

PSALM CXV.

SUBJECT.—In the former Psalm the past wonders which God had wrought were recounted to his honour, and in the present Psalm he is entreated to glorify himself again, because the heathen were presuming upon the absence of miracles, were altogether denying the miracles of former ages, and insulting the people of God with the question, "Where is now their God?" It grieved the heart of the godly that Jehovah should be thus dishonoured, and treating their own condition of reproach as unworthy of notice, they beseech the Lord at least to vindicate his own name. The Psalmist is evidently indignant that the worshippers of foolish idols should be able to put such a taunting question to the people who worshipped the only living and true God; and having spent his indignation in sarcasm upon the images and their makers, he proceeds to exhort the house of Israel to trust in God and bless his name. As those who were dead and gone could no longer sing Psalms unto the Lord among the sons of men, he exhorts the faithful who were then living to take care that God is not robbed of his praise, and then he closes with an exulting Hallelujah. Should not living men extol the living God?

DIVISION.—For the better expounding of it, the Psalm may be divided into an entreaty of God to vindicate his own honour, verses 1, 2; a contemptuous description of the false gods and their worshippers, 3—8; an exhortation to the faithful to trust in God and to expect great blessings from him, 9—15; an explanation of God's relationship to their present condition of things, verse 16; and a reminder that, notwithstanding the dead, but the living, must continually praise God here below, 17, 18.

EXPOSITION.

NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?

1. It will be well to remember that this Psalm was sung at the Passover, and therefore it bears relationship to the deliverance from Egypt. The burden of it seems to be a prayer that the living God, who had been so glorious at the Red Sea and at the Jordan, should again for his name's sake display the wonders of his power. "Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." The people undoubtedly wished for relief from the contemptuous insults of idolaters, but their main desire was that Jehovah himself should no longer be the object of heathen insults. The saddest part of all their trouble was that their God was no longer feared and dreaded by their adversaries. When Israel marched into Canaan, a terror was upon all the people round about, because of Jehovah, the mighty God; but this dread the nations had shaken off since there had been of late no remarkable display of miraculous power. Therefore Israel cried unto her God that he would again make bare his arm as in the day when he cut Rahab and wounded the dragon. The prayer is evidently tinged with a consciousness of unworthiness; because of their past unfaithfulness they hardly dared to appeal to the covenant, and to ask blessings for themselves, but they fell back upon the honour of the Lord their God—an old style of argument which their great lawgiver, Moses, had used with such effect when he pleaded, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people." Joshua also used the like argument when he said, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" In such manner also let us pray when no other plea is available because of our sense of sin; for the Lord is always jealous of his honour, and will work for his name's sake when no other motive will move him.

The repetition of the words, "Not unto us," would seem to indicate a very serious desire to renounce any glory which they might at any time have proudly appropriated to themselves, and it also sets forth the vehemence of their wish that God would at any cost to them magnify his own name. They loathed the idea of seeking

their own glory, and rejected the thought with the utmost detestation; again and again disclaiming any self-glorifying motive in their supplication. "*For thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*" These attributes seemed most in jeopardy. How could the heathen think Jehovah to be a merciful God if he gave his people over to the hands of their enemies? How could they believe him to be faithful and true if, after all his solemn covenant engagements, he utterly rejected his chosen nation? God is very jealous of the two glorious attributes of grace and truth, and the plea that these may not be dishonoured has great weight with him. In these times, when the first victories of the gospel are only remembered as histories of a dim and distant past, sceptics are apt to boast that the gospel has lost its youthful strength and they even presume to cast a slur upon the name of God himself. We may therefore rightly entreat the divine interposition that the apparent blot may be removed from his escutcheon, and that his own word may shine forth gloriously as in the days of old. We may not desire the triumph of our opinions, for our own sakes, or for the honour of a sect, but we may confidently pray for the triumph of truth, that God himself may be honoured.

2. "*Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*" Or, more literally, "Where, pray, is their God?" Why should the nations be allowed with a sneer of contempt to question the existence, and mercy, and faithfulness of Jehovah? They are always ready to blaspheme; we may well pray that they may not derive a reason for so doing from the course of providence, or the decline of the church. When they see the godly down-trodden while they themselves live at ease, and act the part of persecutors, they are very apt to speak as if they had triumphed over God himself, or as if he had altogether left the field of action and deserted his saints. When the prayers and tears of the godly seem to be unregarded, and their miseries are rather increased than assuaged, then do the wicked multiply their taunts and jeers, and even argue that their own wretched irreligion is better than the faith of Christians, because for the present their condition is so much preferable to that of the afflicted saints. And, truly, this is the very sting of the trials of God's chosen when they see the veracity of the Lord questioned, and the name of God profaned because of their sufferings. If they could hope that some good result would come out of all this they would endure it with patience; but as they are unable to perceive any desirable result consequent thereon, they enquire with holy anxiety, "Wherefore should the heathen be permitted to speak thus?" It is a question to which it would be hard to reply, and yet no doubt there is an answer. Sometimes the nations are permitted thus to blaspheme, in order that they may fill up the measure of their iniquity, and in order that the subsequent interposition of God may be rendered the more illustrious in contrast with their profane boastings. Do they say, "Where is now their God?" They shall know by-and-by, for it is written, "Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries"; they shall know it also when the righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Do they say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" That coming shall be speedy and terrible to them. In our own case, by our own lukewarmness and the neglect of faithful gospel preaching, we have permitted the uprising and spread of modern doubt, and we are bound to confess it with deep sorrow of soul; yet we may not therefore lose heart, but may still plead with God to save his own truth and grace from the contempt of men of the world. Our honour and the honour of the church are small matters, but the glory of God is the jewel of the universe, of which all else is but the setting; and we may come to the Lord and plead his jealousy for his name, being well assured that he will not suffer that name to be dishonoured. Wherefore should the pretended wise men of the period be permitted to say that they doubt the personality of God? Wherefore should they say that answers to prayer are pious delusions, and that the resurrection and the deity of our Lord Jesus are moot points? Wherefore should they be permitted to speak disparagingly of atonement by blood and by price, and reject utterly the doctrine of the wrath of God against sin, even that wrath which burneth for ever and ever? They speak exceeding proudly, and only God can stop their arrogant blusterings: let us by extraordinary intercession prevail upon him to interpose, by giving to his gospel such a triumphant vindication as shall utterly silence the perverse opposition of ungodly men.

3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not : eyes have they, but they see not :

6 They have ears, but they hear not : noses have they, but they smell not :

7 They have hands, but they handle not : feet have they, but they walk not : neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them ; *so is every one that trusteth in them.*

3. "*But our God is in the heavens*"—where he should be ; above the reach of mortal sneers, over-hearing all the vain janglings of men, but looking down with silent scorn upon the makers of the babel. Supreme above all opposing powers, the Lord reigneth upon a throne high and lifted up. Incomprehensible in essence, he rises above the loftiest thought of the wise ; absolute in will and infinite in power, he is superior to the limitations which belong to earth and time. This God is *our God*, and we are not ashamed to own him, albeit he may not work miracles at the beck and call of every vain-glorious boaster who may choose to challenge him. Once they bade his Son come down from the cross and they would believe in him, now they would have God overstep the ordinary bounds of his providence and come down from heaven to convince them : but other matters occupy his august mind besides the conviction of those who wilfully shut their eyes to the super-abundant evidences of his divine power and Godhead, which are all around them. If our God be neither seen nor heard, and is not to be worshipped under any outward symbol, yet is he none the less real and true, for he is where his adversaries can never be—in the heavens, whence he stretches forth his sceptre, and rules with boundless power.

"*He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" Up till this moment his decrees have been fulfilled, and his eternal purposes accomplished ; he has not been asleep, nor oblivious of the affairs of men ; he has worked, and he has worked effectually, none have been able to thwart, nor even so much as to hinder him. "Whatsoever he hath pleased" : however distasteful to his enemies, the Lord has accomplished all his good pleasure without difficulty ; even when his adversaries raved and raged against him they have been compelled to carry out his designs against their will. Even proud Pharaoh, when most defiant of the Lord was but as clay upon the potter's wheel, and the Lord's end and design in him were fully answered. We may well endure the jeering question, "Where is now their God ?" while we are perfectly sure that his providence is undisturbed, his throne unshaken, and his purposes unchanged. What he hath done he will yet do, his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure, and at the end of the great drama of human history, the omnipotence of God and his immutability and faithfulness will be more than vindicated to the eternal confusion of his adversaries.

4. "*Their idols are silver and gold.*" mere dead inert matter ; at the best only made of precious metal, but that metal quite as powerless as the commonest wood or clay. The value of the idol shows the folly of the maker in wasting his substance, but certainly does not increase the power of the image, since there is no more life in silver and gold than in brass or iron. "*The work of men's hands.*" Inasmuch as the maker is always greater than the thing that he has made, these idols are less to be honoured than the artificers, who fashioned them. How irrational that men should adore that which is less than themselves ! How strange that a man should think that he can make a god ! Can madness go further ? Our God is a spirit, and his hands made the heavens and the earth : well may we worship him, and we need not be disturbed at the sneering question of those who are so insane as to refuse to adore the living God, and yet bow their knees before images of their own carving. We may make an application of all this to the times in which we are now living. The god of modern thought is the creation of the thinker himself, evolved out of his own consciousness, or fashioned according to his own notion of what a god should be. Now, it is evident that such a being is no God. It is impossible that there should be a God at all except the God of revelation. A god who can be fashioned by our own thoughts is no more a god than the image manufactured or produced by our own hands. The true God must of necessity be his own

revealer. It is clearly impossible that a being who can be excogitated and comprehended by the reason of man should be the infinite and incomprehensible God. Their idols are blinded reason and diseased thought, the product of men's muddled brains, and they will come to nought.

5. "*They have mouths, but they speak not.*" The idols cannot utter even the faintest sound, they cannot communicate with their worshippers, they can neither promise nor threaten, command nor console, explain the past nor prophesy the future. If they had no mouths they might not be expected to speak, but having mouths and speaking not, they are mere dumb idols, and not worthy to be compared with the Lord God who thundered at Sinai, who in old time spake by his servants the prophets, and whose voice even now breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. "*Eyes have they, but they see not.*" They cannot tell who their worshippers may be or what they offer. Certain idols have had jewels in their eyes more precious than a king's ransom, but they were as blind as the rest of the fraternity. A god who has eyes, and cannot see, is a blind deity; and blindness is a calamity, and not an attribute of godhead. He must be very blind who worships a blind god: we pity a blind man, it is strange to worship a blind image.

6. "*They have ears, but they hear not.*" The Psalmist might have pointed to the monstrous ears with which some heathen deities are disfigured,—truly they have ears; but no prayer of their votaries, though shouted by a million voices, can ever be heard by them. How can gold and silver hear, and how can a rational being address petitions to one who cannot even hear his words? "*Noses have they, but they smell not.*" The Psalmist seems to heap together these sentences with something of the grim sardonic spirit of Elijah when he said, "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." In sacred scorn he mocks at those who burn sweet spices, and fill their temples with clouds of smoke, all offered to an image whose nose cannot perceive the perfume. He seems to point his finger to every part of the countenance of the image, and thus pours contempt upon the noblest part of the idol, if any part of such a thing can be noble even in the least degree.

7. "*They have hands, but they handle not.*" Looking lower down upon the images, the Psalmist says, "They have hands, but they handle not," they cannot receive that which is handed to them, they cannot grasp the sceptre of power or the sword of vengeance, they can neither distribute benefits nor dispense judgments, and the most trifling act they are utterly unable to perform. An infant's hand excels them in power. "*Feet have they, but they walk not.*" They must be lifted into their places or they would never reach their shrines; they must be fastened in their shrines or they would fall; they must be carried or they could never move; they cannot come to the rescue of their friends, nor escape the iconoclasm of their foes. The meanest insect has more power of locomotion than the greatest heathen god. "*Neither speak they through their throat.*" They cannot even reach so far as the guttural noise of the lowest order of beasts; neither a grunt, nor a growl, nor a groan, nor so much as a mutter, can come from them. Their priests asserted that the images of the gods upon special occasions uttered hollow sounds, but it was a mere pretence, or a crafty artifice: images of gold or silver are incapable of living sounds. Thus has the Psalmist surveyed the idol from head to foot, looked in its face, and sounded its throat, and he writes it down as utterly contemptible.

8. "*They that make them are like unto them.*" Those who make such things for worship are as stupid, senseless, and irrational as the figures they construct. So far as any spiritual life, thought, and judgment are concerned, they are rather the images of men than rational beings. The censure is by no means too severe. Who has not found the words leaping to his lips when he has seen the idols of the Romanists? "*So is every one that trusteth in them.*" Those who have sunk so low as to be capable of confiding in idols have reached the extreme of folly, and are worthy of as much contempt as their detestable deities. Luther's hard speeches were well deserved by the Papists; they must be mere dolts to worship the rotten relics which are the objects of their veneration.

The god of modern thought exceedingly resembles the deities described in this Psalm. Pantheism is wondrously akin to Polytheism, and yet differs very little from Atheism. The god manufactured by our great thinkers is a mere abstraction: he has no eternal purposes, he does not interpose on the behalf of his people, he cares but very little as to how much man sins, for he has given to the initiated "a

larger hope" by which the most incorrigible are to be restored. He is what the last set of critics chooses to make him, he has said what they choose to say, and he will do what they please to prescribe. Let this creed and its devotees alone, and they will work out their own refutation, for as now their god is fashioned like themselves, they will by degrees fashion themselves like their god; and when the principles of justice, law, and order shall have all been effectually sapped we may possibly witness in some form of socialism, similar to that which is so sadly spreading in Germany, a repetition of the evils which have in former ages befallen nations which have refused the living God, and set up gods of their own.

9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD : he *is* their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD : he *is* their help and their shield.

11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD : he *is* their help and their shield,

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us : he will bless *us* ; he will bless the house of Israel ; he will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

15 Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

9. "*O Israel, trust thou in the LORD.*" Whatever others do, let the elect of heaven keep fast to the God who chose them. Jehovah is the God of Jacob, let his children prove their loyalty to their God by their confidence in him. Whatever our trouble may be, and however fierce the blasphemous language of our enemies, let us not fear nor falter, but confidently rest in him who is able to vindicate his own honour, and protect his own servants. "*He is their help and their shield.*" He is the friend of his servants, both actively and passively, giving them both aid in labour and defence in danger. In the use of the pronoun "their," the Psalmist may have spoken to himself, in a sort of soliloquy : he had given the exhortation, "trust in Jehovah," and then he whispers to himself, "They may well do so, for he is at all times the strength and security of his servants."

10. "*O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD.*" You who are nearest to him, trust him most ; your very calling is connected with his truth and is meant to declare his glory, therefore never entertain a doubt concerning him, but lead the way in holy confidence. The priests were the leaders, teachers, and exemplars of the people, and therefore above all others they should place an unreserved reliance upon Israel's God. The Psalmist is glad to add that they did so, for he says, "*He is their help and their shield.*" It is good to exhort those to faith who have faith : "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; . . . that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." We may stir up pure minds by way of remembrance, and exhort men to trust in the Lord because we know that they are trusting already.

11. The next verse is of the same tenor—"Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD," whether belonging to Israel, or to the house of Aaron, or not, all those who reverence Jehovah are permitted and commanded to confide in him. "*He is their help and their shield.*" He does aid and protect all those who worship him in filial fear, to whatever nation they may belong. No doubt these repeated exhortations were rendered necessary by the trying condition in which the children of Israel were found : the sneers of the adversary would assail all the people, they would most bitterly be felt by the priests and ministers, and those who were secret proselytes would groan in secret under the contempt forced upon their religion and their God. All this would be very staggering to faith, and therefore they were bidden again and again and again to trust in Jehovah.

This must have been a very pleasant song to households in Babylon, or far away in Persia, when they met together in the night to eat the Paschal supper in a land which knew them not, where they wept as they remembered Zion. We seem to hear them repeating the three-fold word, "Trust in Jehovah," men and women and little children singing out their scorn of the dominant idolatry, and declaring their adhesion to the one God of Israel. In the same manner in this day of blasphemy and rebuke it becomes us all to abound in testimonies to the truth of God. The sceptic is loud in his unbelief, let us be equally open in the avowal of our faith.

12. "*The LORD hath been mindful of us,*" or "*Jehovah hath remembered us.*" His past mercies prove that we are on his heart, and though for the present he may afflict us, yet he does not forget us. We have not to put him in remembrance as though he found it hard to recollect his children, but he hath remembered us and therefore he will in future deal well with us. "*He will bless us.*" The word "*us*" is supplied by the translators, and is superfluous, the passage should run, "*He will bless; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.*" The repetition of the word "*bless*" adds great effect to the passage. The Lord has many blessings, each one worthy to be remembered, he blesses and blesses and blesses again. Where he has once bestowed his favour he continues it; his blessing delights to visit the same house very often and to abide where it has once lodged. Blessing does not impoverish the Lord: he has multiplied his mercies in the past, and he will pour them forth thick and threefold in the future. He will have a general blessing for all who fear him, a peculiar blessing for the whole house of Israel, and a double blessing for the sons of Aaron. It is his nature to bless, it is his prerogative to bless, it is his glory to bless, it is his delight to bless; he has promised to bless, and therefore be sure of this, that he will bless and bless and bless without ceasing.

13. "*He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.*" So long as a man fears the Lord it matters nothing whether he be prince or peasant, patriarch or pauper, God will assuredly bless him. He supplies the want of every living thing, from the leviathan of the sea to the insect upon a leaf, and he will suffer none of the godly to be forgotten, however small their abilities, or mean their position. This is a sweet cordial for those who are little in faith, and own themselves to be mere babes in the family of grace. There is the same blessing for the least saint as for the greatest; yea, if anything, the "*small*" shall be first; for as the necessity is the more pressing, the supply shall be the more speedy.

14. "*The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.*" Just as in Egypt he multiplied the people exceedingly, so will he increase the number of his saints upon the earth; not only shall the faithful be blessed with converts, and so with a spiritual seed; but those who are their spiritual children shall become fruitful also, and thus the multitude of the elect shall be accomplished; God shall increase the people, and shall increase the joy. Even to the end of the ages the race of true believers shall be continued, and shall growingly multiply in number and in power. The first blessing upon mankind was, "*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*"; and it is this blessing which God now pronounces upon them that fear him. Despite the idols of philosophy and sacramentarianism, the truth shall gather its disciples, and fill the land with its defenders.

15. "*Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.*" This is another form of the blessing of Melchizedek: "*Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth*"; and upon us through our great Melchizedek this same benediction rests. It is an omnipotent blessing, conveying to us all that an Almighty God can do, whether in heaven or on earth. This fulness is infinite, and the consolation which it brings is unailing; he that made heaven and earth can give us all things while we dwell below, and bring us safely to his palace above. Happy are the people upon whom such a blessing rests; their portion is infinitely above that of those whose only hope lies in a piece of gilded wood, or an image of sculptured stone.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

16. "*The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S.*" There he specially reigns, and manifests his greatness and his glory: "*but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*" He hath left the world during the present dispensation in a great measure under the power and will of men, so that things are not here below in the same perfect order as the things which are above. It is true the Lord rules over all things by his providence, but yet he allows and permits men to break his laws and persecute his people for the time being, and to set up their dumb idols in opposition to him. The free agency which he gave to his creatures necessitated that in some degree he should restrain his power and suffer the children of men to follow their own devices; yet nevertheless, since he has not vacated heaven, he is still master of earth, and can at any time gather up all the reins into his own hands. Perhaps,

however, the passage is meant to have another meaning, viz., that God will increase his people, because he has given the earth to them, and intends that they shall fill it. Man was constituted originally God's vicegerent over the world, and though so yet we see not all things put under him, we see Jesus exalted on high, and in him the children of men shall receive a loftier dominion even on earth than as yet they have known. "The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace": and our Lord Jesus shall reign amongst his ancients gloriously. All this will reflect the exceeding glory of him who reveals himself personally in heaven, and in the mystical body of Christ below. The earth belongs to the sons of God, and we are bound to subdue it for our Lord Jesus, for he must reign. The Lord hath given him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

17 The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

17. "*The dead praise not the LORD*"—so far as this world is concerned. They cannot unite in the Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with which the church delights to adore her Lord. The preacher cannot magnify the Lord from his coffin, nor the Christian worker further manifest the power of divine grace by daily activity while he lies in the grave. "*Neither any that go down into silence.*" The tomb sends forth no voice; from mouldering bones and flesh-consuming worms there arises no sound of gospel ministry nor of gracious song. One by one the singers in the consecrated choir of saints steal away from us, and we miss their music. Thank God, they have gone above to swell the harmonies of the skies, but as far as we are concerned, we have need to sing all the more earnestly because so many songsters have left our choirs.

18. "*But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.*" We who are still living will take care that the praises of God shall not fail among the sons of men. Our afflictions and depressions of spirit shall not cause us to suspend our praises; neither shall old age, and increasing infirmities damp the celestial fires, nay, nor shall even death itself cause us to cease from the delightful occupation. The spiritually dead cannot praise God, but the life within us constrains us to do so. The ungodly may abide in silence, but we will lift up our voices to the praise of Jehovah. Even though for a time he may work no miracle, and we may see no peculiar interposition of his power, yet on the strength of what he has done in ages past we will continue to laud his name "until the day break, and the shadows flee away," when he shall once more shine forth as the sun to gladden the faces of his children. The present time is auspicious for commencing a life of praise, since to-day he bids us hear his voice of mercy. "From this time forth" is the suggestion of wisdom, for this duty ought not to be delayed; and it is the dictate of gratitude, for there are pressing reasons for prompt thankfulness. Once begin praising God and we have entered upon an endless service. Even eternity cannot exhaust the reasons why God should be glorified. "*Praise the LORD,*" or Hallelujah. Though the dead cannot, and the wicked will not, and the careless do not praise God, yet we will shout "Hallelujah" for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Several manuscripts and editions, also the Septuagint, the Syriac, and many of the old translators join this Psalm to the preceding, and make one of them. But the argument and the arrangement of the two Psalms do not allow of the least doubt as to their original independence of each other.—*Justus Olshausen.*

Verse 1.—"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." The Psalmist, by this repetition, implies our natural tendency to self-idolatry, and to magnifying of ourselves, and the difficulty of cleansing our hearts from these self-reflections. If it be angelical to refuse an undue glory stolen from God's throne,

Rev. xxii. 8, 9; it is diabolical to accept and cherish it. "To seek our own glory is not glory," Prov. xxv. 27. It is vile, and the dishonour of a creature, who, by the law of his creation, is referred to another end. So much as we sacrifice to our own credit, to the dexterity of our hands, or the sagacity of our wit, we detract from God.—*Stephen Charnock*.

Verse 1.—"Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory," etc. This is not a doxology, or form of thanksgiving, but a prayer. Not for our safety or welfare, so much as for thy glory, be pleased to deliver us. Not to satisfy our revenge upon our adversaries; not for the establishment of our own interest; but for the glory of thy grace and truth do we seek thine aid, that thou mayest be known to be a God keeping covenant; for mercy and truth are the two pillars of that covenant. It is a great dishonouring of God when anything is sought from him more than himself, or not for himself. Saith Austin, it is but a carnal affection in prayer when men seek self more than God. Self and God are the two things that come in competition. Now there are several sorts of self; there is carnal self, natural self, and glorified self; above all these God must have the pre-eminence.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 1.—There are many sweet and precious texts of Scripture which are so endeared, and have become so habituated to us, and we to them, that one cannot but think we must carry them with us to heaven, and that they will form not only the theme of our song, but a portion of our blessedness and joy even in that happy home. . . . But if there be one text which more especially belongs to all, and which must, I think, break forth from every redeemed one as he enters heaven, and form the unwearied theme of eternity, it is the first verse of this Psalm. I am sure that not one of the Lord's chosen ones on earth, as he reviews the way by which he has been led, as he sees enemy after enemy prostrate before his utter feebleness, and has such thorough evidence and conviction that his weakness is made perfect in the Lord's strength, but must, from the very ground of his heart, say, "*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name*" be the praise and the glory ascribed. And could we see heaven opened—could we hear its glad and glorious hallelujahs—could we see its innumerable company of angels, and its band of glorified saints, as they cast their crowns before the throne, we should hear as the universal chorus from every lip, "*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*" I know not why this should not be as gladly and as gratefully the angel's song as the song of the redeemed: they stand not in their own might nor power,—they kept not their first estate through any inherent strength of their own, but, like their feebler brethren of the human race, are equally "kept by the power of God"; and from their ranks, I doubt not, is re-echoed the same glorious strain, "*Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*" Even our blessed Lord, as on that night of sorrow he sung this hymn of praise, could truly say, in that nature which had sinned, and which was to suffer, "Not unto us,"—not unto man, be ascribed the glory of this great salvation, which I am now with my own blood to purchase, but unto thy name and thy love be the praise given.—*Barton Bouchier*.

Verse 1.—"Non nobis, Domine, sed tibi sit gloria." A part of the Latin version of this Psalm is frequently sung after grace at public dinners, but why we can hardly imagine, except it be for fear that donors should be proud of the guineas they have promised, or gourmands should be vainglorious under the influence of their mighty feeding.—*C. H. S.*

Verses 1, 2.—He, in a very short space, assigns three reasons why God should seek the glory of his name in preserving his people. First, because he is merciful; secondly, because he is true and faithful in observing his promise; thirdly, that the Gentiles may not see God's people in a state of destitution, and find cause for blaspheming him or them. He therefore says, "*for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake,*" show thy glory, or give glory to thy name, for it is then thy glory will be exhibited when thou showest mercy to thy people; and then thou wilt have carried out the truth of the promise which thou hast made to our fathers. "*Lest the Gentiles should say, Where is their God?*" lest the incredulous Gentiles should get an occasion of detracting from thy power, and, perhaps, of ignoring thy very existence.—*Robert Bellarmine*.

Verses 2, 3.—If God be everywhere, why doth Christ teach us to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven"? And when the heathen made that scoffing demand, "*Where is now their God?*" why did David answer, "*Our God is in the heavens?*"?

To these and all other texts of like import we may answer; *heaven* is not there spoken of as bounding the presence of God, but as guiding the faith and hope of man. "In the morning" (saith David, Ps. v. 3) "will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." When the eye hath no sight of any help on earth, then faith may have the clearest vision of it in heaven. And while God appears so little in any gracious dispensation for his people on earth, that the enemy begins to scoff, "Where is now their God?" then his people have recourse by faith to heaven, where the Lord not only is, but is glorious in his appearances. From whence as he the better seeth how it is with us, so he seems to have a position of advantage for relieving us.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verses 2—8.—Contrast Jehovah with any other God. Why should the heathen say, "Where, pray, (*) is your God?" Take up Moses' brief description in Deut. iv. 28, and expand it as is done here. Idols of gold and silver have a *mouth*, but give no counsel to their worshippers; *eyes*, but see not the devotions nor the wants of those who serve them; *ears*, but hear not their cries of distress or songs of praise; *nostrils*, but smell not the fragrant incense presented to their images; *hands*, but the thunderbolt which they seem to hold (as Jupiter Tonans in after days), is a *brutum fulmen*, they cannot launch it; *feet*, but they cannot move to help the fallen. Ah! they cannot so much as whisper one syllable of response, or even mutter in their throat! And as man becomes like his God, (witness Hindoo idolaters whose cruelty is just the reflection of the cruelty of their gods,) so these gods of the heathen being "soul-less, the worshippers become soul-less themselves" (Tholuck).—*Andrew A. Bonar*.

Verse 3.—"And our God (is) in heaven; all that he pleased he has done." The word "and," though foreign from our idiom, adds sensibly to the force of the expression. They ask thus, as if our God were absent or had no existence; and yet all the while our God is in heaven, in his exalted and glorious dwelling-place.—*Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 3 (first clause).—It would be folly to assert the like concerning idols; therefore, if the heathen say, *Where is your God?* we reply, *He is in heaven*, etc.: but where are your idols? In the earth, not making the earth, but made from the earth, etc.—*Martin Geier*.

Verse 3.—"But our God is in the heavens." When they place God in heaven, they do not confine him to a certain locality, nor set limits to his infinite essence; but on the contrary they deny the limitation of his power, its being shut up to human instrumentality only, or its being subject to fate or fortune. In short, they put the universe under his control; and teach us that, being superior to every obstruction, he does freely everything that may seem good to him. This truth is still more plainly asserted in the subsequent clause, "*he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" God then may be said to dwell in heaven, as the world is subject to his will, and nothing can prevent his accomplishing his purposes.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 4.—"Their idols are silver and gold." Can there be anything more absurd than to expect assistance from them, since neither the materials of which they are formed, nor the forms which are given them by the hand of men possess the smallest portion of divinity so as to command respect for them. At the same time, the prophet tacitly indicates that the value of the material does not invest the idols with more excellence, so that they deserve to be more highly esteemed. Hence the passage may be translated adversatively, thus, Though they are of gold and silver, yet they are not gods, because they are the work of men's hands.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 4.—"Their idols are silver," etc. They are metal, stone, and wood. They are generally made in the form of man, but can neither see, hear, smell, feel, walk, nor speak. How brutish to trust in such! and next to them, in stupidity and inanity, must they be who form them, with the expectation of deriving any good from them. So obviously vain was the whole system of idolatry that the more serious heathens ridiculed it, and it was a butt for the jests of their freethinkers and buffoons. How keen are these words of Juvenal!

Audis,

Jupiter, hæc? nec labra moves, cum mittere vocem
 Debueras, vel marmoreus vel æheneus? aut cur
 In carbone tuo charta pia thura soluta
 Ponimus, et sectum vituli jecur, albaque porci
 Omenta? ut video, nullum discrimen habendum est
 Effigies inter vestras, statuamque Bathylli.

Sat. xiii., ver. 113.

"Dost thou hear, O Jupiter, these things? nor move thy lips when thou oughtest to speak out, whether thou art of marble or of bronze? Or, why do we put the sacred incense on thy altar from the opened paper, and the extracted liver of a calf, and the white caul of a hog? As far as I can discern, there is no difference between thy statue and that of Bathyllus."

This irony will appear the keener, when it is known that Bathyllus was a fiddler and player, whose image, by the order of Polycrates, was erected in the temple of Juno at Samos.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 4.—"Idols." Idolators plead in behalf of their idols, that they are only intended to represent their gods, and to maintain a more abiding sense of their presence. The Spirit, however, does not allow this plea, and treats their images as the very gods they worship. The gods they profess to represent do not really exist, and therefore their worship is altogether vain and foolish. Must not the same be said of the pretended worship of many in the present day, who would encumber their worship with representative rites and ceremonies, or expressive symbols, or frame to themselves in their imaginations a god other than the God of revelation?—*W. Wilson*.

Verse 4.—"Silver and gold"—proper things to make money of, but not to make gods of.—*Matthew Henry*,

Verse 4.—"The work of men's hands." The following advertisement is copied from a Chinese newspaper:—"Archen Tea Chinchin, sculptor, respectfully acquaints masters of ships, trading from Canton to India, that they may be furnished with figure-heads of any size, according to order, at one-fourth of the price charged in Europe. He also recommends for private venture, the following idols, brass, gold, and silver: the hawk of Vishnoo, which has reliefs of his incarnation in a fish, boar, lion, and turtle. An Egyptian apis, a golden calf and bull, as worshipped by the pious followers of Zoroaster. Two silver mammosits, with golden ear-rings; an aprimanes, for Persian worship; a ram, an alligator, a crab, a laughing hyena, with a variety of household gods on a small scale, calculated for family worship. Eighteen months' credit will be given, or a discount of fifteen per cent. for prompt payment of the sum affixed to each article. Direct, China-street, Canton, under the marble Rhinoceros and Gilt Hydra."—*Arvine's Anecdotes*.

Verse 4.—"The work of men's hands." Works, and not the makers of works.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 4.—"The work of men's hands." And therefore they must needs be goodly gods, when made by bunglers especially, as was the rood of *Cockram*, which if it were not good enough to make a god would make an excellent devil, as the Mayor of Doncaster merrily told the complainants.—*John Trapp*.

Verses 4—7.—A beautiful contrast is formed between the God of Israel and the heathen idols. He made everything, they are themselves made by men; he is in heaven, they are upon earth; he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth, they can do nothing; he seeth the distresses, heareth and answereth the prayers, accepteth the offerings, cometh to the assistance, and effecteth the salvation of his servants; they are blind, deaf, and dumb, senseless, motionless, and impotent. Equally slow to hear, equally impotent to save, in time of greatest need, will every worldly idol prove, on which men have set their affections, and to which they have, in effect, said, "Thou art my God."—*George Horne*.

Verses 4—7.—In Alexandria there was a most famous building called the *Serapion*, a temple of *Serapis*, who presided over the inundations of the Nile, and the fertility of Egypt. It was a vast structure of masonry, crowning a hill in the centre of the city, and was ascended by a hundred steps. It was well fortified and very handsome. The statue of the god was a colossal image, which touched with outstretched hands, both sides of the building, while the head reached the lofty roof. It was adorned with rich metals and jewels.

The Emperor Theodosius, having commanded the demolition of the heathen temple, Theophilus, the bishop, attended by the soldiers, hastened to ascend the steps and enter the fane. The sight of the image, for a moment, made even the Christian destructives pause. The bishop ordered a soldier to strike without delay. With a hatchet he smote the statue on the knee. All waited in some emotion, but there was neither sound nor sign of divine anger. The soldiers next climbed to the head and struck it off. It rolled on the ground. A large family of rats, disturbed in their tranquil abode within the sacred image, poured out from the trembling statue and raced over the temple floor. The people now began to laugh, and to destroy

with increased zeal. They dragged the fragments of the statue through the streets. Even the Pagans were disgusted with gods who did not defend themselves. The huge edifice was slowly destroyed, and a Christian church was built in its place. There was still some fear among the people that the Nile would show displeasure by refusing its usual inundation. But as the river rose with more than usual fulness and bounty, every anxiety was dispelled.—*Andrew Reed*, in "*The Story of Christianity*," 1877.

Verses 4—8.—Theodoret tells us of S. Publia, the aged abbess of a company of nuns at Antioch, who used to chant, as Julian went by in idolatrous procession, the Psalm, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. . . . They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them"; and he narrates how the angry Emperor caused his soldiers to buffet her till she bled, unable as he was to endure the sting of the old Hebrew song.—*Neale and Littledale*.

Verse 5.—"*Mouths, but they speak not.*" The noblest function of the mouth is to speak. Eyes, ears, and nose are the organs of certain senses. The mouth contains the organ of taste, and the hands and feet belong to the organ of touch, but speech is the glory of the mouth.—*James G. Murphy*.

Verse 6.—"*They have ears, but they hear not.*" But are as deaf as door-nails to the prayers of their suppliants. The Cretians pictured their Jupiter without ears, so little hearing or help they hoped for from him. Socrates, in contempt of heathen gods, swore by an oak, a goat, a dog; as holding these better gods than those.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 7.—"*They have hands, but they handle not.*" Even their artist therefore surpasseth them, since he had the faculty of moulding them by the motion and functions of his limbs; though thou wouldst be ashamed to worship that artist. Even thou surpassest them, though thou hast not made these things, since thou doest what they cannot do.—*Augustine*.

Verse 7.—"*Neither speak they through their throat.*" *Yehgu*; not so much as the low faint moaning of a dove. Isaiah xxxviii. 14.—*William Kay*.

Verse 7.—"*Speak,*" or, as the Hebrew word likewise signifies, *breathe*. They are not only irrational, but also inanimate.—*Thomas Fenton*.

Verse 8.—"*They that make them are like unto them.*" They that make them *images* show their ingenuity, and doubtless are sensible men; but they that make them *gods* show their stupidity, and are as senseless, blockish things as the idols themselves.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 8.—"*They that make them are like unto them.*" They are like idols, because, though they hear and see, it is more in appearance than in reality; for they neither see nor hear the things that pertain to salvation, the things that only are worth seeing, so that they may be said more to dream than to see or hear; as St. Mark has it, "Having eyes ye see not, having ears ye hear not."—*Robert Bellarmine*.

Verse 8.—"*Like unto them,*" etc. Every one is just what his God is; whoever serves the Omnipotent is omnipotent with him: whoever exalts feebleness, in stupid delusion, to be his god, is feeble along with that god. This is an important preservative against fear for those who are sure that they worship the true God.—*E. W. Hengstenberg*.

Verse 8.—"*Like unto them.*" Namely, "hollowness," vanity, unprofitableness: (*tohu*). Isaiah xlv. 9, 10.—*William Kay*.

Verse 8.—They that serve a base god cannot but be of a base spirit, and so can do nothing worthily and generously. Every man's temper is as his god is.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 9.—"*He is their help.*" We should rather have expected, "Our help and our shield," etc. But the burden thrice introduced, appears to be a well-known formula of praise. "*Their,*" *i.e.*, "of all who trust in him." The verses contain a climax: (1) Israel in general is addressed; (2) the priests or ministers of God's service; (3) the true Israelites; not only chosen out of all people, or out of the chosen people for outward service; but serving God in sincerity of heart.—*Speaker's Commentary*.

Verse 10.—"He is the help" of his people; they are helpless in themselves, and vain is the help of man, for there is none in him; there is no help but in the Lord, and he is a present, seasonable, and sufficient help. Jehovah the Father has promised them help, and he is both able and faithful to make it good; he has laid help upon his Son for them; and has set up a throne of grace, where they may come for grace to help them in time of need. Christ has helped them out of the miserable estate they were fallen into by sin; he helps them on in their way to heaven, by his power and grace, and at last brings them thither. The Spirit of God helps them to the things of Christ; to many exceeding great and precious promises; and out of many difficulties, snares and temptations; and he helps them in prayer under all their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, according to the will of God; and therefore they should trust in the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit.—*John Gill.*

Verse 12.—"The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us." God hath, and therefore God will, is an ordinary Scripture argument.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 13.—"He will bless . . . both small and great." Mercy, according to the covenant of grace, giveth the same grounds of faith and hope to everyone within the church; so that whatever of favour is shown to one of God's people, it is of a general use and profit to others. This Scripture sheweth that as the duty of trusting in the Lord is common to all sorts of persons, so the blessing of trust is common, and doth belong to all sorts of believers, small and great. God's Israel consists of several degrees of men. There are magistrates who have their peculiar service; there are ministers who intercede between God and man in things belonging to God, and there are the common sort of them that fear God, and are admitted to the honour of being his people. Now these have all the same privileges. If God be the help and shield of the one, he will be the help and shield of the other; if he bless the one he will bless the other. Every one that feareth God, and is in the number of the true Israelites, may expect his blessing as well as public persons; the meanest peasant as well as the greatest prince, as they have leave to trust in God, so they may expect his blessing. The reason is that they have all an equal interest in the same God, who is a God of goodness and power, able and willing to relieve all those that trust in him. He is alike affected to all his children, and beareth them the same love.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 13.—He says, "both small and great," by which circumstance he magnifies God's paternal regard the more, showing that he does not overlook even the meanest and the most despised, provided they cordially seek his aid. Now as there is no acceptance of persons before God, our low and abject condition ought to be no obstruction to our drawing near to him, since he so kindly invites to approach him those who appear to be held in no reputation. The repetition of the word "bless" is intended to mark the uninterrupted stream of his loving-kindness.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 14.—"The LORD shall increase you," etc. This is expressive of the further and increasing blessing of Jehovah on his Israel, upon his ministers, and upon the whole church. They are to be increased in light and knowledge, in gifts and graces, in faith and utterance, in numbers and multitude.—*Samuel Eyles Pierce.*

Verse 14.—

The Lord will heap his blessings upon you,
Upon you and your children.

—*William Green, in "A New Translation of the Psalms," 1762.*

Verse 15.—"Blessed are ye," etc. Ye are the people blessed of old in the person of your father Abraham, by Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth," Gen. xiv. 19. "Of Jehovah," literally, to Jehovah, as an object of benediction to him. Or the Hebrew preposition, as in many other cases, may be simply equivalent to our *by*. The creative character of God is mentioned, as ensuring his ability, no less than his willingness, to bless his people.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 16.—"The heavens, even the heavens, are the LORD'S." He demonstrates, that, as God has his dwelling-place in the heavens, he must be independent of all worldly riches; for, assuredly, neither wine, nor corn, nor anything requisite for the support of the present life, is produced there. Consequently, God has every resource in himself. To this circumstance the repetition of the term "heavens" refers. *The*

heavens, the heavens are enough for God; and as he is superior to all aid, he is to himself instead of a hundred more.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 16.—“*The earth hath he given,*” etc.—This verse is full of beauty, when read in connection with what follows, as a descriptive declaration of the effect of “the regeneration” on this lower scene. For until then, man has rather been given to the earth than the earth to the sons of men. It is but a place of graves, and the day of death seems better than the day of birth, so long as men walk in no brighter light than that of the sun.—*Arthur Pridham.*

Verse 17.—“*The dead praise not the LORD,*” etc. David considers not here what men do, or do not, in the next world; but he considers only that in this world he was bound to propagate God’s truth, and that he could not do so if God took him away by death. Now there is a double reason given of David’s and other holy men’s deprecation of death in the Old Testament; one in relation to themselves, *qui promissiones obscuræ*, because Moses had conveyed to those men all God’s future blessings, all the joy and glory of heaven, only in the types of earthly things, and said little of the state of the soul after this life. And therefore the promises belonging to the godly after this life, were not so clear that in the contemplation of them they could deliver themselves confidently into the jaws of death: he that is not fully satisfied of the next world, makes shift to be content with this. The other reason was *quia operarii pauci*, because God had a great harvest in hand, and few labourers in it, they were loth to be taken from the work; and this reason was not in relation to themselves, but to God’s church, since they would not be able to do God’s cause any more good here. This was the other reason that made those good men so lothe to die. *Quid facies nomini tuo?* says Joshua in his prayer to God. If the Canaanites come in to destroy us, and blaspheme thee, what wilt thou do unto thy mighty name? What wilt thou do unto thy glorious church, said the saints of God under the Old Testament, if thou take those men out of the world, whom thou hast chosen, enabled, and qualified, for the edification, sustentation, and propagation of that church? Upon this account David desired to live, not for his own sake, but for God’s glory, and his church’s good; neither of which could be advanced by him when he was dead.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 17.—“*The dead praise not the LORD,*” etc. Who are here meant by “the dead”? I cannot rest in the view taken by those who consider this verse simply as a plea by those who use it, that they may be saved from death. They are words provided for the church at large, as the subsequent verse proves. By “the dead,” then, I understand those who descend to the silence of eternal death, who have not praised God, and never can. For them the earth might seem never to have been given.—*W. Wilson.*

Verse 17.—“*Into silence.*” Into the grave—the land of silence. Ps. xciv. 17. Nothing is more impressive in regard to the grave than its utter *silence*. Not a voice, not a sound, is heard there,—of birds or men—of song or conversation—of the roaring of the sea, the sighing of the breeze, the fury of the storm, the tumult of battle. Perfect stillness reigns there; and the first sound that shall be heard there will be the archangel’s trumpet.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verses 17, 18.—The *people* of God cannot die, because the *praise* of God would die with them, which would be impossible.—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

Verses 17, 18.—It is not to be overlooked that there do occur, in certain Psalms, words which have the appearance of excluding the hope of eternal life.* . . . Yet it is a very significant fact, that in all the Psalms in question, there is an earnest solicitude expressed for the glory of God. If death is deprecated, it is in order that the Lord may not lose the glory, nor his church the services which a life prolonged might furnish. This is well exemplified in the hundred and fifteenth, which I the rather cite because, being the sole exception to the rule, that the dark views of death are found in Psalms of contrition and deep sorrow; it is the only Psalm to which the preceding observations are inapplicable. It is a tranquil hymn of praise.

17. It is not the dead who praise Jah:
Neither any that go down into silence.
18. But we will bless Jah,
From this time forth and for evermore.
Hallelujah!

The Psalm thus closed, was one of the Songs of the Second Temple.

* Psalm vi. 5, xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 10, 12, lxxxix. 47, cxv. 17.

What we hear in it is the voice of the church, rather than of an individual soul. And this may assist us in perceiving its entire harmony with faith in the heavenly glory. It much concerns the honour of God that there be continued, on the earth, a visible church, in which his name may be recorded from generation to generation. That is a work which cannot be performed by the dead. Since, therefore, the uppermost desire of the church ought ever to be that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom advanced, and his will done in the earth; it is her duty to pray for continued subsistence here, on the earth, to witness for God. And it is to be carefully observed, that not only in this passage, but in all the parallel texts in which the Psalmists seem to speak doubtfully or disparagingly of the state of the departed, it is in connection with the interest of God's cause on the earth. The thought that is uppermost in their hearts is, that "in death there is no commemoration" of God—no recording of his name for the salvation of men. This single circumstance might, I think, suffice to put the reader on his guard against a precipitate fastening on them of a meaning which would exclude the hope of eternal life. It goes far to show that what the Psalmist deprecates, is not death simply considered, but premature death. Their prayer is, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." Ps. cii. 24. And I do not hesitate to say that there are men so placed in stations of eminent usefulness, that it is their duty to make the prayer their own.—*William Binnie.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—The passage may be used as, I. A powerful plea in prayer. II. An expression of the true spirit of piety. III. A safe guide in theology. IV. A practical direction in choosing our way of life. V. An acceptable spirit when surveying past or present success.

Verse 1.—I. No praise is due to man. Have we a being? Not unto us, etc. Have we health? Not unto us, etc. Have we outward comforts? Not unto us, etc. Friends? Not unto us, etc. The means of grace? Not unto us, etc. Saving faith in Christ? Not unto us, etc. Gifts and graces? Not unto us, etc. The hope of glory? Not unto us, etc. Usefulness to others? Not unto us, etc. II. All praise is due to God. 1. Because all we have is from mercy. 2. Because all we expect is from faithfulness.—*G. R.*

Verse 2.—A taunting question, to which we can give many satisfactory replies.

Verse 2.—Why do they say so? Why doth God permit them to say so?—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 2, 3.—I. The inquiry of heathens: ver. 2. 1. Of ignorance. They see a temple but no god. 2. Of reproach to the people of God when their God has forsaken them for a time: "While they say daily unto me, where," etc. II. The reply to their inquiry: ver. 3. Do you ask where is our God? Ask rather where he is not? Do you ask what he has done? "He has done whatsoever he hath pleased."—*G. R.*

Verse 3.—I. His position betokens absolute dominion. II. His actions prove it. III. Yet he condescends to be "our God."

Verse 3 (second clause).—The sovereignty of God. Establish and improve the great scriptural doctrine, that the glorious God has a right to exercise dominion over all his creatures; and to do, in all respects, as he pleases. This right naturally results from his being the *Former* and the *Possessor* of heaven and earth. Consider (1) He is infinitely wise; he perfectly knows all his creatures, all their actions, and all their tendencies. (2) He is infinitely righteous. (3) He is infinitely good.—*George Burder.*

Verses 4—8.—I. The character of idol gods. Whether our gods are natural objects or riches or worldly pleasures, they have no eye to pity, no ear to hear petitions, no tongue to counsel, no hand to help. II. The character of the true God. He is all eye, all ear, all tongue, all hand, all feet, all mind, all heart. III. The character of the idol worshippers. All become naturally assimilated to the objects of their worship.

Verse 8.—The likeness between idolators and their idols. Work it out in the particulars mentioned.

Verse 9.—The living God claims spiritual worship; the life of such worship is faith; faith proves God to be a living reality—"He is their help," etc. Only elect Israel will ever render this living worship.

Verses 9—11.—I. The reproof. "O Israel!" "O house of Aaron!" "Ye who fear the Lord." Have you been unbelieving towards your God? II. The correction or admonition. "Trust in the Lord." Have you trusted in the true God as others have in their false gods? III. The instruction. "He is their help," etc. Let churches, ministers, and all who fear God know that at all times and under all circumstances he is their help and their shield.—G. R.

Verse 10.—I. Those who publicly serve should specially trust. "O house of Aaron, trust." II. Those who are specially called shall be specially helped. "He is their help." III. Those who are specially helped in service may be sure of special protection in danger—"and their shield."

Verse 11.—Filiat fear the foundation of fuller faith.

Verse 12.—What we have experienced. What we may expect.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 12, 13.—I. What God *has done* for his people: "He hath been mindful of us." 1. Our preservation proves this. 2. Our mercies. 3. Our trials. 4. Our guidance. 5. Our consolations. Everything, even the minutest blessing, represents a thought in the mind of God respecting us. "How precious are thy thoughts concerning me, O God, how great," etc., and those thoughts go back to an eternity before we came into being. "The Lord hath been mindful of us"; then should we not be more mindful of him? II. What he *will do* for his people—"He will bless us." 1. Greatly. His blessings are like himself, great. They are blessed whom he blesses. 2. Suitably. The house of Israel, the house of Aaron, all who fear him, according to their need, both small and great. 3. Assuredly. "He will," "he will," "he will," "he will." With one "will" he curses, with four "wills" he blesses.—G. R.

Verse 13.—I. The general character—"fear the Lord." II. The degrees of development—"small and great." III. The common blessing.

Verse 14.—I. Gracious increase—in knowledge, love, power, holiness, usefulness, etc. II. Growing increase—we grow faster, and advance not only more, but more and more. III. Relative increase—our children grow in grace through our examples, etc.

Verse 14.—The blessings of God are, I. *Ever-flowing*—"more and more." II. *Over-flowing*—"you and your children." Let parents seek more grace for themselves for the sake of their children. 1. That they may be more influenced by their example. 2. That their prayers may be more prevalent on their behalf. 3. That their children may be more blessed for their sakes.—G. R.

Verse 15.—A blessing. I. Belonging to a peculiar people—"ye." II. Coming from a peculiar quarter—"of the Lord," etc. III. Bearing a peculiar date—"are." IV. Stamped with peculiar certainty—"Ye are blessed." V. Involving a peculiar duty—"Bless the Lord now and evermore."

Verse 15.—The Creator's blessing—its greatness, fulness, variety, etc.

Verse 16.—Man's lordship over the world, its limit, its abuse, its legitimate bound, its grand design.

Verses 17, 18.—I. Missing voices—"The dead praise not." II. Their stimulus upon ourselves—"But we." III. Their cry to others—"Praise ye the Lord." Let us make up for the silent voices.

Verses 17, 18.—I. They who do not praise God here will not praise him hereafter. No reprieve therefore from punishment. II. They who praise God in this life will praise him for evermore. Hallelujah for this. "Praise the Lord."—G. R.

Verses 17, 18.—A new year's sermon. I. A mournful memory—"the dead." II. A happy resolve—"but we will bless the Lord." III. An appropriate commencement—"from this time forth." IV. An everlasting continuance—"and for evermore."