

## PSALM CXIV.

**SUBJECT AND DIVISION.**—*This sublime SONG OF THE EXODUS is one and indivisible. True poetry has here reached its climax : no human mind has ever been able to equal, much less to excel, the grandeur of this Psalm. God is spoken of as leading forth his people from Egypt to Canaan, and causing the whole earth to be moved at his coming. Things inanimate are represented as imitating the actions of living creatures when the Lord passes by. They are apostrophised and questioned with marvellous force of language, till one seems to look upon the actual scene. The God of Jacob is exalted as having command over river, sea, and mountain, and causing all nature to pay homage and tribute before his glorious majesty.*

### EXPOSITION.

**W**HEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language ;

2 Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

3 The sea saw *it*, and fled : Jordan was driven back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

5 What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest ? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back ?

6 Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams ; *and* ye little hills, like lambs ?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob ;

8 Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

1. "*When Israel went out of Egypt.*" The song begins with a burst, as if the poetic fury could not be restrained, but overleaped all bounds. The soul elevated and filled with a sense of divine glory cannot wait to fashion a preface, but springs at once into the middle of its theme. Israel emphatically came out of Egypt, out of the population among whom they had been scattered, from under the yoke of bondage, and from under the personal grasp of the king who had made the people into national slaves. Israel came out with a high hand and a stretched-out arm, defying all the power of the empire, and making the whole of Egypt to travail with sore anguish, as the chosen nation was as it were born out of its midst. "*The house of Jacob from a people of strange language.*" They had gone down into Egypt as a single family—"the house of Jacob"; and, though they had multiplied greatly, they were still so united, and were so fully regarded by God as a single unit, that they are rightly spoken of as the house of Jacob. They were as one man in their willingness to leave Goshen; numerous as they were, not a single individual stayed behind. Unanimity is a pleasing token of the divine presence, and one of its sweetest fruits. One of their inconveniences in Egypt was the difference of languages, which was very great. The Israelites appear to have regarded the Egyptians as stammerers and babblers, since they could not understand them, and they very naturally considered the Egyptians to be barbarians, as they would no doubt often beat them because they did not comprehend their orders. The language of foreign taskmasters is never musical in an exile's ear. How sweet it is to a Christian who has been compelled to hear the filthy conversation of the wicked, when at last he is brought out from their midst to dwell among his own people !

2. "*Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*" The pronoun "his" comes in where we should have looked for the name of God; but the poet is so full of thought concerning the Lord that he forgets to mention his name, like the spouse in the Song, who begins, "Let *him* kiss me," or Magdalene when she cried, "Tell me where thou hast laid *him*." From the mention of Judah and Israel certain critics have inferred that this Psalm must have been written after the division

of the two kingdoms ; but this is only another instance of the extremely slender basis upon which an hypothesis is often built up. Before the formation of the two kingdoms David had said, "Go, number Israel and Judah," and this was common parlance, for Uriah the Hittite said, "The ark and Israel, and Judah abide in tents" ; so that nothing can be inferred from the use of the two names. No division into two kingdoms can have been intended here, for the poet is speaking of the coming out of Egypt when the people were so united that he has just before called them "the house of Judah." It would be quite as fair to prove from the first verse that the Psalm was written, when the people were in union as to prove from the second that its authorship dates from their separation. Judah was the tribe which led the way in the wilderness march, and it was foreseen in prophecy to be the royal tribe, hence its poetical mention in this place. The meaning of the passage is that the whole people at the coming out of Egypt were separated unto the Lord to be a peculiar people, a nation of priests whose motto should be, "Holiness unto the Lord." Judah was the Lord's "holy thing," set apart for his special use. The nation was peculiarly Jehovah's dominion, for it was governed by a theocracy in which God alone was King. It was his domain in a sense in which the rest of the world was outside his kingdom. These were the young days of Israel, the time of her espousals, when she went after the Lord into the wilderness, her God leading the way with signs and miracles. The whole people were the shrine of Deity, and their camp was one great temple. What a change there must have been for the godly amongst them from the idolatries and blasphemies of the Egyptians to the holy worship and righteous rule of the great King in Jeshurun. They lived in a world of wonders, where God was seen in the wondrous bread they ate and in the water they drank, as well as in the solemn worship of his holy place. When the Lord is manifestly present in a church, and his gracious rule obediently owned, what a golden age has come, and what honourable privileges his people enjoy ! May it be so among us.

3. "*The sea saw it, and fled*" ; or rather, "The sea saw and fled"—it saw God and all his people following his lead, and it was struck with awe and fled away. A bold figure ! The Red Sea mirrored the hosts which had come down to its shore, and reflected the cloud which towered high over all, as the symbol of the presence of the Lord : never had such a scene been imagined upon the surface of the Red Sea, or any other sea, before. It could not endure the unusual and astounding sight, and fleeing to the right and to the left, opened a passage for the elect people. A like miracle happened at the end of the great march of Israel, for "*Jordan was driven back*." This was a swiftly-flowing river, pouring itself down a steep decline, and it was not merely divided, but its current was driven back so that the rapid torrent, contrary to nature, flowed up-hill. This was God's work : the poet does not sing of the suspension of natural laws, or of a singular phenomenon not readily to be explained ; but to him the presence of God with his people is everything, and in his lofty song he tells how the river was driven back because the Lord was there. In this case poetry is nothing but the literal fact, and the fiction lies on the side of the atheistic critics who will suggest any explanation of the miracle rather than admit that the Lord made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all his people. The division of the sea and the drying up of the river are placed together though forty years intervened, because they were the opening and closing scenes of one great event. We may thus unite by faith our new birth and our departure out of the world into the promised inheritance, for the God who led us out of the Egypt of our bondage under sin will also conduct us through the Jordan of death out of our wilderness wanderings in the desert of this tried and changeful life. It is all one and the same deliverance, and the beginning ensures the end.

4. "*The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.*" At the coming of the Lord to Mount Sinai, the hills moved ; either leaping for joy in the presence of their Creator like young lambs ; or, if you will, springing from their places in affright at the terrible majesty of Jehovah, and flying like a flock of sheep when alarmed. Men fear the mountains, but the mountains tremble before the Lord. Sheep and lambs move lightly in the meadows ; but the hills, which we are wont to call eternal, were as readily made to move as the most active creatures. Rams in their strength, and lambs in their play, are not more stirred than were the solid hills when Jehovah marched by. Nothing is immovable but God himself : the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but the covenant of his grace abideth fast for ever and ever. Even thus do mountains of sin and hills of trouble

move when the Lord comes forth to lead his people to their eternal Canaan. Let us never fear, but rather let our faith say unto this mountain, "Be thou removed hence and cast into the sea," and it shall be done.

5. "*What ailed thee, O thou sea?*" Wert thou terribly afraid? Did thy strength fail thee? Did thy very heart dry up? "What ailed thee, O thou sea, *that thou fleddest?*" Thou wert neighbour to the power of Pharaoh, but thou didst never fear his hosts; stormy wind could never prevail against thee so as to divide thee in twain; but when the way of the Lord was in thy great waters thou wast seized with affright, and thou becamest a fugitive from before him. "*Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?*" What ailed thee, O quick descending river? Thy fountains had not dried up, neither had a chasm opened to engulf thee! The near approach of Israel and her God sufficed to make thee retrace thy steps. What aileth all our enemies that they fly when the Lord is on our side? What aileth hell itself that it is utterly routed when Jesus lifts up a standard against it? "Fear took hold upon them there," for fear of HIM the stoutest hearted did quake, and became as dead men.

6. "*Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?*" What ailed ye that ye were thus moved? There is but one reply: the majesty of God made you to leap. A gracious mind will chide human nature for its strange insensibility, when the sea and the river, the mountains and the hills, are all sensitive to the presence of God. Man is endowed with reason and intelligence, and yet he sees unmoved that which the material creation beholds with fear. God has come nearer to us than ever he did to Sinai, or to Jordan, for he has assumed our nature, and yet the mass of mankind are neither driven back from their sins, nor moved in the paths of obedience.

7. "*Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.*" Or "from before the Lord, the Adonai, the Master and King." Very fitly does the Psalm call upon all nature again to feel a holy awe because its Ruler is still in its midst.

"Quake when Jehovah walks abroad,  
Quake, earth, at sight of Israel's God."

Let the believer feel that God is near, and he will serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Awe is not cast out by faith, but the rather it becomes deeper and more profound. The Lord is most revered where he is most loved.

8. "*Which turned the rock into a standing water,*" causing a mere or lake to stand at its foot, making the wilderness a pool: so abundant was the supply of water from the rock that it remained like water in a reservoir. "*The flint into a fountain of waters,*" which flowed freely in streams, following the tribes in their devious marches. Behold what God can do! It seemed impossible that the flinty rock should become a fountain; but he speaks, and it is done. Not only do mountains move, but rocks yield rivers when the God of Israel wills that it should be so.

"From stone and solid rock he brings  
The spreading lake, the gushing springs."

"O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together," for he it is and he alone who doeth such wonders as these. He supplies our temporal needs from sources of the most unlikely kind, and never suffers the stream of his liberality to fail. As for our spiritual necessities they are all met by the water and the blood which gushed of old from the riven rock, Christ Jesus: therefore let us extol the Lord our God.

Our deliverance from under the yoke of sin is strikingly typified in the going up of Israel from Egypt, and so also was the victory of our Lord over the powers of death and hell. The Exodus should therefore be earnestly remembered by Christian hearts. Did not Moses on the mount of transfiguration speak to our Lord of "the exodus" which he should shortly accomplish at Jerusalem; and is it not written of the hosts above that they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb? Do we not ourselves expect another coming of the Lord, when before his face heaven and earth shall flee away and there shall be no more sea? We join then with the singers around the Passover table and make their Hallel ours, for we too have been led out of bondage and guided like a flock through a desert land, wherein the Lord supplies our wants with heavenly manna and water from the Rock of ages. Praise ye the Lord.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—The cxivth Psalm appears to me to be an admirable ode, and I began to turn it into our own language. As I was describing the journey of Israel from Egypt, and added the Divine Presence amongst them, I perceived a beauty in this Psalm, which was entirely new to me, and which I was going to lose; and that is, that the poet utterly conceals the presence of God in the beginning of it, and rather lets a possessive pronoun go without a substantive, than he will so much as mention anything of divinity there. "Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion" or kingdom. The reason now seems evident, and this conduct necessary; for, if God had appeared before, there could be no wonder why the mountains should leap and the sea retire; therefore, that this convulsion of nature may be brought in with due surprise, his name is not mentioned till afterwards; and then with a very agreeable turn of thought, God is introduced at once in all his majesty. This is what I have attempted to imitate in a translation without paraphrase, and to preserve what I could of the spirit of the sacred author.

When Israel, freed from Pharaoh's hand,  
Left the proud tyrant and his land,  
The tribes with cheerful homage own  
Their King, and Judah was his throne.

Across the deep their journey lay,  
The deep divides to make them way;  
The streams of Jordan saw, and fled  
With backward current to their head.

The mountains shook like frightened sheep,  
Like lambs the little hillocks leap;  
Not Sinai on her base could stand,  
Conscious of sovereign power at hand.

What power could make the deep divide?  
Make Jordan backward roll his tide?  
Why did ye leap, ye little hills?  
And whence the fright that Sinai feels?

Let ev'ry mountain, ev'ry flood,  
Retire, and know th' approaching God,  
The King of Israel! see him here:  
Tremble, thou earth, adore and fear.

He thunders—and all nature mourns;  
The rock to standing pools he turns;  
Flints spring with fountains at his word,  
And fires and seas confess their Lord.

*Isaac Watts, in "The Spectator," 1712.*

*Verse 1.*—"When Israel went out of Egypt." Out of the midst of that nation, that is, out of the bowels of the Egyptians, who had, as it were, devoured them; thus the Jew-doctors gloss upon this text.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 1.*—"Israel went out of Egypt." This was an emblem of the Lord's people in effectual vocation, coming out of bondage into liberty, out of darkness into light, out of superstition, and idolatry, and profaneness, to the service of the true God in righteousness and true holiness; and from a people of strange language to those that speak the language of Canaan, a pure language, in which they can understand one another when they converse together, either about experience or doctrine; and the manner of their coming out is much the same, by strength of hand, by the power of divine grace, yet willingly and cheerfully, with great riches, the riches of grace, and a title to the riches of glory, and with much spiritual strength; for though weak in themselves, yet they are strong in Christ.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 1.*—"The house of Jacob." The Israelites though they were a great number when they went forth from Egypt, nevertheless formed one house or family; thus the church at the present time dispersed throughout the whole world is called one

house : 1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Heb. iii. 6 ; 1 Pet. ii. 5 : and that because of one faith, one God, one Father, one baptism, Ephes. iv. 5.—*Marloratus.*

*Verse 1.*—"A people of strange language." When we find in verse 1, as in Psalm lxxxi. 5, Egypt spoken of as a land where the people were of a "strange tongue," it seems likely that the reference is to their being a people who could not speak of God, as Israel could ; even as Zeph. iii. 9 tells of the "pure lip," viz. the lip that calls on the name of the Lord.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

*Verse 1.*—"A people of strange language." Mant translates this "tyrant land," and has the following note :—"The Hebrew word here rendered "tyrant," has been supposed to signify "barbarous" ; that is, "using a barbarous or foreign language or pronunciation." But, says Parkhurst, the word seems rather to refer to the "violence" of the Egyptians towards the Israelites, or "the barbarity of their behaviour," which was more to the Psalmist's purpose than "the barbarity of their language" ; even supposing the reality of the latter in the time of Moses. The epithet "barbarous" would leave the same ambiguity as Parkhurst supposes to belong to the text. Bishop Horsley renders "a tyrannical people."

*Verse 1.*—"A people of strange language." The strange language is evidently an annoyance. Israel could not feel at home in Egypt.—*Justus Olshausen.*

*Verse 2.*—"Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion." These people were God's sanctification and dominion, that is, witnesses of his holy majesty in adopting them, and of his mighty power in delivering them : or, his sanctification, as having his holy priests to govern them in the points of piety ; and dominion, as having godly magistrates ordained from above to rule them in matters of policy : or, his sanctuary, both actually, because sanctifying him ; and passively, because sanctified of him. . . . This one verse expounds and exemplifies two prime petitions of the Lord's Prayer. "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come" : for Judah was God's sanctuary, because hallowing his name ; and Israel his dominion, as desiring his kingdom to come. Let every man examine himself by this pattern, whether he be truly the servant of Jesus his Saviour, or the vassal of Satan the destroyer. If any man submit himself willingly to the domineering of the devil, and suffer sin to reign in his mortal members, obeying the lusts thereof, and working all uncleanness even with greediness ; assuredly that man is yet a chapel of Satan, and a slave to sin. On the contrary, whosoever unfeignedly desires that God's kingdom may come, being ever ready to be ruled according to his holy word, acknowledging it a lantern to his feet, and a guide to his paths ; admitting obediently his laws, and submitting himself alway to the same ; what is he, but a citizen of heaven, a subject of God, a saint, a sanctuary ?—*John Boys.*

*Verse 2.*—"Judah was his sanctuary," etc. Reader, do not fail to remark when Israel was brought out of Egypt the Lord set up his tabernacle among them, and manifested his presence to them. And what is it now, when the Lord Jesus brings out his people from the Egypt of the world ? Doth he not fulfil that sweet promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" ? Is it not the privilege of his people, to live to him, to live with him, and to live upon him ? Doth he not in every act declare, "I will say, it is my people ; and they shall say, the Lord is my God" ? Matt. xxviii. 20 ; Zech. xiii. 9.—*Robert Hawker.*

*Verse 2.*—"Judah was his sanctuary." Meaning not the tribe of Judah only, though they in many things had the pre-eminence ; the kingdom belonged to it, the chief ruler being out of it, especially the Messiah ; its standard was pitched and moved first ; it offered first to the service of the Lord ; and the Jews have a tradition, mentioned by Jarchi and Kimchi, that this tribe with its prince at the head of it, went into the Red Sea first ; the others fearing, but afterwards followed, encouraged by their example. In this place all the tribes are meant, the whole body of the people.—*John Gill.*

*Verse 2.*—One peculiarity of the second verse requires attention. It twice uses the word "his," without naming any one. There are two theories to account for this circumstance. One is that Psalm cxiv. was always sung in immediate connection with cxiii., in which the name of God occurs no less than six times, so that the continuance of the train of thought made a fresh repetition of it here unnecessary. But this view, to be fully consistent with itself, must assume that the two Psalms are really one, with a merely arbitrary division, which does not, on the face of the matter, seem by any means probable, as the scope of thought in the two is perfectly distinct. The other, which is more satisfactory, regards the omission of the Holy

Name in this part of the Psalm as a practical artifice to heighten the effect of the answer to the sudden apostrophe in verses five and six. There would be nothing marvellous in the agitation of the sea, and river, and mountains in the presence of God, but it may well appear wonderful till that potent cause is revealed, as it is most forcibly in the dignified words of the seventh verse.—*Ewald and Perowne, in Neale and Littledale.*

*Verse 3.*—“*The sea saw it*”: to wit this glorious work of God in bringing his people out of Egypt.—*Matthew Pool.*

*Verse 3.*—“*The sea saw it.*” Saw there that “*Judah*” was “*God’s sanctuary,*” “*and Israel his dominion,*” and therefore “*fled*”; for nothing could be more awful. It was this that *drove Jordan back,* and was an invincible dam to his streams; God was at the head of that people, and therefore they must give way to them, must make room for them, they must retire, contrary to their nature, when God speaks the word.—*Matthew Henry.*

*Verse 3.*—“*The sea saw it, and fled.*”

The waves on either side  
Unloose their close embraces, and divide,  
And backwards press, as in some solemn show  
The crowding people do,  
(Though just before no space was seen,)  
To let the admirèd triumph pass between.  
The wondering army saw, on either hand,  
The no less wondering waves like rocks of crystal stand.  
They marched betwixt, and boldly trod  
The secret paths of God.

*Abraham Cowley, 1618—1667.*

*Verse 3.*—“*Jordan was driven back.*” And now the glorious day was come when, by a stupendous miracle, Jehovah had determined to show how able he was to remove every obstacle in the way of his people, and to subdue every enemy before their face. By his appointment the host, amounting probably to two millions-and-a-half of persons (about the same number as had crossed the Red Sea on foot), had removed to the banks of the river three days before, and now in marching array awaited the signal to cross the stream. At any time the passage of the river by such a multitude, with their women and children, their flocks and herds, and all their baggage, would have presented formidable difficulties; but now the channel was filled with a deep and impetuous torrent, which overflowed its banks and spread widely on each side, probably extending nearly a mile in width; while in the very sight of the scene were the Canaanitish hosts, who might be expected to pour out from their gates, and exterminate the invading multitude before they could reach the shore. Yet these difficulties were nothing to Almighty power, and only served to heighten the effect of the stupendous miracle about to be wrought.

By the command of Jehovah, the priests, bearing the ark of the covenant, the sacred symbol of the Divine presence, marched more than half-a-mile in front of the people, who were forbidden to come any nearer to it. Thus it was manifest that Jehovah needed not protection from Israel, but was their guard and guide, since the unarmed priests feared not to separate themselves from the host, and to venture with the ark into the river in the face of their enemies. And thus the army, standing aloof, had a better opportunity of seeing the wondrous results, and of admiring the mighty power of God exerted on their behalf; for no sooner had the feet of the priests touched the brim of the overflowing river, than the swelling waters receded from them; and not only the broad lower valley, but even the deep bed of the stream was presently emptied of water, and its pebbly bottom became dry. The waters which had been in the channel speedily ran off, and were lost in the Dead Sea; whilst those which would naturally have replaced them from above, were miraculously suspended, and accumulated in a glassy heap far above the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan. These places are supposed to have been at least forty miles above the Dead Sea, and may possibly have been much more; so that nearly the whole channel of the Lower Jordan, from a little below the Lake of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, was dry. . . . What a glorious termination of the long pilgrimage of Israel was this! and how worthy of the power, wisdom, and goodness of their Divine Protector! “*The passage of this deep and*

rapid river," remarks Dr. Hales, "at the most unfavourable season, was more manifestly miraculous, if possible, than that of the Red Sea; because here was no natural agency whatever employed; no mighty wind to sweep a passage, as in the former case; no reflux of the tide, on which minute philosophers might fasten to depreciate the miracle. It seems, therefore, to have been providentially designed to silence cavils respecting the former; and it was done at noon-day, in the face of the sun, and in the presence, we may be sure, of the neighbouring inhabitants, and struck terror into the kings of the Canaanites and Amorites westward of the river."—*Philip Henry Gosse, in "Sacred Streams," 1877.*

Verse 3.—"*Jordan was driven back.*" The waters know their Maker: that Jordan which flowed with full streams when Christ went into it to be baptized, now gives way when the same God must pass through it in state: then there was use of his water, now of his sand. I hear no more news of any rod to strike the waters; the presence of the ark of the Lord God, Lord of all the world, is sign enough to these waves, which now, as if a sinew were broken, run back to their issues, and dare not so much as wet the feet of the priests that bare it. How subservient are all the creatures to the God that made them! How glorious a God do we serve; whom all the powers of the heavens and elements are willingly subject unto, and gladly take that nature which he pleaseth to give them.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 3.—"*Jordan was driven back.*" It was probably at the point near the present southern fords, crossed at the time of the Christian era by a bridge. The river was at its usual state of flood at the spring of the year, so as to fill the whole of the bed, up to the margin of the jungle with which the river banks are lined. On the broken edge of the swollen stream, the band of priests stood with the ark on their shoulders. At the distance of nearly a mile in the rear was the mass of the army. Suddenly the full bed of the Jordan was dried before them. High up the river, "far, far away," "in Adam, the city which is beside Zaretan," "as far as the parts of Kirjath-jearim" (Josh. iii. 16), that is, at a distance of thirty miles from the place of the Israelite encampment, the waters there stood which "descended" "from the heights above,"—stood and rose up, as if gathered into a waterskin; as if in a barrier or heap, as if congealed; and those that "descended" towards the sea of "the desert," the salt Sea, "failed and were cut off." Thus the scene presented is of the "descending stream" (the words employed seem to have a special reference to that peculiar and most significant name of the "Jordan"), not parted asunder, as we generally fancy, but, as the Psalm expresses it, "turned backwards"; the whole bed of the river left dry from north to south, through its long windings; the huge stones lying bare here and there, imbedded in the soft bottom; or the shingly pebbles drifted along the course of the channel.—*Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, in "The History of the Jewish Church," 1870.*

Verse 4.—"*The mountains skipped like rams,*" etc. The figure drawn from the lambs and rams would appear to be inferior to the magnitude of the subject. But it was the prophet's intention to express in the homeliest way the incredible manner in which God, on these occasions, displayed his power. The stability of the earth being, as it were, founded on the mountains, what connection can they have with rams and lambs, that they should be agitated, skipping hither and thither? In speaking in this homely style, he does not mean to detract from the greatness of the miracle, but more forcibly to engrave these extraordinary tokens of God's power on the illiterate.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 4.—"*Skipped.*" A poetic description of the concussion caused by the thunder and lightning that accompanied the divine presence.—*James G. Murphy.*

Verse 4.—At the giving of the law at Sinai, Horeb and the mountains around, both great and small, shook with a sudden and mighty earthquake, like rams leaping in a grassy plain, with the young sheep frisking round them.—*Plain Commentary.*

Verses 4—6.—When Christ descends upon the soul in the work of conversion, what strength doth he put forth! The strongholds of sin are battered down, every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ is brought into captivity to the obedience of his sceptre, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Devils are cast out of the possession which they have kept for many years without the least disturbance. Strong lusts are mortified and the very constitution of the soul is changed. "*What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fellest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams?*" etc. The prophet speaks those words of the powerful entrance of the children of Israel into Canaan. The like is done by Christ in the

conversion of a sinner. Jordan is driven back, the whole course of the soul is altered, the mountains skip like rams. There are many mountains in the soul of a sinner, as pride, unbelief, self-conceitedness, atheism, profaneness, etc. These mountains are plucked up by the roots in a moment when Christ begins the work of conversion.—*Ralph Robinson.*

Verse 5.—

Fly where thou wilt, O sea !  
And Jordan's current cease !  
Jordan, there is no need of thee,  
For at God's word, whene'er he please,  
The rocks shall weep new waters forth instead of these.

*Abraham Cowley.*

Verses 5, 6.—A singular animation and an almost dramatic force are given to the poem by the beautiful apostrophe in verses 5, 6, and the effect of this is heightened in a remarkable degree by the use of the present tenses. The awe and the trembling of nature are a spectacle on which the poet is looking. The parted sea through which Israel walks as on dry land, the rushing Jordan arrested in its course, the granite cliffs of Sinai shaken to their base—he sees it all, and asks in wonder what it means?—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verses 5, 6.—This questioning teaches us that we should ourselves consider and inquire concerning the reason of those things, which we see to have been done in a wondrous way, out of the course of nature. There are signs in the sun, moon, stars, heaven, etc., concerning which Christ has spoken. Let us inquire the reason why they are, that we be not stupid and inaccurate spectators. The things which are done miraculously do speak : and they can give answer why they are done. Nay, rather, portents, signs, earthquakes, extraordinary appearances are loud-speaking, and they declare from themselves what they are : namely, that they are prophetic of the anger and future vengeance of God. Such inquiry as this is not prying curiosity, but is pious and useful, working to this end, that we become observant of the judgments of God, with which he visits this world, and yield ourselves to his grace, and so we escape the coming vengeance.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verses 5, 6.—

What ails thee, sea, to part,  
Thee, Jordan, back to start ?  
Ye mountains, like the rams to leap,  
Ye little hills, like sheep ?

*John Keble.*

Verse 7.—“*Tremble, thou earth.*” Hebrew, *Be in pain*, as a travelling woman ; for if the giving of the law had such dreadful effects, what should the breaking thereof have?—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—

“At the presence of the Lord be in pangs, O earth.”

“*Lord,*” *Adon*, the Sovereign Ruler. “*Pangs,*” *Chuli* : Mic. iv. 10. The convulsions of nature, which accompanied the Exodus, were as the birth-throes of the Israelite people. “A nation was born in a day.” But the deliverance out of Babylon saw the prelude to a far more wondrous truth ;—that of him, in whom nature was to be regenerated.—*William Kay.*

Verses 7, 8.—“*Tremble,*” etc. This is an answer to the preceding question : as if he had said, It is no wonder that Sinai, and Horeb, and a few adjoining hills should tremble at the majestic presence of God ; for the whole earth must do so, whenever he pleases.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 8.—“*Which turned the rock into a standing water.*” *Into a pool.* The divine poet represents the very substance of the rock as being converted into water, not literally, but poetically ; thus ornamenting his sketch of the wondrous power displayed on this occasion.—*William Walford.*

Verse 8.—The remarkable rock in Sinai which tradition regards as the one which Moses smote, is at least well chosen in regard to its situation, whatever opinion we may form of the truth of that tradition, which it seems to be the disposition of late travellers to regard with more respect than was formerly entertained. It is an isolated mass of granite, nearly twenty feet square and high, with its base



concealed in the earth—we are left to conjecture to what depth. In the face of the rock are a number of horizontal fissures, at unequal distances from each other; some near the top, and others at a little distance from the surface of the ground. An American traveller\* says: "The colour and whole appearance of the rock are such that, if seen elsewhere, and disconnected from all traditions, no one would hesitate to believe that they had been produced by water flowing from these fissures. I think it would be extremely difficult to form these fissures or produce these appearances by art. It is not less difficult to believe that a natural fountain should flow at the height of a dozen feet out of the face of an isolated rock. Believing, as I do, that the water was brought out of a rock belonging to this mountain, I can see nothing incredible in the opinion that this is the identical rock, and that these fissures, and the other appearances, should be regarded as evidences of the fact."—*John Kitto*.

*Verse 8.*—*Shall the hard rock be turned into a standing water, and the flint-stone into a springing well?* and shall not our hard and flinty hearts, in consideration of our own miseries, and God's unspeakable mercies in delivering us from evil, (if not gush forth into fountains of tears) express so much as a little *standing water* in our eyes? It is our hard heart indeed, *quod nec compunctione scinditur, nec pietate mollitur, nec movetur precibus, minis non cedit, flagellis duratur,† etc.* O Lord, touch thou the mountains and they shall smoke, touch our lips with a coal from thine altar, and our mouth shall show forth thy praise. Smite, Lord, our flinty hearts as hard as the nether millstone, with the hammer of thy word, and mollify them also with the drops of thy mercies and dew of thy Spirit; make them humble, fleshy, flexible, circumcised, soft, obedient, new, clean, broken, and then "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise." Ps. li. 17. "O Lord my God, give me grace from the very bottom of my heart to desire thee; in desiring, to seek thee; in seeking, to find; in finding, to love thee; in loving, utterly to loathe my former wickedness;" that living in thy fear, and dying in thy favour, when I have passed through this Egypt and wilderness of this world, I may possess the heavenly Canaan and happy land of promise, prepared for all such as love thy coming, even for every Christian one, which is thy "*dominion*" and "*sanctuary.*"‡—*John Boys*.

*Verse 8.*—The same almighty power that turned waters into a rock to be a wall to Israel (Exod. xiv. 22), turned the rock into waters to be a well to Israel. As they were protected, so they were provided for, by miracles, standing miracles; for such was the standing water, that fountain of waters, into which the rock, the flinty rock, was turned, "and that rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4. For he is a fountain of living waters to his Israel, from whom they receive grace for grace.—*Matthew Henry*.

*Verse 8.*—"*The flint into a fountain of waters.*" The causing of water to gush forth out of the flinty rock is a practical proof of unlimited omnipotence and of the grace which converts death into life. Let the earth then tremble before the Lord, the God of Jacob. It has always trembled before him, and before him let it tremble. For that which he has been he still ever is; and as he came once he will come again.—*Franz Delitzsch*

#### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verses 1, 2.*—The time of first delivery from sin a season notable for the peculiar presence of God.

*Verses 1, 2.*—The Lord was to his people—I. A deliverer. II. A priest—"his sanctuary." III. A king—"his dominion."

*Verses 1, 7.*—"The house of Jacob" and "the God of Jacob," the relation between the two.

*Verse 2.*—The church the temple of sanctity and the domain of obedience.

\* Dr. Olin.

† Bernard.

‡ Augustine.

*Verse 3.*—The impenitence of sinners rebuked by the inanimate creation.

*Verse 3.*—“Jordan was driven back,” or death overcome.

*Verse 4.*—The movableness of things which appear to be fixed and settled. God's power of creating a stir in lethargic minds, among ancient systems, and prejudiced persons of the highest rank.

*Verses 7, 8.*—Holy awe. I. Should be caused by the fact of the divine presence. Should be increased by his covenant character—“the God of Jacob.” III. Should culminate when we see displays of his grace towards his people—“which turned,” etc. IV. Should become universal.

*Verse 8.*—Wonders akin to the miracle at the rock. I. Christ's death the source of life. II. Adversity a means of prosperity. III. Hard hearts made penitent. IV. Barrenness of soul turned into abundance.

*Verse 8.*—Divine supplies. 1. Sure—for he will fetch them even from a rock. 2. Plentiful—“a mere or standing water.” 3. Continual “fountain of waters.” 4. Instructive. Should create in us holy awe at the power, etc., of the Lord.