compassed, that David compares his court to the profane and barbarous heathens', among whom there was scarce more wickedness to be found : Ps. cxx. 5. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar ;" that is, among those who were as prodigiously wicked as any there. And no doubt but this made this gracious man in his banishment, before he came to the crown, having seen the evil of a disordered house, to resolve what he would do when God should make him the head of such a royal family. "*He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*" He instanceth those sins, not as if he would spend all his zeal against these, but because he had observed them principally to abound in Saul's court, by which he had suffered so much, as you may perceive by Psalm cxx.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 8.—"*That I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.*" As the kingdom of David was only a faint image of the kingdom of Christ, we ought to set Christ before our view ; who, although he may bear with many hypocrites, yet as he will be the judge of the world, will at length call them all to an account, and separate the sheep from the goats. And if it seems to us that he tarries too long, we should think of that morning which will suddenly dawn, that all filthiness being purged away, true purity may shine forth.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 8.—"*Early.*" From some incidental notices of Scripture (2 Sam. xv. 2 ; Ps. ci. 8 ; Jer. xxi. 12), it has been inferred that judges ordinarily held their sessions in the morning. In a climate like that of Palestine, such a custom would be natural and convenient. It is doubtful, however, whether this passage expresses anything more than the promptness and zeal which a righteous judge exercises in the discharge of his duty.—*E. P. Barrows, in "Biblical Geography and Antiquities."*

Verse 8.—The holy vow "*to destroy all the wicked of the land,*" and to "*cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord,*" must begin at our own hearts as his sanctuary, the temple of the Holy Ghost.—*Alfred Edersheim.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Whole Psalm.—This is a Psalm of wills and shalls. There are nine wills and five shalls. Resolutions should be made, 1. With deliberation ; not, therefore, upon trifling matters. 2. With reservation. "*If the Lord will,*" etc. 3. With dependence upon divine strength for their fulfillment.—*G. R.*

Verse 1.—I. The sweet work that is resolved upon is to "*sing.*" II. The sweet singer that thus resolves, namely, David, "*I will sing.*" III. The sweet subject of the song, "*mercy and judgment.*" IV. The sweet object of this praise, and the manner in which he would sing it—"*Unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*"—*Ralph Erskine.*

Verse 1.—What there is in mercy that affords ground of singing. I. The freeness and undeservedness of mercy. II. The unexpectedness of mercy. When I was expecting a frown I got a smile ; when I was expecting nothing but wrath, I got a glance of love ; instead of a stroke of vengeance, I got a view of glory. III. The seasonableness of mercy is a ground of singing—grace to help in time of need. IV. The greatness and riches of mercy make the recipients thereof sing. V. The sweetness of mercy makes them sing. VI. The sureness and firmness of mercy make them sing—"The sure mercies of David."—*From Ralph Erskine's Sermon, entitled "The Militant's Song."*

Verse 1.—I. The different conditions of the righteous man in this life. Not all mercy, nor all judgment, but mercy and judgment. II. His one duty and privilege in reference to them : "*I will sing,*" etc. 1. Because they are both from God. 2. Because they are both from love. 3. Because they are both for present good. 4. Because they are both preparative for the heavenly rest.—*G. R.*

Verses 1, 2.—The blending of song with holy living. The bell of praise and the pomegranate of holy fruitfulness should both adorn the Lord's priests.

Verse 2.—I. The end desired: "To behave wisely," etc.; consistency of conduct. II. The means employed: "When wilt thou come," etc.; only when God is with us we walk in a perfect way. III. The test proposed: "Within my house," where I am most myself and am best known.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—The wisdom of holiness. 1. In selecting our sphere of duty. 2. In timing, arranging, and balancing duties. 3. In managing others according to their tempers. 4. In avoiding disputes with adversaries. 5. In administering rebuke, giving alms, rendering advice, etc.; the blending of the serpent with the dove.

Verse 2.—"O when wilt thou come unto me?" A devout ejaculation. I. Revealing the Psalmist's need of the divine presence in order to holiness. II. His intense longing. III. His full expectation. IV. His thorough appreciation of the condescending visit.

Verse 2 (last clause).—Home piety. Its duty, excellence, influence, sphere, and reward. Note also the change of heart and firmness of purpose necessary to it.

Verse 3.—I. The sight of wickedness is to be avoided: "I will set no wicked thing," etc. II. When seen it is to be loathed: "I hate," etc. III. When felt it is to be repudiated. It may touch me, but "it shall not cleave to me."

Verse 4.—The need of extreme care in the choice of our intimates.

Verse 5.—The detestable nature of slander, hurting three persons at once—the speaker, hearer, and person slandered.

Verse 6.—The duty of believers who are wealthy to encourage and employ persons of pious character.

Verse 8.—The work of the great King when he comes in judgment.