

PSALM CXII.

TITLE AND SUBJECT.—*There is no title to this Psalm, but it is evidently a companion to the hundred and eleventh, and, like it, it is an alphabetical Psalm. Even in the number of verses, and clauses of each verse, it coincides with its predecessor, as also in many of its words and phrases. The reader should carefully compare the two Psalms line by line. The subject of the poem before us is—the blessedness of the righteous man, and so it bears the same relation to the preceding which the moon does to the sun; for, while the first declares the glory of God, the second speaks of the reflection of the divine brightness in men born from above. God is here praised for the manifestation of his glory which is seen in his people, just as in the preceding Psalm he was magnified for his own personal acts. The hundred and eleventh speaks of the great Father, and this describes his children renewed after his image. The Psalm cannot be viewed as the extolling of man, for it commences with "Praise ye the Lord;" and it is intended to give to God all the honour of his grace which is manifested in the sons of God.*

DIVISION.—*The subject is stated in the first verse, and enlarged upon under several heads from 2 to 9. The blessedness of the righteous is set forth by contrast with the fate of the ungodly in verse 10.*

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Blessed is the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.

1. "*Praise ye the LORD.*" This exhortation is never given too often; the Lord always deserves praise, we ought always to render it, we are frequently forgetful of it, and it is always well to be stirred up to it. The exhortation is addressed to all thoughtful persons who observe the way and manner of life of men that fear the Lord. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, the Lord should have all the glory of it, for we are his workmanship. "*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.*" According to the last verse of Psalm cxi., "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; this man, therefore, has begun to be wise, and wisdom has brought him present happiness, and secured him eternal felicity. Jehovah is so great that he is to be feared and had in reverence of all them that are round about him, and he is at the same time so infinitely good that the fear is sweetened into filial love, and becomes a delightful emotion, by no means engendering bondage. There is a slavish fear which is accursed; but that godly fear which leads to delight in the service of God is infinitely blessed. Jehovah is to be praised both for inspiring men with godly fear and for the blessedness which they enjoy in consequence thereof. We ought to bless God for blessing any man, and especially for setting the seal of his approbation upon the godly. His favour towards the God-fearing displays his character and encourages gracious feelings in others, therefore let him be praised. "*That delighteth greatly in his commandments.*" The man not only studies the divine precepts and endeavours to observe them, but rejoices to do so: holiness is his happiness, devotion is his delight, truth is his treasure. He rejoices in the precepts of godliness, yea, and delights *greatly* in them. We have known hypocrites rejoice in the doctrines, but never in the commandments. Ungodly men may in some measure obey the commandments out of fear, but only a gracious man will observe them with delight. Cheerful obedience is the only acceptable obedience; he who obeys reluctantly is disobedient at heart, but he who takes pleasure in the command is truly loyal. If through divine grace we find ourselves described in these two sentences, let us give all the praise to God, for he hath wrought all our works in us, and the dispositions out of which they spring. Let self-righteous men praise themselves, but he who has been made righteous by grace renders all the praise to the Lord.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed

3 Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house : and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness : *he is* gracious and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth : he will guide his affairs with discretion.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever : the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart *is* established, he shall not be afraid, until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor ; his righteousness endureth for ever ; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

2. "*His seed shall be mighty upon earth,*" that is to say, successive generations of God-fearing men shall be strong and influential in society, and in the latter days they shall have dominion. The true seed of the righteous are those who follow them in their virtues, even as believers are the seed of Abraham, because they imitate his faith ; and these are the real heroes of their era, the truly great men among the sons of Adam ; their lives are sublime, and their power upon their age is far greater than at first sight appears. If the promise must be regarded as alluding to natural seed, it must be understood as a general statement rather than a promise made to every individual, for the children of the godly are not all prosperous, nor all famous. Nevertheless, he who fears God, and leads a holy life, is, as a rule, doing the best he can for the future advancement of his house ; no inheritance is equal to that of an unblemished name, no legacy can excel the benediction of a saint ; and, taking matters for all in all, the children of the righteous man commence life with greater advantages than others, and are more likely to succeed in it, in the best and highest sense. "*The generation of the upright shall be blessed.*" The race of sincere, devout, righteous men, is kept up from age to age, and ever abides under the blessing of God. The godly may be persecuted, but they shall not be forsaken ; the curses of men cannot deprive them of the blessing of God, for the words of Balaam are true, "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Their children also are under the special care of heaven, and as a rule it shall be found that they inherit the divine blessing. Honesty and integrity are better corner-stones for an honourable house than mere cunning and avarice, or even talent and push. To fear God and to walk uprightly is a higher nobility than blood or birth can bestow.

3. "*Wealth and riches shall be in his house.*" Understood literally this is rather a promise of the old covenant than of the new, for many of the best of the people of God are very poor ; yet it has been found true that uprightness is the road to success, and, all other things being equal, the honest man is the rising man. Many are kept poor through knavery and profligacy ; but godliness hath the promise of the life that now is. If we understand the passage spiritually it is abundantly true. What wealth can equal that of the love of God ? What riches can rival a contented heart ? It matters nothing that the roof is thatched, and the floor is of cold stone : the heart which is cheered with the favour of heaven is "rich to all the intents of bliss." "*And his righteousness endureth for ever.*" Often when gold comes in the gospel goes out ; but it is not so with the blessed man. Prosperity does not destroy the holiness of his life, or the humility of his heart. His character stands the test of examination, overcomes the temptations of wealth, survives the assaults of slander, outlives the afflictions of time, and endures the trial of the last great day. The righteousness of a true saint endureth for ever, because it springs from the same root as the righteousness of God, and is, indeed, the reflection of it. So long as the Lord abideth righteous he will maintain by his grace the righteousness of his people. They shall hold on their way, and wax stronger and stronger. There is also another righteousness which belongs to the Lord's chosen, which is sure to endure for ever, namely, the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which is called "everlasting righteousness," belonging as it does to the Son of God himself, who is "the Lord our righteousness."

4. *"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."* He does not lean to injustice in order to ease himself, but like a pillar stands erect, and he shall be found so standing when the ungodly, who are as a bowing wall and a tottering fence, shall lie in ruins. He will have his days of darkness, he may be sick and sorry, poor and pining, as well as others; his former riches may take to themselves wings and fly away, while even his righteousness may be cruelly suspected; thus the clouds may lower around him, but his gloom shall not last for ever, the Lord will bring him light in due season, for as surely as a good man's sun goes down it shall rise again. If the darkness be caused by depression of spirit, the Holy Ghost will comfort him; if by pecuniary loss or personal bereavement, the presence of Christ shall be his solace; and if by the cruelty and malignity of men, the sympathy of his Lord shall be his support. It is as ordinary for the righteous to be comforted as for the day to dawn. Wait for the light and it will surely come; for even if our heavenly Father should in our last hours put us to bed in the dark, we shall find it morning when we awake. *"He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous."* This is spoken of God in the fourth verse of the hundred and eleventh Psalm, and now the same words are used of his servant: thus we are taught that when God makes a man upright, he makes him like himself. We are at best but humble copies of the great original; still we are copies, and because we are so we praise the Lord, who hath created us anew in Christ Jesus. The upright man is "gracious," that is, full of kindness to all around him; he is not sour and churlish, but he is courteous to friends, kind to the needy, forgiving to the erring, and earnest for the good of all. He is also "full of compassion"; that is to say, he tenderly feels for others, pities them, and as far as he can assists them in their time of trouble. He does not need to be driven to benevolence, he is brimful of humanity; it is his joy to sympathize with the sorrowing. He is also said to be "righteous": in all his transactions with his fellow men he obeys the dictates of right, and none can say that he goes beyond or defrauds his neighbour. His justice is, however, tempered with compassion, and seasoned with graciousness. Such men are to be found in our churches, and they are by no means so rare as the censorious imagine; but at the same time they are far scarcer than the breadth of profession might lead us to hope. Lord, make us all to possess these admirable qualities.

5. *"A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth."* Having passed beyond stern integrity into open-handed benevolence he looks kindly upon all around him, and finding himself in circumstances which enable him to spare a little of his wealth he lends judiciously where a loan will be of permanent service. Providence has made him able to lend, and grace makes him willing to lend. He is not a borrower, for God has lifted him above that necessity; neither is he a hoarder, for his new nature saves him from that temptation; but he wisely uses the talents committed to him. *"He will guide his affairs with discretion."* Those who neglect their worldly business must not plead religion as an excuse, for when a man is truly upright he exercises great care in managing his accounts, in order that he may remain so. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between indiscretion and dishonesty; carelessness in business may become almost as great an evil to others as actual knavery; a good man should not only be upright, but he should be so discreet that no one may have the slightest reason to suspect him of being otherwise. When the righteous man lends he exercises prudence, not risking his all, for fear he should not be able to lend again, and not lending so very little that the loan is of no service. He drives his affairs, and does not allow them to drive him; his accounts are straight and clear, his plans are wisely laid, and his modes of operation carefully selected. He is prudent, thrifty, economical, sensible, judicious, discreet. Men call him a fool for his religion, but they do not find him so when they come to deal with him. "The beginning of wisdom" has made him wise, the guidance of heaven has taught him to guide his affairs, and with half an eye one can see that he is a man of sound sense. Such persons greatly commend godliness. Alas, some professedly good men act as if they had taken leave of their senses; this is not religion, but stupidity. True religion is sanctified common sense. Attention to the things of heaven does not necessitate the neglect of the affairs of earth; on the contrary, he who has learned how to transact business with God ought to be best able to do business with men. The children of this world often are in their generation wiser than the children of light, but there is no reason why this proverb should continue to be true.

6. *"Surely he shall not be moved for ever."* God has rooted and established

him so that neither men nor devils shall sweep him from his place. His prosperity shall be permanent, and not like that of the gambler and the cheat, whose gains are evanescent : his reputation shall be bright and lustrous from year to year, for it is not a mere pretence ; his home shall be permanent, and he shall not need to wander from place to place as a bird that wanders from her nest ; and even his memory shall be abiding, for a good man is not soon forgotten, and "*the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*" They are of a most ancient family, and not mushrooms of an hour, and their grand old stock shall be found flourishing when all the proud houses of ungodly men shall have faded into nothing. The righteous are worth remembering, their actions are of the kind which record themselves, and God himself takes charge of their memorials. None of us likes the idea of being forgotten, and yet the only way to avoid it is to be righteous before God.

7. "*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*" He shall have no dread that evil tidings will come, and he shall not be alarmed when they do come. Rumours and reports he despises ; prophecies of evil, vented by fanatical mouths, he ridicules ; actual and verified information of loss and distress he bears with equanimity, resigning everything into the hands of God. "*His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*" He is neither fickle nor cowardly ; when he is undecided as to his course he is still fixed in heart : he may change his plan, but not the purpose of his soul. His heart being fixed in solid reliance upon God, a change in his circumstances but slightly affects him ; faith has made him firm and steadfast, and therefore if the worst should come to the worst, he would remain quiet and patient, waiting for the salvation of God.

8. "*His heart is established.*" His love to God is deep and true, his confidence in God is firm and unmoved ; his courage has a firm foundation, and is supported by omnipotence. He has become settled by experience, and confirmed by years. He is not a rolling stone, but a pillar in the house of the Lord. "*He shall not be afraid.*" He is ready to face any adversary—a holy heart gives a brave face. "*Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*" All through the conflict, even till he seizes the victory, he is devoid of fear. When the battle wavers, and the result seems doubtful, he nevertheless believes in God, and is a stranger to dismay. Grace makes him desire his enemies' good : though nature leads him to wish to see justice done to his cause, he does not desire for those who injure him anything by way of private revenge.

9. "*He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor.*" What he received, he distributed ; and distributed to those who most needed it. He was God's reservoir, and forth from his abundance flowed streams of liberality to supply the needy. If this be one of the marks of a man who feareth the Lord, there are some who are strangely destitute of it. They are great at gathering, but very slow at dispersing ; they enjoy the blessedness of receiving, but seldom taste the greater joy of giving. "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—perhaps they think that the blessing of receiving is enough for them. "*His righteousness endureth for ever.*" His liberality has salted his righteousness, proved its reality, and secured its perpetuity. This is the second time that we have this remarkable sentence applied to the godly man, and it must be understood as resulting from the enduring mercy of the Lord. The character of a righteous man is not spasmodic, he is not generous by fits and starts, nor upright in a few points only ; his life is the result of principle, his actions flow from settled, sure, and fixed convictions, and therefore his integrity is maintained when others fail. He is not turned about by companions, nor affected by the customs of society ; he is resolute, determined, and immovable. "*His horn shall be exalted with honour.*" God shall honour him, the universe of holy beings shall honour him, and even the wicked shall feel an unconscious reverence of him. Let it be observed, in summing up the qualities of the God-fearing man, that he is described not merely as righteous, but as one bearing the character to which Paul refers in the memorable verse, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Kindness, benevolence, and generosity, are essential to the perfect character ; to be strictly just is not enough, for God is love, and we must love our neighbour as ourselves : to give every one his due is not sufficient, we must act upon those same principles of grace which reign in the heart of God. The promises of establishment and prosperity are not to churlish Nabals, nor to niggard Labans, but to bountiful souls who have proved their fitness to be stewards of the Lord by the right way in which they use their substance.

10 The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved ; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away : the desire of the wicked shall perish.

The tenth and last verse sets forth very forcibly the contrast between the righteous and the ungodly, thus making the blessedness of the godly appear all the more remarkable. Usally we see Ebal and Gerizim, the blessing and the curse, set the one over against the other, to invest both with the greater solemnity. "*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved.*" The ungodly shall first see the example of the saints to their own condemnation, and shall at last behold the happiness of the godly and to the increase of their eternal misery. The child of wrath shall be obliged to witness the blessedness of the righteous, though the sight shall make him gnaw his own heart. He shall fret and fume, lament and wax angry, but he shall not be able to prevent it, for God's blessing is sure and effectual. "*He shall gnash with his teeth.*" Being very wrathful, and exceedingly envious, he would fain grind the righteous between his teeth ; but as he cannot do that, he grinds his teeth against each other. "*And melt away.*" The heat of his passion shall melt him like wax, and the sun of God's providence shall dissolve him like snow, and at the last the fire of divine vengeance shall consume him as the fat of rams. How horrible must that life be which like the snail melts as it proceeds, leaving a slimy trail behind. Those who are grieved at goodness deserve to be worn away by such an abominable sorrow. "*The desire of the wicked shall perish.*" He shall not achieve his purpose, he shall die a disappointed man. By wickedness he hoped to accomplish his purpose—that very wickedness shall be his defeat. While the righteous shall endure for ever, and their memory shall be always green ; the ungodly man and his name shall rot from off the face of the earth. He desired to be the founder of a family, and to be remembered as some great one : he shall pass away and his name shall die with him. How wide is the gulf which separates the righteous from the wicked, and how different are the portions which the Lord deals out to them. O for grace to be blessed of the Lord ! This will make us praise him with our whole heart.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The hundred and eleventh and the hundred and twelfth Psalms, two very short poems, dating apparently from the latest age of inspired psalmody, present such features of resemblance as to leave no doubt that they came from the same pen. In structure they are identical ; and this superficial resemblance is designed to call attention to something deeper and more important. The subject of the one is the exact counterpart of the subject of the other. The first celebrates the character and works of *God* ; the second, the character and felicity of *the godly man*.—*William Binnie.*

Whole Psalm.—Here are rehearsed the blessings which God is wont to bestow on the godly. And as in the previous Psalm the praises of God were directly celebrated, so in this Psalm they are indirectly declared by those gifts which are conspicuous in those who fear him.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm is a banquet of heavenly wisdom ; and as Basil speaketh of another part of Scripture, likening it to an apothecary's shop ; so may this book of Psalms fitly be compared ; in which are so many sundry sorts of medicines, that every man may have that which is convenient for his disease.—*T. S., 1621.*

Whole Psalm.—The righteousness of the Mediator, I make no doubt, is celebrated in this Psalm ; for surely that alone is worthy to be extolled in songs of praise : especially since we are taught by the Holy Ghost to say, " I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." I conclude, therefore, that in this alphabetical Psalm, for such is its construction, Christ is " the Alpha and the Omega."—*John Fry.*

Verse 1.—This Psalm is a praising of God for blessing the believer, and the whole Psalm doth prove that the believer is blessed : which proposition is set down

in verse 1, and confirmed with as many reasons as there are verses following. Whence learn, 1. Albeit, in singing of certain Psalms, or parts thereof, there be nothing directly spoken of the Lord, or to the Lord, yet he is praised when his truth is our song, or when his works and doctrine are our song; as here it is said, "*Praise ye the Lord.*" and then in the following verses the blessedness of the believer taketh up all the Psalm. 2. It is the Lord's praise that his servants are the only blessed people in the world. "*Praise ye the Lord.*" Why? because "*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.*" 3. He is not the blessed man who is most observant to catch opportunities to have pleasure, profit, and worldly preferment, and careth not how he cometh by them: but he is the blessed man who is most observant of God's will, and careful to follow it.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 1.—"Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord." It is not said simply, *Blessed is the man who fears*: for there is a fear which of itself produces misery and wretchedness rather than happiness. It has to do, therefore, chiefly with what is feared. To fear when it is not becoming, and not to fear when fear is proper, these are not blessedness for a man, but misery and wretchedness. The prophet, therefore, says rightly, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord": and in the 7th and 8th verses he says of this blessed one that he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. Therefore, he who fears God and, according to the exhortation of Christ, does not fear those who can kill the body, he truly may be numbered among the blessed.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 1.—"Feareth the Lord." Filial fear is here intended. Whereby we are both restrained from evil, Prov. iii. 7; and incited unto well doing, Eccles. xii. 13; and whereof God alone is the author, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40; A duty required of every one, Ps. xxxiii. 8; Early, 1 Kings xviii. 12; Only, Luke xii. 5; Continually, Prov. xxiii. 17; With confidence, Ps. cxv. 11; With joyfulness, Ps. cxix. 74; With thankfulness, Rev. xix. 5.—*Thomas Wilson, in "A Complete Christian Dictionary,"* 1661.

Verse 1.—"That delighteth greatly in his commandments." The Hebrew word *per, chapets*, is rather emphatical, which is, as it were, to *take his pleasure*, and I have rendered it *to delight himself*. For the prophet makes a distinction between a willing and prompt endeavour to keep the law, and that which consists in mere servile and constrained obedience.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 1.—"That delighteth greatly in his commandments"—defining what constitutes the true "fear of the Lord," which was termed "the beginning of wisdom," Ps. cxi. 10. He who hath this true "fear" *delights* (Ps. cxi. 2) not merely in the theory, but in the practice of all "the Lord's commandments." Such fear, so far from being a "hard" service, is the only "blessed" one (Jer. xxxii. 39). Compare the Gospel commandments, 1 John iii., 23, 24: v. 3. True obedience is not task-work, as formalists regard religion, but a "delight" (Ps. i. 2). Worldly delights, which made piety irksome, are supplanted by the new-born delight in and taste for the will and ways of God (Ps. xix. 7—10).—*A. R. Fausset.*

Verse 1.—"In his commandments." When we cheerfully practise all that the Lord requireth of us, love sweeteneth all things, and it becomes our meat and drink to do his will. The thing commanded is excellent, but it is sweeter because commanded by him—"his commandments." A man is never thoroughly converted till he delighteth in God and his service, and his heart is overpowered by the sweetness of divine love. A slavish kind of religiousness, when we had rather not do than do our work, is no fruit of grace, and cannot evidence a sincere love.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 2.—"His seed." If any one should desire to leave behind him a flourishing posterity, let him not think to accomplish it by accumulating heaps of gold and silver, and leaving them behind him; but by rightly recognising God and serving Him; and commending his children to the guardianship and protection of God.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 2.—"The generation of the upright"—the family; the children—"shall be blessed." Such promises are expected to be fulfilled in general; it is not required by any proper rules of interpreting language that this should be universally and always true.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 2.—"The generation of the upright shall be blessed." Albeit, few do believe it, yet is it true, that upright dealing hath better fruits than witty projecting and cunning catching.—*David Dickson.*

Verses 2, 3.—It is probable that Lot thought of enriching his family when he

chose the fertile plains of wicked Sodom, yet the event was very different; but Abraham "feared the Lord, and delighted greatly in his commandments," and his descendants were "*mighty upon earth.*" And thus it will generally be, in every age, with the posterity of those who imitate the father of the faithful; and their disinterested and liberal conduct shall prove, in the event, a far preferable inheritance laid up for their children, than gold and silver, houses and lands, would have been.—*Thomas Scott.*

Verse 3.—"Wealth and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever." He is not the worse for his wealth, nor drawn aside by the deceitfulness of riches, which yet is hard and happy.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—In the lower sense, we may read these words literally of abundant wealth bestowed on the righteous by God, and used, not for pride and luxury, but for continual works of mercy, whence it is said of the person so enriched, that "*his righteousness endureth for ever.*" But the higher meaning bids us see here those true spiritual riches which are stored up for the poor in spirit, often most needy in the prosperity of the world; and we may come at the truest sense by comparing the words wherein the great apostle describes his own condition, "As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." 2 Cor. vi. 10. For who can be richer than he who is heir of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ?—*Agellius, Chrysostom, and Didymus, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 3.—"His righteousness endureth for ever." It seems a bold thing to say this of anything human, and yet it is true; for all human righteousness has its root in the righteousness of God. It is not merely man striving to copy God. It is God's gift and God's work. There is a living connexion between the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man, and therefore the imperishableness of the one appertains to the other also. Hence the same thing is affirmed here of the human righteousness which in *exi. 3* is affirmed of the Divine.—*J. J. S. Perowne.*

Verse 3.—"His righteousness endureth for ever." We are justified before God by faith only: Rom. iii. 4: but they are righteous before men, who live honestly, piously, humbly, as the law of God requires. Concerning this righteousness the Psalmist says that *it endureth for ever*, while the feigned and simulated uprightness of hypocrites is abominable before God, and with men speedily passes away.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 4.—"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The arising of light out of darkness, although one of the most common, is one of the most beautiful, as it is one of the most beneficent natural phenomena. The sunrise is a daily victory of light over darkness. Every morning the darkness flees away. Heavy sleepers in the city are not apt to be very well acquainted with the rising sun. They know the tender beauties of the dawning, and the glories of sunrise by poetical description, or by the word of others. The light has fully come, and the day has long begun its work, especially if it be summer time, before ordinary citizens are awake; and, unless on some rare occasions, the millions of men who, every day, see more or less the fading of the light into the dark, never see the rising of the light out of the dark again; and, perhaps, seldom or never think with what thankfulness and joy it is hailed by those who need it—by the sailor, tempest-tossed all night, and driven too near the sand-bank or the shore; by the benighted traveller lost in the wood, or in the wild, who knows not south from north until the sun shall rise; but the night watcher in the sick room, who hears, and weeps to hear, through the weary night, the moaning of that old refrain of sorrow, "Would God it were morning!" What intensity of sorrow, fear, hope, there may be in that expression, "more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning!" Now I make no doubt that there is at least somewhat of that intenser meaning carried up into the higher region of spiritual experience, and expressed by the text, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." . . . Sincerity: an honest desire to know the truth: readiness to make any sacrifice in order to the knowledge: obedience to the truth so far as it is known already—these will bring the light *when nothing else will bring it.*—*Alexander Raleigh, in "The Little Sanctuary and other Meditations," 1872.*

Verse 4.—"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." The great lesson taught by this simile is the connection which obtains between integrity of purpose and clearness of perception, insomuch that a duteous conformity to what is right,

is generally followed up by a ready and luminous discernment of what is true. It tells us that if we have but grace to *do* as we ought, we shall be made to *see* as we ought. It is a lesson repeatedly affirmed in Scripture, and that in various places both of the Old and New Testament: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; "The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them"; "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart"; or still more specifically, "To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."—*Thomas Chalmers*, 1780—1847.

Verse 4.—"Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness": that is, comfort in affliction. He hath comforted others in affliction, and been light to them in their darkness, as is showed in the latter end of the fourth verse, and in the fifth, and therefore by way of gracious retaliation, the Lord will comfort him in his affliction, and command the light to rise upon him in his darkness.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 4.—"Light," "Darkness." While we are on earth, we are subject to a threefold "darkness"; the darkness of error, the darkness of sorrow, and the darkness of death. To dispel these, God visiteth us, by his Word, with a threefold "light"; the light of truth, the light of comfort, and the light of life.—*George Horne*.

Verse 4.—"Gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous"—attributes usually applied to God, but here said of "the upright." The children of God, knowing in their own experience that God our Father is "gracious, full of compassion, and righteous," seek themselves to be the same towards their fellow men from instinctive imitation of him (Matt. v. 45, 48; Eph. v. 8; Luke vi. 36).—*A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 5.—"A good man sheweth favour," etc. Consider that power to do good is a dangerous ability, unless we use it. Remember that it is God who giveth wealth, and that he expecteth some answerable return of it. Live not in such an inhuman manner as if Nabal and Judas were come again into the world. Think frequently and warmly of the love of God and Jesus to you. You will not deny your crumbs to the miserable, when you thankfully call to mind that Christ gave for you his very flesh and blood. Consider as one great end of poverty is patience, so one great end of wealth is charity. Think how honourable it is to make a present to the great King of the world; and what a condescension it is in his all-sufficiency to do that good by us, which he could so abundantly do without us.—*Thomas Tenison*, 1636—1715.

Verse 5.—"Lendeth." The original word here, לָוָה , *lavah*, means to join oneself to any one; to cleave to him; then to form the union which is constituted between debtor and creditor, borrower and lender. Here it is used in the latter sense, and it means that a good man will accommodate another—a neighbour—with money, or with articles to be used temporarily and returned again. A man who always borrows is not a desirable neighbour; but a man who never lends—who never is willing to accommodate—is a neighbour that no one would wish to live near—a crooked, perverse, bad man. True religion will always dispose a man to do acts of kindness in any and every way possible.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 5.—Charity though it springs in the heart should be guided by the head, that it may spread itself abroad to the best advantage. "*He will guide his affairs with discretion,*" and no affairs are so properly the good man's own as the dispensation and stewardship of those blessings which God has entrusted him with, for "*it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.*"—*Michael Cox*, 1748.

Verse 5.—"He will guide his affairs with discretion." Just as a steward, servant, or agent in any secular concern has to feel that his *mind* is his master's, as well as his hands, and that his attention, thought, tact, and talent, should be vigorously and faithfully given to the interests of his employer; so the Christian stewardship of money, demands on the part of God's servant, in respect to every form of its use and disposal, the exercise of reflexion; a reference to conscience; the recollection of responsibility to God; attention to the appeals of humanity is addressed to the ear of justice and love. Everything is to be weighed as in the balance of the sanctuary; a decision formed; and then energy, skill schemes, and plans wisely constructed, prudential limitations or beneficent liberality as may seem best. Spending, saving, giving, or lending, all being done so as best to meet what may be felt to be the Master's will, and what may best evince at once the wisdom and the fidelity of his servant.—*Thomas Binney*, in "*Money: a Popular Exposition in Rough Notes,*" 1865.

Verse 5.—“*Discretion.*” There is a story, concerning divers ancient Fathers, that they came to St. Anthony, enquiring of him, what virtue did by a direct line lead to perfection, that so a man might shun the snares of Satan. He bade every one of them speak his opinion; one said, watching and sobriety; another said, fasting and discipline; a third said, humble prayer; a fourth said, poverty and obedience; and another, piety and works of mercy; but when every one has spoken his mind, his answer was, That all these were excellent graces indeed, but discretion was the chief of them all. And so beyond doubt it is; being the very *Auriga virtutum*, the guide of all virtuous and religious actions, the moderator and orderer of all the affections; for whatsoever is done with it is virtue, and what without it is vice. An ounce of discretion is said to be worth a pound of learning. As zeal without knowledge is blind, so knowledge without discretion is lame, like a sword in a madman’s hand, able to do much, apt to do nothing. *Tolle hanc et virtus vitium erit.* He that will fast most fast with discretion, he must so mortify that he does not kill his flesh; he that gives alms to the poor, must do it with discretion, *Omni petenti non omnia petenti*—to every one that doth ask, but not everything that he doth ask; so likewise pray with discretion, observing place and time; place, lest he be reputed a hypocrite; time, lest he be accounted a heretic. Thus it is that discretion is to be made the guide of all religious performances.—*Quoted by John Spencer, 1658.*

Verse 6.—What doth the text say? “*The righteous (that is the bountiful) shall be in everlasting remembrance.*” God remembers our good deeds, when he rewards them (as he does our prayers, when he hears them). If to remember, then, be to reward, an everlasting reward is our everlasting remembrance. . . . Now in those who are to be partakers of mercy, the divine wisdom requires this congruity, that they be such as have been ready to show mercy to others.—*Joseph Mede, 1586—1638.*

Verse 6.—“*The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*” The stately and durable pyramids of Egypt have not transmitted to posterity even the names of those buried in them. And what has even embalming done, but tossed them about, and exposed them to all the world as spectacles to the curious, of meanness, or horror? But the piety of Abraham, of Jacob, of David and Samuel, of Hezekiah, Josiah and others, is celebrated to this very day. So when pyramids shall sink, and seas cease to roll, when sun and moon and stars shall be no more, “*the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*”—*John Dun, 1790*

Verse 7.—“*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*” How can you affright him? Bring him word his estate is ruined; “yet my inheritance is safe,” says he. Your wife, or child, or dear friend is dead; “yet my Father lives.” You yourself must die; “well, then, I go home to my Father, and to my inheritance.”

For the public troubles of the Church, doubtless it is both a most pious and generous temper, to be more deeply affected for these than for all our private ones; and to sympathise in the common calamities of any people, but especially of God’s own people, hath been the character of men near unto him. Observe the pathetic strains of the prophet’s bewailing, when he foretells the desolation even of foreign kingdoms, much more of the Lord’s chosen people, still mindful of Sion, and mournful of her distresses. (Jer. ix. 1, and the whole Book of Lamentations.) Yet even in this, with much compassion, there is a calm in a believer’s mind; he finds amidst all hard news, yet still a fixed heart, trusting, satisfied in this, that deliverance shall come in due time, Ps. cii. 13, and that in those judgments that are inflicted, men shall be humbled and God exalted, Isaiah ii. 11, and v. 15, 16; and that in all tumults and changes, and subversion of states, still the throne of God is fixed, and with that the believer’s heart likewise, Ps. xciii. 2. So Ps. xxix. 10.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 7.—“*He shall not be afraid,*” etc. If a man would lead a happy life, let him but seek a sure object for his trust, and he shall be safe: “*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.*” A man that puts his confidence in God, if he hears bad news of mischief coming towards him, as suppose a bad debt, a loss at sea, accidents by fire, tempests, or earthquakes, as Job had his messengers of evil tidings, which came thick and threefold upon him, yet he is not afraid, for his heart is fixed on God: he hath laid up his confidence in God, therefore his heart is kept in an equal poise; he can say, as Job, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,” Job i. 21. His

comforts did not ebb and flow with the creature, but his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 7 (first clause).—The good man will not be alarmed by any report of danger, whilst the dishonest man, conscious of his wickedness, is always in a state of fear.—*George Phillips*.

Verse 7.—“*His heart is fixed,*” or prepared, ready, and in arms for all services; resolved not to give back, able to meet all adventures, and stand its ground. God is unchangeable; and therefore faith is invincible, for it sets the heart on him; fastens it there on the rock of eternity; then let winds blow and storms arise, it cares not.—*Robert Leighton*.

Verse 7.—“*His heart is fixed*”—established fearlessly. So Moses, with the Red Sea before and the Egyptian foes behind (Exod. xiv. 13); Jehoshaphat before the Ammonite horde of invaders (2 Chron. xx. 12, 15, 17); Asa before Zerah, the Ethiopian’s “thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots” (2 Chron. xiv. 9—12). Contrast with the persecuted David’s fearless trust, Saul’s panic-stricken feeling at the Philistine invasion, inasmuch as he repaired for help to a witch. How bold were the three youths in prospect of Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace! How fearless Stephen before the council! Basilus could say, in answer to the threats of Cæsar Valens, “such bug-bears should be set before children.” Athanasius said of Julian, his persecutor, “He is a mist that will soon disappear.”—*A. R. Fausset*.

Verse 7.—“*Trusting in the Lord,*” I need not prove that a man can have no other sure comfort and support. For what can he confide in? His *treasure*? This may soon be exhausted, or it may awaken the avarice or ambition of a powerful enemy, as Hezekiah’s did the king of Babylon, and so instead of being a defence, prove the occasion of his ruin. Can he confide in *power*? Alas, he knows that when this is grown too big to fall by any other hands, it generally falls by its own. Can he finally confide in worldly *wisdom*? Alas, a thousand unexpected accidents, and unobserved latent circumstances, cross and frustrate this, and render the Abithophels not only unfortunate, but often contemptible too.—*Richard Lucas*, 1648—1715.

Verse 8.—“*His heart is established.*” Happy, surely, is the man whose heart is thus established. Others may be politic, he only is wise; others may be fortunate, he only is great; others may drink deeper draughts of sensual pleasure, he only can eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. He is an image of that great Being whom he trusts . . . and in the midst of storms, and thunders, and earthquakes sits himself serene and undisturbed, bidding the prostrate world adore the Lord of the universe.—*George Gleig*, 1803.

Verse 8.—“*Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*” His faith will not fail, nor shrink, nor change, while one by one his enemies are brought to the knowledge of the truth and the love of Christ, and he shall see his heart’s desire fulfilled upon them, even that they may be saved.—*Plain Commentary*.

Verse 8.—“*Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*” Or, according to the original, *Until he looks upon his oppressors*; that is, till he behold them securely, and, as we say, confidently *looks in their faces*; as being now no longer under their power, but being freed from their tyranny and oppression.—*Thomas Fenton*.

Verse 9.—When all the flashes of sensual pleasure are quite extinct, when all the flowers of secular glory are withered away; when all earthly treasures are buried in darkness; when this world, and all the fashion of it, are utterly vanished and gone, the bountiful man’s state will be still firm and flourishing, and “*his righteousness shall endure for ever.*” “*His horn shall be exalted with honour.*” A horn is an emblem of *power*; for it is the beast’s strength, offensive and defensive: and of *plenty*, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of *sanctity*, for in it was put the holy oil, with which kings were consecrated; and of *dignity*, both in consequence upon the reasons mentioned (as denoting might, and influence, and sacredness accompanying sovereign dignity) and because also it is an especial beauty and ornament to the creature which hath it; so that this expression, “*his horn shall be exalted with honour,*” may be supposed to import that an abundance of high, and holy, of firm and solid honour shall attend upon the bountiful person. . . . God will thus exalt the bountiful man’s horn even here in this world, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in a future state.—*Isaac Barrow*, 1630—1677.

Verse 9.—“*For ever.*” The Hebrew phrase in this text is not עלְמֵד , in *seculum*,

which is sometimes used of a limited eternity, but *נָדָב*, *in eternum*, which seems more expressive of an endless duration, and is the very same phrase whereby the duration of God's righteousness is expressed in the foregoing Psalm at the third verse.—*William Berriman, 1688—1749.*

Verses 9, 10.—These words are an enlargement of the character, begun at the first verse, of the blessed man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. The author closes that character with an amiable description of his charity, and so leaves on our minds a strong impression, that benevolence of heart when displayed in the benefaction of the hand is the surest mark and fairest accomplishment of a moral and religious mind; which, whether it rewards the worthy, or relieves the unworthy object, is the noblest imitation of the dealings of God with mankind. For he rewardeth the good if any can be called so but himself, (though the name *good* is but *God* spread out). He beareth even with the wicked and stretcheth out his hand to save even them.—*Michael Cox.*

Verse 10.—“*The wicked.*” The word *רָעָה*, *the wicked*, is used emphatically, by the Jews, to denote him who neither gives to the poor himself, nor can endure to see other people give; while he who deserves but one part of this character is only said to have an *evil eye* in regard of other people's substance, or in regard of his own.—*Mishna.*

Verse 10.—“*The wicked shall see it and be grieved,*” etc.—The sight of Christ in glory with his saints, will, in an inexpressible manner torment the crucifiers of the one, and the persecutors of the other; as it will show them the hopes and wishes of their adversaries all granted to the full, and all their own “*desires*” and designs for ever at an end; it will excite envy which must prey upon itself, produce a grief which can admit of no comfort, give birth to a worm which can never die, and blow up those fires which nothing can quench.—*George Horne.*

Verse 10.—“*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved,*” etc. It is the property of the Devil, not to mistake the nature of virtue, and esteem it criminal, but to hate it for this reason, because it is good, and therefore most opposite to his designs. The wicked, as his proper emissaries, resemble him in this, and grieve to have the foulness of their vices made conspicuous by being placed near the light of virtuous example. . . . They may, like the giants of ancient fable, attempt a romantic war with heaven; but all their preparations for that purpose must recoil with double force upon themselves, and cover them with shame and confusion. . . . If such be the effect of their malice in the present life, that, instead of injuring those they rage against, it usually turns to their own vexation, how much more, when the scene shall open in the life to come. . . . They shall continue then to gnash their teeth (the wretched amusement of that cursed state) as well in grief and anguish for their own torments, as in rage and envy at the abundant honour which is done the saints.—*William Berriman.*

Verse 10.—“*The wicked shall see it, and be grieved*”; that is, he shall have secret indignation in himself to see matters go so; “*he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away.*” Gnashing of teeth is caused by vexing the heart; and therefore it follows, “*he melts away*”; which notes (melting is from the heart) an extreme heat within. The sense is very suitable to that of Eliphaz (Job v. 2) “*wrath slayeth the foolish,*” or wrath makes him melt away, it melts his grease with chafing, as we say of a man furiously vexed. Hence that deplorable condition of the damned, who are cast out of the presence of God for ever, is described by “*weeping, and walling, and gnashing of teeth*”; which imports not only pain, but extreme vexing at, or in themselves. These finally impenitent ones shall be slain for ever with their own wrath, as well as with the wrath of God.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 10.—“*The wicked shall see it.*” The Psalm which speaks of the blessedness of the saints also bears solemn testimony to the doom of the wicked. Cowper sings as if this verse was before his eyes.

. . . The same word, that like the polished share
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,
Kills, too, the flow'ry weeds where'er they grow,
That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.
Oh that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,
Sad messenger of mercy from above,
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear;

His will and judgment at continual strife,
That civil war embitters all his life ;
In vain he points his pow'rs against the skies,
In vain he closes or averts his eyes ;
Truth will intrude.

Verse 10.—"He shall gnash with his teeth." An enraged man snaps his teeth together, as if about to bite the object of his anger. Thus in the book *Rāmyanum*, the giant Rāvanan is described as in his fury gnashing together his "thirty-two teeth!" Of angry men it is frequently said, "Look at the beast, how he gnashes his teeth!" "Go near that fellow! not I, indeed! he will only gnash his teeth."—*Joseph Roberts.*

Verse 10.—"He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away." The effect of envy, which consumes the envious. Thus the poet: "Envy is most hateful, but has some good in it, for it makes the eyes and the heart of the envious to pine away."—*John Le Clerc, 1657—1736.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—"Praise ye the LORD." I. Who should be praised? Not man, self, wealth, etc., but God only. II. Who should praise him? All men, but specially his people, the blessed ones described in this Psalm. III. Why should they do it? For all the reasons mentioned in succeeding verses. IV. How should they do it? Chiefly by leading such a life as is here described.

Verse 1 (second clause).—I. Fear of the Lord; what it is. II. Its connection with the delight mentioned. III. The qualities in the commandments which excite delight in godfearing minds.

Verse 2.—The real might of the holy seed and their true blessedness.

Verse 3.—The riches of a Christian: content, peace, security, power in prayer, promises, providence, yea, God himself.

Verse 3.—The enduring character of true righteousness. 1. Based on eternal principles. 2. Growing out of an incorruptible seed. 3. Sustained by a faithful God. 4. United to the everliving Christ.

Verse 3.—Connection of the two clauses—How to be wealthy and righteous. Note the following verses, and show how liberality is needful if rich men would be righteous men.

Verse 4 (whole verse).—I. The upright have their dark times. II. They shall receive comfort. III. Their own character will secure this.

Verse 4 (first clause).—I. The character of the righteous: "upright," "gracious," etc. II. His privilege. 1. Light as well as darkness. 2. More light than darkness. 3. Light in darkness: inward light in the midst of surrounding darkness. Light seen above, when all is dark below. Even darkness itself becomes the harbinger of day.—*G. R.*

Verse 4 (last clause).—A Trinity of excellencies found in true Christians, in Christ, and in God: their union forms a perfect character when they are well balanced. Show how they are exemplified in daily life.

Verse 5.—I. A good man is benevolent, but a benevolent man is not always good. II. A good man is prudent, but a prudent man is not always a good man. There must first be goodness and then its fruits. "Make the tree good," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 5.—"Lending." I. It is to be done. II. It is to be done as a favour; borrowing is seeking alms. III. It should be done very discreetly. Add to this a homily on borrowing and repaying.

Verse 6.—I. In this life the Christian is, 1, Steadfast; 2, Calm; 3, Unconquerable; and II. When this life is over his memory is, 1, Beloved; 2, Influential; 3, Perpetual.

Verse 6.—I. The character of the righteous is eternal: "surely," etc. II. His influence upon others is eternal: "shall be had," etc.—*G. R.*

Verse 7.—1. "He shall not be afraid," etc.: peaceful. 2. "His heart is fixed": restful. 3. "Trusting in the Lord": trustful; the cause of the former.

Verse 7.—I. The waves : “evil tidings.” II. The steady ship : “he shall not be afraid.” III. The anchor : “his heart is fixed, trusting.” IV. The anchorage : “in the Lord.”

Verse 8.—Heart establishment, the confidence which flows from it, the sight which shall be seen by him who possesses it.

Verse 8.—I. The security of the righteous : “his heart is established.” II. His tranquillity : “he shall not be afraid ;” and, III. His expectancy : “until,” etc. —*G. R.*

Verse 9.—Benevolence : its exercise in almsgiving, its preserving influence upon character, and the honour which it wins.

Verse 10.—I. What the wicked must see, and its effect upon them. II. What they shall never see (their desire), and the result of their disappointment.
