

## PSALM CXVI.

**SUBJECT.**—This is a continuation of the Paschal Hallel, and therefore must in some measure be interpreted in connection with the coming out of Egypt. It has all the appearance of being a personal song in which the believing soul, reminded by the Passover of its own bondage and deliverance, speaks thereof with gratitude, and praises the Lord accordingly. We can conceive the Israelite with a staff in his hand singing, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul," as he remembered the going back of the house of Jacob to the land of their fathers; and then drinking the cup at the feast using the words of the thirteenth verse, "I will take the cup of salvation." The pious man evidently remembers both his own deliverance and that of his people as he sings in the language of the sixteenth verse, "Thou hast loosed my bonds"; but he rises into sympathy with his nation as he thinks of the courts of the Lord's house and of the glorious city, and pledges himself to sing "in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." Personal love fostered by a personal experience of redemption is the theme of this Psalm, and in it we see the redeemed answered when they pray, preserved in time of trouble, resting in their God, walking at large, sensible of their obligations, conscious that they are not their own but bought with a price, and joining with all the ransomed company to sing hallelujahs unto God.

Since our divine Master sang this hymn, we can hardly err in seeing here words to which he could set his seal,—words in a measure descriptive of his own experience; but upon this we will not enlarge, as in the notes we have indicated how the Psalm has been understood by those who love to find their Lord in every line.

**DIVISION.**—David Dickson has a somewhat singular division of this Psalm, which strikes us as being exceedingly suggestive. He says, "This Psalm is a threefold engagement of the Psalmist unto thanksgiving unto God, for his mercy unto him, and in particular for some notable delivery of him from death, both bodily and spiritual. The first engagement is, that he shall out of love have recourse unto God by prayer, verses 1 and 2; the reasons and motives whereof are set down, because of his former deliverances, 3—8; the second engagement is to a holy conversation, verse 9; and the motives and reasons are given in verses 10 to 13; the third engagement is to continual praise and service, and specially to pay those vows before the church, which he had made in days of sorrow, the reasons whereof are given in verses 14—19."

### EXPOSITION.

**I** LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.

1. "I love the LORD." A blessed declaration: every believer ought to be able to declare without the slightest hesitation, "I love the Lord." It was required under the law, but was never produced in the heart of man except by the grace of God, and upon gospel principles. It is a great thing to say "I love the Lord"; for the sweetest of all graces and the surest of all evidences of salvation is love. It is great goodness on the part of God that he condescends to be loved by such poor

creatures as we are, and it is a sure proof that he has been at work in our heart when we can say, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." "*Because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.*" The Psalmist not only knows that he loves God, but he knows why he does so. When love can justify itself with a reason, it is deep, strong, and abiding. They say that love is blind; but when we love God our affection has its eyes open and can sustain itself with the most rigid logic. We have reason, superabundant reason, for loving the Lord; and so because in this case principle and passion, reason and emotion go together, they make up an admirable state of mind. David's reason for his love was the love of God in hearing his prayers. The Psalmist had used his "*voice*" in prayer, and the habit of doing so is exceedingly helpful to devotion. If we can pray aloud without being overheard it is well to do so. Sometimes, however, when the Psalmist had lifted up his voice, his utterance had been so broken and painful that he scarcely dared to call it prayer; words failed him, he could only produce a groaning sound, but the Lord heard his moaning voice. At other times his prayers were more regular and better formed: these he calls "*supplications.*" David had praised as best he could, and when one form of devotion failed him he tried another. He had gone to the Lord again and again, hence he uses the plural and says "*my supplications,*" but as often as he had gone, so often had he been welcome. Jehovah had heard, that is to say, accepted, and answered both his broken cries and his more composed and orderly supplications; hence he loved God with all his heart. Answered prayers are silken bonds which bind our hearts to God. When a man's prayers are answered, love is the natural result. According to Alexander, both verbs may be translated in the present, and the text may run thus, "I love because Jehovah hears my voice, my supplications." This also is true in the case of every pleading believer. Continual love flows out of daily answers to prayer.

2. "*Because he hath inclined his ear unto me*":—bowing down from his grandeur to attend to my prayer; the figure seems to be that of a tender physician or loving friend leaning over a sick man whose voice is faint and scarcely audible, so as to catch every accent and whisper. When our prayer is very feeble, so that we ourselves can scarcely hear it, and question whether we do pray or not, yet God bows a listening ear, and regards our supplications. "*Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live,*" or, "*in my days.*" Throughout all the days of my life I will address my prayer to God alone, and to him I will unceasingly pray. It is always wise to go where we are welcome and are well treated. The word "*call*" may imply praise as well as prayer: calling upon the name of the Lord is an expressive name for adoration of all kinds. When prayer is heard in our feebleness, and answered in the strength and greatness of God, we are strengthened in the habit of prayer, and confirmed in the resolve to make ceaseless intercession. We should not thank a beggar who informed us that because we had granted his request he would never cease to beg of us, and yet doubtless it is acceptable to God that his petitioners should form the resolution to continue in prayer: this shows the greatness of his goodness, and the abundance of his patience. In all days let us pray and praise the Ancient of days. He promises that as our days our strength shall be; let us resolve that as our days our devotion shall be.

3. The Psalmist now goes on to describe his condition at the time when he prayed unto God. "*The sorrows of death compassed me.*" As hunters surround a stag with dogs and men, so that no way of escape is left, so was David enclosed in a ring of deadly griefs. The bands of sorrow, weakness, and terror with which death is accustomed to bind men ere he drags them away to their long captivity were all around him. Nor were these things around him in a distant circle, they had come close home, for he adds, "*and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.*" Horrors such as those which torment the lost seized me, grasped me, found me out, searched me through and through, and held me a prisoner. He means by the pains of hell those pangs which belong to death, those terrors which are connected with the grave; these were so closely upon him that they fixed their teeth in him as hounds seize their prey. "*I found trouble and sorrow,*" trouble was around me, and sorrow within me. His griefs were double, and as he searched into them they increased. A man rejoices when he finds a hid treasure; but what must be the anguish of a man who finds, where he least expected it, a vein of trouble and sorrow? The Psalmist was sought for by trouble and it found him out, and when he himself became a seeker he found no relief, but double distress.

4. "*Then called I upon the name of the LORD.*" Prayer is never out of season, he

prayed *then*, when things were at their worst. When the good man could not run to God, he *called* to him. In his extremity his faith came to the front : it was useless to call on man, and it may have seemed almost as useless to appeal to the Lord ; but yet he did with his whole soul invoke all the attributes which make up the sacred name of Jehovah, and thus he proved the truth of his confidence. We can some of us remember certain very special times of trial of which we can now say, "*then* called I upon the name of the Lord." The Psalmist appealed to the Lord's mercy, truth, power, and faithfulness, and this was his prayer,—"*O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*" This form of petition is short, comprehensive, to the point, humble, and earnest. It were well if all our prayers were moulded upon this model ; perhaps they would be if we were in similar circumstances to those of the Psalmist, for real trouble produces real prayer. Here we have no multiplicity of words, and no fine arrangement of sentences ; everything is simple and natural ; there is not a redundant syllable, and yet there is not one lacking.

5. "*Gracious is the LORD, and righteous.*" In hearing prayer the grace and righteousness of Jehovah are both conspicuous. It is a great favour to hear a sinner's prayer, and yet since the Lord has promised to do so, he is not unrighteous to forget his promise and disregard the cries of his people. The combination of grace and righteousness in the dealings of God with his servants can only be explained by remembering the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the cross we see how gracious is the Lord and righteous. "*Yea, our God is merciful,*" or compassionate, tender, pitiful, full of mercy. We who have accepted him as ours have no doubt as to his mercy, for he would never have been our God if he had not been merciful. See how the attribute of righteousness seems to stand between two guards of love :—gracious, *righteous*, merciful. The sword of justice is scabbarded in a jewelled sheath of grace.

6. "*The LORD preserveth the simple.*" Those who have a great deal of wit may take care of themselves. Those who have no worldly craft and subtlety and guile, but simply trust in God, and do the right, may depend upon it that God's care shall be over them. The worldly-wise with all their prudence shall be taken in their own craftiness, but those who walk in their integrity with single-minded truthfulness before God shall be protected against the wiles of their enemies, and enabled to outlive their foes. Though the saints are like sheep in the midst of wolves, and comparatively defenceless, yet there are more sheep in the world than wolves, and it is highly probable that the sheep will feed in safety when not a single wolf is left upon the face of the earth : even so the meek shall inherit the earth, when the wicked shall be no more. "*I was brought low, and he helped me,*"—simple though I was, the Lord did not pass me by. Though reduced in circumstances, slandered in character, depressed in spirit, and sick in body, the Lord helped me. There are many ways in which the child of God may be brought low, but the help of God is as various as the need of his people : he supplies our necessities when impoverished, restores our character when maligned, raises up friends for us when deserted, comforts us when desponding, and heals our diseases when we are sick. There are thousands in the church of God at this time who can each one of them say for himself, "*I was brought low, and he helped me.*" Whenever this can be said it should be said to the praise of the glory of his grace, and for the comforting of others who may pass through the like ordeal. Note how David after stating the general doctrine that the Lord preserveth the simple, proves and illustrates it from his own personal experience. The habit of taking home a general truth and testing the power of it in our own case is an exceedingly blessed one ; it is the way in which the testimony of Christ is confirmed in us, and so we become witnesses unto the Lord our God.

7. "*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*" He calls the rest still his own, and feels full liberty to return to it. What a mercy it is that even if our soul has left its rest for a while we can tell it—"it is thy rest still." The Psalmist had evidently been somewhat disturbed in mind, his troubles had ruffled his spirit ; but now with a sense of answered prayer upon him he quiets his soul. He had rested before, for he knew the blessed repose of faith, and therefore he returns to the God who had been the refuge of his soul in former days. Even as a bird flies to its nest, so does his soul fly to his God. Whenever a child of God even for a moment loses his peace of mind, he should be concerned to find it again, not by seeking it in the world or in his own experience, but in the Lord alone. When the believer prays, and the Lord inclines his ear, the road to the old rest is before him, let him not be slow to follow it. "*For the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.*" Thou hast served a good

God, and built upon a sure foundation ; go not about to find any other rest, but come back to him who in former days hath condescended to enrich thee by his love. What a text is this ! and what an exposition of it is furnished by the biography of every believing man and woman ! The Lord hath dealt bountifully with us, for he hath given us his Son, and in him he hath given us all things : he hath sent us his Spirit, and by him he conveys to us all spiritual blessings. God dealeth with us like a God ; he lays his fulness open to us, and of that fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. We have sat at no niggard's table, we have been clothed by no penurious hand, we have been equipped by no grudging provider ; let us come back to him who has treated us with such exceeding kindness. More arguments follow.

8. "*For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*" The triune God has given us a trinity of deliverances : our life has been spared from the grave, our heart has been uplifted from its griefs, and our course in life has been preserved from dishonour. We ought not to be satisfied unless we are conscious of all three of these deliverances. If our soul has been saved from death, why do we weep ? What cause for sorrow remains ? Whence those tears ? And if our tears have been wiped away, can we endure to fall again into sin ? Let us not rest unless with steady feet we pursue the path of the upright, escaping every snare and shunning every stumblingblock. Salvation, joy, and holiness must go together, and they are all provided for us in the covenant of grace. Death is vanquished, tears are dried, and fears are banished when the Lord is near.

Thus has the Psalmist explained the reasons of his resolution to call upon God as long as he lived, and none can question but that he had come to a most justifiable resolve. When from so great a depth he had been uplifted by so special an interposition of God, he was undoubtedly bound to be for ever the hearty worshipper of Jehovah, to whom he owed so much. Do we not all feel the force of the reasoning, and will we not carry out the conclusion ? May God the Holy Spirit help us so to pray without ceasing and in everything to give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.

- 9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.  
 10 I believed, therefore have I spoken : I was greatly afflicted :  
 11 I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.  
 12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me ?  
 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

9. "*I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.*" This is the Psalmist's second resolution, to live as in the sight of God in the midst of the sons of men. By a man's walk is understood his way of life : some men live only as in the sight of their fellow men, having regard to human judgment and opinion ; but the truly gracious man considers the presence of God, and acts under the influence of his all-observing eye. "Thou God seest me" is a far better influence than "My master sees me." The life of faith, hope, holy fear, and true holiness is produced by a sense of living and walking before the Lord, and he who has been favoured with divine deliverances in answer to prayer finds his own experience the best reason for a holy life, and the best assistance to his endeavours. We know that God in a special manner is nigh unto his people : what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness ?

10. "*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" I could not have spoken thus if it had not been for my faith : I should never have spoken unto God in prayer, nor have been able now to speak to my fellow men in testimony if it had not been that faith kept me alive, and brought me a deliverance, whereof I have good reason to boast. Concerning the things of God no man should speak unless he believes ; the speech of the waverer is mischievous, but the tongue of the believer is profitable ; the most powerful speech which has ever been uttered by the lip of man has emanated from a heart fully persuaded of the truth of God. Not only the Psalmist, but such men as Luther, and Calvin, and other great witnesses for the faith, could each one most heartily say, "I believed, therefore have I spoken." "*I was greatly afflicted.*" There was no mistake about that ; the affliction was as bitter and as terrible as it well could be, and since I have been delivered from it, I am sure that the deliverance is no fanatical delusion, but a self-evident fact ; therefore am I the more resolved

to speak to the honour of God. Though greatly afflicted, the Psalmist had not ceased to believe: his faith was tried but not destroyed.

11. "*I said in my haste, All men are liars.*" In a modified sense the expression will bear justification, even though hastily uttered, for all men will prove to be liars if we unduly trust in them; some from want of truthfulness, and others from want of power. But from the expression, "*I said in my haste,*" it is clear that the Psalmist did not justify his own language, but considered it as the ebullition of a hasty temper. In the sense in which he spoke his language was unjustifiable. He had no right to distrust all men, for many of them are honest, truthful, and conscientious; there are faithful friends and loyal adherents yet alive; and if sometimes they disappoint us, we ought not to call them liars for failing when the failure arises entirely from want of power, and not from lack of will. Under great affliction our temptation will be to form hasty judgments of our fellow men, and knowing this to be the case we ought carefully to watch our spirit, and to keep the door of our lips. The Psalmist had believed, and therefore he spoke; he had doubted, and therefore he spoke in haste. He believed, and therefore he rightly prayed to God; he disbelieved, and therefore he wrongfully accused mankind. Speaking is as ill in some cases as it is good in others. Speaking in haste is generally followed by bitter repentance. It is much better to be quiet when our spirit is disturbed and hasty, for it is so much easier to say than to unsay; we may repent of our words, but we cannot so recall them as to undo the mischief they have done. If even David had to eat his own words, when he spoke in a hurry, none of us can trust our tongue without a bridle.

12. "*What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?*" He wisely leaves off fretting about man's falsehood and his own ill humour, and directs himself to his God. It is of little use to be harping on the string of man's imperfection and deceitfulness; it is infinitely better to praise the perfection and faithfulness of God. The question of the verse is a very proper one: the Lord has rendered so much mercy to us that we ought to look about us, and look within us, and see what can be done by us to manifest our gratitude. We ought not only to do what is plainly before us, but also with holy ingenuity to search out various ways by which we may render fresh praises unto our God. His benefits are so many that we cannot number them, and our ways of acknowledging his bestowments ought to be varied and numerous in proportion. Each person should have his own peculiar mode of expressing gratitude. The Lord sends each one a special benefit, let each one enquire, "*What shall I render? What form of service would be most becoming in me?*"

13. "*I will take the cup of salvation.*" "*I will take*" is a strange answer to the question, "*What shall I render?*" and yet it is the wisest reply that could possibly be given.

"The best return for one like me,  
So wretched and so poor,  
Is from his gifts to draw a plea  
And ask him still for more."

To take the cup of salvation was in itself an act of worship, and it was accompanied with other forms of adoration, hence the Psalmist says, "*and call upon the name of the LORD.*" He means that he will utter blessings and thanksgivings and prayers, and then drink of the cup which the Lord had filled with his saving grace. What a cup this is! Upon the table of infinite love stands the cup full of blessing; it is ours by faith to take it in our hand, make it our own, and partake of it, and then with joyful hearts to laud and magnify the gracious One who has filled it for our sakes that we may drink and be refreshed. We can do this figuratively at the sacramental table, we can do it spiritually every time we grasp the golden chalice of the covenant, realizing the fulness of blessing which it contains, and by faith receiving its divine contents into our inmost soul. Beloved reader, let us pause here and take a long and deep draught from the cup which Jesus filled, and then with devout hearts let us worship God.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant: I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

14. "*I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.*" The Psalmist has already stated his third resolution, to devote himself to the worship of God evermore, and here he commences the performance of that resolve. The vows which he had made in anguish, he now determines to fulfil: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord." He does so at once, "*now*," and that publicly, "in the presence of all his people." Good resolutions cannot be carried out too speedily; vows become debts, and debts should be paid. It is well to have witnesses to the payment of just debts, and we need not be ashamed to have witnesses to the fulfilling of holy vows, for this will show that we are not ashamed of our Lord, and it may be a great benefit to those who look on and hear us publicly sounding forth the praises of our prayer-hearing God. How can those do this who have never with their mouth confessed their Saviour? O secret disciples, what say you to this verse! Be encouraged to come into the light and own your Redeemer. If, indeed, you have been saved, come forward and declare it in his own appointed way.

15. "*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints,*" and therefore he did not suffer the Psalmist to die, but delivered his soul from death. This seems to indicate that the song was meant to remind Jewish families of the mercies received by any one of the household, supposing him to have been sore sick and to have been restored to health, for the Lord values the lives of his saints, and often spares them where others perish. They shall not die prematurely; they shall be immortal till their work is done; and when their time shall come to die, then their deaths shall be precious. The Lord watches over their dying beds, smooths their pillows, sustains their hearts, and receives their souls. Those who are redeemed with precious blood are so dear to God that even their deaths are precious to him. The death-beds of saints are very precious to the church, she often learns much from them; they are very precious to all believers, who delight to treasure up the last words of the departed; but they are most of all precious to the Lord Jehovah himself, who view the triumphant deaths of his gracious ones with sacred delight. If we have walked before him in the land of the living, we need not fear to die before him when the hour of our departure is at hand.

16. The man of God in paying his vows re-dedicating himself unto God; the offering which he brings is himself, as he cries, "*O LORD, truly I am thy servant,*" rightfully, really, heartily, constantly, I own that I am thine, for thou hast delivered and redeemed me." "*I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid,*" a servant born in thy house, born of a servant and so born a servant, and therefore doubly thine. My mother was thine handmaid, and I, her son, confess that I am altogether thine by claims arising out of my birth. O that children of godly parents would thus judge; but, alas, there are many who are the sons of the Lord's handmaids, but they are not themselves his servants. They give sad proof that grace does not run in the blood. David's mother was evidently a gracious woman, and he is glad to remember that fact, and to see in it a fresh obligation to devote himself to God. "*Thou hast loosed my bonds,*"—freedom from bondage binds me to thy service. He who is loosed from the bonds of sin, death, and hell should rejoice to wear the easy yoke of the great Deliverer. Note how the sweet singer delights to dwell upon his belonging to the Lord; it is evidently his glory, a thing of which he is proud, a matter which causes him intense satisfaction. Verily, it ought to create rapture in our souls if we are able to call Jesus Master, and are acknowledged by him as his servants.

17. "*I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.*" Being thy servant, I am bound to sacrifice to thee, and having received spiritual blessings at thy hands I will not bring bullock or goat, but I will bring that which is more suitable, namely, the thanksgiving of my heart. My inmost soul shall adore thee in gratitude. "*And will call upon the name of the LORD,*" that is to say, I will bow before thee reverently, lift up my heart in love to thee, think upon thy character, and adore thee as thou dost reveal thyself. He is fond of this occupation, and several times in this Psalm

declares that "he will call upon the name of the Lord," while at the same time he rejoices that he had done so many a time before. Good feelings and actions bear repeating: the more of hearty callings upon God the better.

18. "*I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.*" He repeats the declaration. A good thing is worth saying twice. He thus stirs himself up to greater heartiness, earnestness, and diligence in keeping his vow,—really paying it at the very moment that he is declaring his resolution to do so. The mercy came in secret, but the praise is rendered in public; the company was, however, select; he did not cast his pearls before swine, but delivered his testimony before those who could understand and appreciate it.

19. "*In the courts of the LORD'S house*": in the proper place, where God had ordained that he should be worshipped. See how he is stirred up at the remembrance of the house of the Lord, and must needs speak of the holy city with a note of joyful exclamation—"In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." The very thought of the beloved Zion touched his heart, and he writes as if he were actually addressing Jerusalem, whose name was dear to him. There would he pay his vows, in the abode of fellowship, in the very heart of Judea, in the place to which the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord. There is nothing like witnessing for Jesus, where the report thereof will be carried into a thousand homes. God's praise is not to be confined to a closet, nor his name to be whispered in holes and corners, as if we were afraid that men should hear us; but in the thick of the throng, and in the very centre of assemblies, we should lift up heart and voice unto the Lord, and invite others to join with us in adoring him, saying, "*Praise ye the LORD,*" or Hallelujah. This was a very fit conclusion of a song to be sung when all the people were gathered together at Jerusalem to keep the feast. God's Spirit moved the writers of these Psalms to give them a fitness and suitability which was more evident in their own day than now; but enough is perceptible to convince us that every line and word had a peculiar adaptation to the occasions for which the sacred sonnets were composed. When we worship the Lord we ought with great care to select the words of prayer and praise, and not to trust to the opening of a hymn-book, or to the unconsidered extemporizing of the moment. Let all things be done decently and in order, and let all things begin and end with Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord.

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

*Whole Psalm.*—A Psalm of Thanksgiving in the Person of Christ. He is imagined by the prophet to have passed through the sorrows and afflictions of life. The atonement is passed. He has risen from the dead. He is on the right hand of the Majesty on High; and he proclaims to the whole world the mercies he experienced from God in the day of his incarnation, and the glories which he has received in the kingdom of his Heavenly Father. Yet, although the Psalm possesses this power, and, by its own internal evidence, proves the soundness of the interpretation, it is yet highly mystic in its mode of disclosure, and requires careful meditation in bringing out its real results. Its language, too, is not so exclusively appropriate to the Messiah, that it shall not be repeated and applied by the believer to his own trials in the world; so that while there is much that finds a ready parallel in the exaltation of Christ in heaven, there is much that would seem to be restrained to his condition upon earth. It therefore depends much on the *mind* of the individual, whether he will receive it in the higher sense of the Redeemer's glory; or restrict it *solely* to a thanksgiving for blessings amidst those sufferings in life to which all men have been subject in the same manner, though not to the same extent as Jesus. The most perfect and the most profitable reading would combine the two, taking Christ as the *exemplar* of God's mercies towards ourselves.

1. Enthroned in eternity, and triumphant over sin and death—I—Christ—am well pleased that my Heavenly Father listened to the anxious prayers that I made to him in the day of my sorrows; when I had neither strength in my own mind, nor assistance from men; therefore "*through my days*"—through the endless ages

of my eternal existence—will I call upon him in my gratitude, and praise him with my whole heart.

3. In the troublous times of my incarnation I was encircled with snares, and urged onwards towards my death. The priest and ruler; the Pharisee and the scribe; the rich and the poor, clamoured fiercely for my destruction. The whole nation conspired against me. "*The bands of the grave*" laid hold of me, and I was hurried to the cross.

4. Then, *truly* did Christ find heaviness and affliction. "His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He prayed anxiously to his Heavenly Father, that "the cup might pass from him." The fate of the whole world was in the balance; and he supplicated with agony, that his *soul* might be delivered.

5. The abrupt breaking off in this verse from the direct narrative of his own sorrows is wonderfully grand and beautiful. Nor less so, is the expression "*our God*" as applied by Christ to his own disciples and believers. "*I called,*" he states, "*on the name of the LORD.*" But he does not yet state the answer. He leaves that to be inferred from the assurance that God is *ever* gracious to the faithful; yea, "*our God*"—the protector of the Christian church, as well as of myself—"our God is merciful."

6. Instantly, however, he resumes. Mark the energy of the language, "I was afflicted; and he delivered me." And how delivered? The soul of Christ has returned freely to its tranquillity; for though the body and the frame perished on the tree, yet the soul burst through the bands of death. Again in the full stature of a perfect man Christ rose resplendent in glory to the mansions of eternity. The tears ceased; the sorrows were hushed; and henceforward, through the boundless day of immortality, doth he "walk before Jehovah, in the land of the living." This last is one of those expressions in the Psalm which might, without reflection, seem adapted to the rescued believer's state on earth, rather than Christ's in heaven. But applying the language of earthly things to heavenly—which is usual, even in the most mystic writings of Scripture—nothing can be finer than the appellation of "*the land of the living,*" when assigned to the future residence of the soul. It is the noblest application of the metaphor, and is singularly appropriate to those eternal mansions where death and sorrow are alike unknown.

10. This stanza will bear an emendation.

I felt confidence, although I said,—  
 "I am sore afflicted."  
 I said in my sudden terror,—  
 "All mankind are false."—*French.*

It alludes to the eve of his crucifixion, when worn down with long watchfulness and fasting, his spirit almost fainted in the agony of Gethsemane. Still, oppressed and stricken as he was in soul, he yet trusted in Jehovah, for he felt assured that he would not forsake him. But, sustained by God, he was deserted by men, the disciples with whom he had lived; the multitudes whom he had taught; the afflicted whom he had healed, "*all* forsook him and fled." Not one—not even the "*disciples whom he loved*"—remained; and in the anguish of that desertion he could not refrain from the bitter thought, that all mankind were alike false and treacherous.

12. But that dread hour has passed. He has risen from the dead; and stands girt with truth and holiness and glory. What then is his earliest thought? Hear it, O man, and blush for thine oft ingratitude! I will lift up "*the cup of deliverance*"—the drink-offering made to God with sacrifice after any signal mercies received—and bless the Lord who has been thus gracious to me. In the sight of the whole world will I pay my past vows unto Jehovah, and bring nations from every portion of the earth, reconciled and holy through the blood of my atonement.

The language in these verses, as in the concluding part of the Psalm, is wholly drawn from earthly objects and modes of religious service, well recognized by the Jews. It is in these things that the *spiritual* sense is required to be separated from the external emblem. For instance, the sacramental cup was without a doubt drawn and instituted from the cup used in commemoration of deliverances by the Jews. It is used figuratively by Christ in heaven; but the reflective mind can scarcely fail to see the beauty of imagining it in his hand in thankfulness for his triumph, *because* "he has burst his bonds in sunder": the bonds which held him fast in death, and confined him to the tomb: the assertion that "precious in the



sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints" *specially includes* the sacrifice of Christ within its more general allusion to the blood shed, in such abundance, by prophets and martyrs to the truth. In the same manner the worship of Jehovah in the courts of his temple at Jerusalem is used in figure for the open promulgation of Christianity to the whole world. The temple services were the most solemn and most public which were offered by the Jews; and when Christ is said to "offer his sacrifices of thanksgiving" to God *in the sight of all his people*, the figure is easily separated from the grosser element; and *the conversion* of all people intimated under the form of Christ *seen* by all.—*William Hill Tucker.*

*Verse 1.*—"I love." The expression of the prophet's affection is in this short abrupt phrase, "I love," which is but one word in the original, and expressed as a full and entire sentence in itself, thus—"I love because the Lord hath heard," etc. Most translators so turn it, as if, by a trajection, or passing of a word from one sentence to another, this title Lord were to be joined with the first clause, thus—(אֲנִי אֶהְבֶּה אֶת־יְהוָה, כִּי־שָׁמַע אָזְנוֹ), "I love the LORD, because he hath heard," etc. I deny not but that thus the sense is made somewhat the more perspicuous, and the words run the more roundly; yet are they not altogether so emphatical. For when a man's heart is inflamed, and his soul ravished with a deep apprehension of some great and extraordinary favour, his affection will cause interruption in the expression thereof, and make stops in his speech; and therefore this concise and abrupt clause, "I love," declareth a more entire and ardent affection than a more full and round phrase would do. Great is the force of true love, so that it cannot be sufficiently expressed.—*William Gouge, 1575—1653.*

*Verse 1.*—"I love the LORD." Oh that there were such hearts in us that we could every one say, as David, with David's spirit, upon his evidence, "I love the LORD"; that were more worth than all these, viz.; First, to know all secrets. Secondly, to prophesy. Thirdly, to move mountains, etc., 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, etc. "I love the LORD"; it is more than I know the Lord; for even castaways are enlightened, (Heb. vi. 4); more than I fear the Lord, for devils fear him unto trembling (James ii. 19); more than I pray to God (Isai. i. 15). What should I say? More than all services, than all virtues separate from charity: truly say the schools, charity is the form of all virtues, because it forms them all to acceptability, for nothing is accepted but what issues from charity, or, in other words, from the love of God.—*William Slater, 1638.*

*Verse 1.*—"I love the LORD, because," etc. How vain and foolish is the talk, "To love God for his benefits towards us is mercenary, and cannot be pure love!" Whether pure or impure, there is no other love that can flow from the heart of the creature to its Creator. "We love him," said the holiest of Christ's disciples, "because he first loved us;" and the increase of our love and filial evidence is in proportion to the increased sense we have of our obligation to him. We love him for the benefits bestowed on us.—*Love begets love.*—*Adam Clarke.*

*Verse 1.*—"He hath heard my voice." But is this such a benefit to us, that God hears us? Is his hearing our voice such an argument of his love? Alas! he may hear us, and we be never the better: he may hear our voice, and yet his love to us may be but little, for he will not give a man the hearing, though he love him not at all? With men perhaps it may be so, but not with God; for his hearing is not only voluntary, but reserved; *non omnibus dormit*: his ears are not open to every one's cry; indeed, to hear us, is in God so great a favour, that he may well be counted his favourite whom he vouchsafes to hear: and the rather, for that his hearing is always operative, and with a purpose of helping; so that if he hear my voice, I may be sure he means to grant my supplication; or rather perhaps in David's manner of expressing, and in God's manner of proceeding, to hear my voice is no less in effect than to grant my supplication.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 1.*—"Hath heard." By hearing prayer God giveth evidence of the notice which he taketh of our estates, of the respect he beareth to our persons, of the pity he hath of our miseries, of his purpose to supply our wants, and of his mind to do us good according to our needs.—*William Gouge.*

*Verses 1 and 2.*—The first שָׁמַע אָזְנוֹ is more of an aorist. The Lord hears always; and then, making a distinction אָזְנוֹ אֲזָנָיָאָה. He has done it hitherto; אָזְנָאָה Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live, cleaving to Him in love and faith! It should be noticed, in addition, that אָזְנָאָה here is not simply the prayer for help, but includes also the praising and thanksgiving, according to the twofold signifi-

tion of *הוֹדוּת*, in verses 4, 13, and 17: therefore, Jarchi very excellently says: *In the time of my distress I will call upon Him, and in the time of my deliverance I will praise Him.*—Rudolph Stier.

Verses 1, 2.—“*I love.*” “*Therefore will I call upon him.*” It is love that doth open our mouths, that we may praise God with joyful lips; “*I will love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplications*”; and then, ver. 2, “*I will call upon him as long as I live.*” The proper intent of mercies is to draw us to God. When the heart is full of a sense of the goodness of the Lord, the tongue cannot hold its peace. Self-love may lead us to prayers, but love to God excites us to praises: therefore to seek and not to praise, is to be lovers of ourselves rather than of God.—Thomas Manton.

Verses 1, 12.—“*I love.*” “*What shall I render?*” Love and thankfulness are like the symbolical qualities of the elements, easily resolved into each other. David begins with, “*I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice*”; and to enkindle this grace into a greater flame, he records the mercies of God in some following verses; which done, then he is in the right mood for praise; and cries, “*What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits?*” The spouse, when thoroughly awake, pondering with herself what a friend had been at her door, and how his sweet company was lost through her unkindness, shakes off her sloth, riseth, and away she goes after him; now, when by running after her beloved, she hath put her soul into a heat of love, she breaks out in praising him from top to toe. Cant. v. 10. That is the acceptable praising which comes from a warm heart; and the saint must use some holy exercise to stir up his habit of love, which like natural heat in the body, is preserved and increased by motion.—William Gurnall.

Verse 2.—“*He hath inclined his ear unto me.*” How great a blessing, is the inclining of the Divine ear, may be judged from the conduct of great men, who do not admit a wretched petitioner to audience: but, if they do anything, receive the main part of the complaint through the officer appointed for such matters, or through a servant. But God himself hears immediately, and *inclines his ear*, hearing readily, graciously, constantly, etc. Who would not pray?—Wolfgang Musculus.

Verse 2.—And now *because he hath inclined his ear unto me*, I will therefore *call upon him as long as I live*: that if it be expected I should call upon any other, it must be when I am dead; for as long as I live, I have vowed to call upon God. But will this be well done? May I not, in so doing, do more than I shall have thanks for? Is this the requital that God shall have for his kindness in hearing me, that now he shall have a customer of me, and never be quiet because of my continual running to him, and calling upon him? Doth God get anything by my calling upon him, that I should make it a vow, as though in calling upon him I did him a pleasure? O my soul, I would that God might indeed have a customer of me in praying: although I confess I should not be so bold to call upon him so continually, if his own commanding me did not make it a duty: for hath not God bid me call upon him when I am in trouble? and is there any time that I am not in trouble, as long as I live in this vale of misery? and then can there be any time as long as I live, that I must not call upon him? For shall God bid me, and shall I not do it? Shall God incline his ear, and stand listening to hear, and shall I hold my peace that he may have nothing to hear?—Sir Richard Baker.

Verse 2.—“*Therefore will I call upon him.*” If the hypocrite speed in prayer, and get what he asks, then also he throws up prayer, and will ask no more. If from a sick bed he be raised to health, he leaves prayer behind him, as it were, sick-bed; he grows weak in calling upon God, when at his call God hath given him strength. And thus it is in other instances. When he hath got what he hath a mind to in prayer, he hath no more mind to pray. Whereas a godly man prays after he hath sped, as he did before, and though he fall not into those troubles again, and so is not occasioned to urge those petitions again which he did in trouble, yet he cannot live without prayer, because he cannot live out of communion with God. The creature is as the white of an egg, tasteless to him, unless he enjoy God. David saith, “*I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications,*” that is, because he hath granted me that which I supplicated to him for. But did this grant of what he had asked take him off from asking more? The next words show us what his resolution was upon that grant. “*Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live*”; as if he had said, I will never give over praying, forasmuch as I have been heard in prayer.—Joseph Caryl.

Verse 2.—“As long as I live.” Not on some few days, but every day of my life; for to pray on certain days, and not on all, is the mark of one who loathes and not of one who loves.—*Ambrose*.

Verse 3.—Here beginneth the exemplification of God’s kindness to his servant; the first branch whereof is a description of the danger wherein he was and out of which he was delivered. Now, to magnify the kindness of God the more in delivering him out of the same, he setteth it out with much variety of words and phrases.

The first word  $\text{קָשָׁי}$ , “sorrows,” is diversely translated. Some expound it snares, some cords, some sorrows. The reason of this difference is because the word itself is metaphorical. It is taken from cruel creditors, who will be sure to tie their debtors fast, as with cords, so that they shall not easily get loose and free again. The pledge which the debtor leaveth with his creditor as a pawn, hath this name in Hebrew; so also a cord wherewith things are tied fast; and the mast of a ship fast fixed, and tied on every side with cords; and bands or troops of men combined together; and the pain of a woman in travail, which is very great; and destruction with pain and anguish. Thus we see that such a word is used here as setteth out a most lamentable and inextricable case.

The next word, “of death”  $\text{מָוֶת}$ , sheweth that his case was deadly; death was before his eyes; death was as it were threatened. He is said to be “compassed” herewith in two respects: (1) To show that these sorrows were not far off, but even upon him, as waters that compass a man when he is in the midst of them, or as enemies that begird a place. (2) To show that they were not few, but many sorrows, as bees that swarm together.

The word translated “pains,”  $\text{סָעָר}$ , in the original is put for sacks fast bound together, and flint stones, and fierce enemies, and hard straits; so that this word also aggravateth his misery.

The word translated “hell,”  $\text{אֵשׁ}$ , is usually taken in the Old Testament for the grave; it is derived from  $\text{שָׁאַל}$ , a verb that signifieth to crave, because the grave is ever craving, and never satisfied.

The words translated “gat hold on me,”  $\text{קָשָׁוּנִי}$ , and “I found,”  $\text{אֶמְצֵא}$ , are both the same verb; they differ only in circumstances of tense, number, and person. The former showeth that these miseries found him, and as a serjeant they seized on him; he did not seek them, he would wittingly and willingly have escaped them, if he could. The latter sheweth that indeed he found them; he felt the tartness and bitterness, the smart and pain of them.

The word translated *trouble*,  $\text{צָרָה}$  of  $\text{צָר}$ , hath a near affinity with the former word translated pain,  $\text{צָרָה}$  of  $\text{צָר}$ , and is used to set out as great misery as that; and yet further to aggravate the same, another word is added thereto, “sorrow.”

The last word, “sorrow,”  $\text{גִּידָה}$  of  $\text{גָּדַח}$ , importeth such a kind of calamity as maketh them that lie under it much to grieve, and also moveth others that behold it much to pity them. It is often used in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Either of these two last words, trouble and sorrow, do declare a very perplexed and distressed estate; what then both of them joined together? For the Holy Ghost doth not multiply words in vain.—*William Gouge*.

Verse 3.—“Gat hold upon me.” The original word is, *found me*, as we put in the margin. They found him, as an officer or serjeant finds a person that he is sent to arrest; who no sooner finds him, but he takes hold of him, or takes him into custody. When warrants are sent out to take a man who keeps out of the way, the return is, *Non est inventus*, the man is not found, he cannot be met with, or taken hold of. David’s pains quickly found him, and having found him they gat hold of him. Such finding is so certainly and suddenly followed with taking hold, and holding what is taken, that one word in the Hebrew serves to express both acts. When God sends out troubles and afflictions as officers to attack any man, they will find him, and finding him, they will take hold of him. The days of affliction will take hold; there’s no striving, no struggling with them, no getting out of their hands. These divine pursuivants will neither be persuaded nor bribed to let you go, till God speak the word, till God say, Deliver him, release him. “*I found trouble and sorrow.*” I found trouble which I looked not for. I was not searching after sorrow, but I found it. There’s an elegance in the original. The Hebrew is, “*The pains of hell found me.*” They found me, I did not find them;

but no sooner had the pains of hell found me, than I found trouble and sorrow, enough, and soon enough.—*Joseph Caryl.*

*Verse 3.*—See how the saints instead of lessening the dangers and tribulations, with which they are exercised by God, magnify them in figurative phrasology: neither do they conceal their distress of soul, but clearly and willingly set it forth. Far otherwise are the minds of those who regard their own glory and not the glory of God. The saints, that they may make more illustrious the glory of the help of God, declare things concerning themselves which make but little for their own glory.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

*Verses 3—7.*—Those usually have most of heaven upon earth, that formerly have met with most of hell upon earth. “*The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow: (as Jonas crying in the belly of hell). But look upon him within two or three verses after, and you may see him in an ecstasy, as if he were in heaven; verse 7: “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.”—Matthew Lawrence.*

*Verse 4.*—“*The name of the LORD.*” God’s name, as it is set out in the word, is both a glorious name, full of majesty; and also a gracious name, full of mercy. His majesty worketh fear and reverence, his mercy faith and confidence. By these graces man’s heart is kept within such a compass, that he will neither presume above that which is meet, nor despond more than there is cause. But where God’s name is not rightly known, it cannot be avoided but that they who come before him must needs rush upon the rock of presumption, or sink into the gulf of desperation. Necessary, therefore, it is that God be known of them that pray to him, that in truth they may say, “*We have called upon the name of the LORD.*” Be persuaded hereby so to offer up your spiritual sacrifice of supplication to God, that he may have respect to your persons and prayers, as he had respect to Abel and his offering. Learn to know the name of God, as in his word it is made known; and then, especially when you draw near to him, meditate on his name. Assuredly God will take good notice of them that take due notice of him, and will open his ears to them by name who rightly call upon his name.—*William Gouge.*

*Verse 4.*—“*O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*” A short prayer for so great a suit, and yet as short as it was, it prevailed. If we wondered before at the power of God, we may wonder now at the power of prayer, that can prevail with God, for obtaining of that which in nature is impossible, and to reason is incredible.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 4.*—We learn here that there is nothing better and more effectual in distressing agonies than assiduous prayer—“*Then called I upon the name of the LORD;*” but in such prayers the first care ought to be for the salvation of the soul—“*I beseech thee, deliver my soul;*” for, this being done, God also either removes or mitigates the bodily disease.—*Solomon Gesner.*

*Verse 5.*—“*Gracious is the LORD,*” etc. He is *gracious* in hearing, he is “*righteous*” in judging, he is “*merciful*” in pardoning, and how, then, can I doubt of his will to help me? He is righteous to reward according to deserts; he is gracious to reward above deserts; yea, he is merciful to reward without deserts; and how, then, can I doubt of his will to help me? He is gracious, and this shews his bounty; he is righteous, and this shews his justice; yea, he is merciful, and this shews his love; and how, then, can I doubt of his will to help me? If he were not gracious I could not hope he would hear me; if he were not righteous, I could not depend upon his promise; if he were not merciful, I could not expect his pardon; but now that he is gracious and righteous and merciful too, how can I doubt of his will to help me?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 5.*—The first attribute, “*gracious,*” (רַחֵם) hath especial respect to that goodness which is in God himself. The root (רָחַם) whence it cometh signifieth to do a thing gratis, freely, of one’s own mind and goodwill. This is that word which is used to set out the free grace and mere goodwill of God, thus (וְרַחֵם אֱלֹהִים אֶתְּמוּנָתְךָ), “*I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,*” Exod. xxxiii. 19. There is also an adverb (רַחֵם) derived thence, which signifieth gratis, freely, as where Laban thus speaketh to Jacob, “*Shouldst thou serve me for nought?*” Thus is the word opposed to merit. And hereby the prophet acknowledged that the deliverance which God gave was for the Lord’s own sake, upon no desert of him that was delivered.

The second attribute, “*righteous*” or just, (צַדִּיק), hath particular relation to the

promise of God. God's righteousness largely taken is the integrity or equity of all his counsels, words, and actions. . . . Particularly is God's righteousness manifested in giving reward and taking vengeance. Thus it is said to be "a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest," 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. . . . But the occasion of mentioning God's righteousness here in this place being to show the ground of his calling on God, and of God's delivering him, it must needs have respect to God's word and promise, and to God's truth in performing what he hath promised.—*William Gouge*.

*Verse 5.*—"The LORD"; "our God." The first title, "Lord," sets out the excellency of God. Fit mention is here made thereof, to shew the blessed concurrence of greatness and goodness in God. Though he be Jehovah the Lord, yet is he gracious, and righteous, and merciful. The second title, "our God," manifesteth a peculiar relation betwixt him and the faithful that believe in him, and depend on him, as this prophet did. And to them in an especial manner the Lord is gracious, which moved him thus to change the person; for where he had said in the third person "the Lord is gracious," here, in the first person, he says, "our God," yet so that he appropriateth not this privilege to himself, but acknowledgeth it to be common to all of like character by using the plural number, "our."—*William Gouge*.

*Verse 5.*—The "Berlenburger Bibelwerk" says, "The righteousness is very significantly placed between the grace and the mercy: for it is still necessary, that the evil should be mortified and driven out. Grace lays, as it were, the foundation for salvation, and mercy perfects the work; but not till righteousness has finished its intermediary work."—*Rudolph Stier*.

*Verse 5.*—"Our God is merciful." Mercy is God's darling attribute; and by his infinite wisdom he has enabled mercy to triumph over justice without in any degree violating his honour or his truth. The character of merciful is that by which our God seems to delight in being known. When he proclaimed himself amid terrific grandeur to the children of Israel, it was as "the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin." And such was the impression of this his character on the mind of Jonah that he says to him, "I knew that thou wert a merciful God." These, however, are not mere assertions—claims made to the character by God on the one hand, and extorted without evidence from man on the other; for in whatever way we look upon God, and examine into his conduct towards his creatures, we perceive it to bear the impression of mercy. Nor can we more exalt the Lord our God than by speaking of his mercy and confiding in it; for our "Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and put their trust in his mercy."—*John Gwyther, 1833*.

*Verse 6.*—"The LORD preserveth the simple." God taketh most care of them that, being otherwise least cared for, wholly depend on him. These are in a good sense simple ones; simple in the world's account, and simple in their own eyes. Such as he that said, "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Ps. xxii. 6. And again, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me." Ps. xl. 17. These are those poor ones of a contrite spirit on whom the Lord looketh. Isai. lxvi. 2. Of such fatherless is God a father; and of such widows a judge. Read Ps. lxxviii. 5, and cxlvi. 7, 8, 9. Yea, read observantly the histories of the Gospel, and well weigh who they were to whom Christ in the days of his flesh afforded succour, and you shall find them to be such simple ones as are here intended.

By such objects the free grace and merciful mind of the Lord is best manifested. Their case being most miserable, in reference to human helps, the greater doth God's mercy appear to be; and since there is nothing in them to procure favour or succour from God, for in their own and others' eyes they are nothing, what God doth for them evidently appeareth to be freely done.

Behold here how of all others they who seem to have least cause to trust on God have most cause to trust on him. Simple persons, silly wretches, despicable fools in the world's account, who have not subtle brains, or crafty wits to search after indirect means, have, notwithstanding, enough to support them, in the grand fact that they are such as the Lord preserveth. Now, who knoweth not that "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes"? Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.—*William Gouge*.

*Verse 6.*—"The LORD preserveth the simple." How delightful it is to be able to reflect on the character of God as preserving the soul. The word properly signifies

to defend us at any season of danger. The Hebrew word which is translated "simple," signifies one who has no control over himself, one that cannot resist the power and influence of those around, and one, therefore, subject to the greatest peril from which he has naturally no deliverance. "The Lord preserveth": his eye is upon them, his hand is over them, and they cannot fall. The word "simple" signifies likewise those that are ignorant of their condition, and not watching over their foes. Delightful thought, that though we may be thus ignorant, yet we are blessed with the means of escape! We may be simple to the last extent, and our simplicity may be such as to involve our mind in the greatest doubt: the Lord preserveth us, and let us rest in him. It is delightful to reflect, that it is the simple in whom the Lord delights, whom he loves to bless. We are sometimes especially in the condition in which we may be inclined to make the inquiry, how we may be saved. We suppose there are many truths to be apprehended, many principles to be realized before we can be saved. No; "the Lord preserveth the simple." We may be able to reconcile scarcely any of the doctrines of Christianity with each other; we may find ourselves in the greatest perplexity when we examine the evidences on which they rest; we may be exposed to great difficulty when we seek to apply them to practical usefulness; but still we may adopt the language before us: "*The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*"—R. S. M'All, 1834.

Verse 6.—"*The Lord preserveth the simple.*" The term *simple* equals the "simplicity" of the New Testament, namely, that pure mind towards God, which, without looking out for help from any other quarter, and free from all dissimulation, expects salvation from him alone.—Augustus F. Tholuck.

Verse 6.—"*The simple.*" They are such as honestly keep the plain way of God's commandments, without those slights, or creeks of carnal policy, for which men are in the world esteemed wise; see Gen. xxv. 27, where Jacob is called a plain man. Simple or foolish he calls them, because they are generally so esteemed amongst the wise of the world; not that they are so silly as they are esteemed; for if the Lord can judge of wisdom or folly, the only fool is the Atheist and profane person (Ps. xiv. 1); the only wise man in the world is the plain, downright Christian (Deut. iv. 6), who keeps himself precisely in all states to that plain, honest course the Lord hath prescribed him. To such simple ones, God's fools, who in their misery and affliction keep them only to the means of deliverance and comfort which the Lord hath prescribed them, belongs this blessing of preservation from mischief, or destruction: so Solomon (Prov. xvi. 17), "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil." "He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul"; see also Prov. xix. 16, 23; for exemplification see in Asa, 2 Chron. xiv. 9—12, and xvi. 7, 8, 9, read the excellent speech of Hanani the seer.—William Stater, 1638.

Verse 6.—"*I was brought low.*" By affliction and trial. The Hebrew literally means to hang down, to be pendulous, to swing, to waive—as a bucket in a well, or as the slender branches of the palm, the willow, etc. Then it means to be slack, feeble, weak, as in sickness, etc. It probably refers to the prostration of strength by disease. "*And he helped me.*" He gave me strength; he restored me.—Albert Barnes.

Verse 6.—"*I was brought low, and he helped me.*" The word translated "*brought low,*" בָּרָאָהּ אֶל הַיָּבֵשׁ, properly signifieth to be drawn dry. The metaphor is taken from ponds, or brooks, or rivers that are clean exhausted and dried up, where water utterly faileth. Thus doth Isaiah use this word, "The brooks shall be emptied and dried up," Isai. xix. 6, בָּרָאָהּ וְנִקְרְבוּ אֵרֶץ. Being applied to man, it setteth out such an one as is spent, utterly wasted, or, as we use to speak, clean gone, who hath no ability to help himself, no means of help, no hope of help from others.

The other word whereby the succour which God afforded is expressed, and translated "*helped*" אָבַד עֵזִי מִיָּדַי, signifieth such help as freeth out of danger. It is usually translated "to save."—William Gouge.

Verse 6.—"*I was brought low, and he helped me.*" Then is the time of help, when men are brought low: and therefore God who does all things in due time when I was brought low, then helped me. Wherefore, O my soul, let it never trouble thee how low soever thou be brought, for when thy state is at the lowest, then is God's assistance at the nearest. We may truly say, God's ways are not as the ways of the world, for in the world when a man is once brought low, he is commonly trampled upon, and nothing is heard then but, "down with him, down to the ground": but with God it is otherwise; for his delight is to raise up them that fall, and when

they are brought low, then to help them. Hence it is no such hard case for a man to be brought low, may I not rather say his case is happy? For is it not better to be brought low, and have God to help him, than to be set aloft and left to help himself? At least, O my body, this may be a comfort to thee: for thou art sure to be brought low, as low as the grave, which is low indeed: yet there thou mayest rest in hope; for even there the Lord will not fail to help thee.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 6.—“*He helped me.*” Helped me both to bear the worst and to hope the best; helped me to pray, else desire had failed; helped me to wait, else faith had failed.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—“*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*” The Psalmist had been at a great deal of unrest, and much off the hooks, as we say; now, having prayed (for prayer hath *vim pacativam*, a pacifying property), he calleth his soul to rest; and rocketh it asleep in a spiritual security. Oh, learn this holy art; acquaint thyself with God, acquiesce in him, and be at peace; so shall good be done unto thee. Job xxii. 21. *Sis Sabbatum Christi.* Luther.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 7.—Gracious souls rest in God; they and none else. Whatever others may speak of a rest in God, only holy souls know what it means. “*Return unto thy rest, O my soul,*” to thy rest in calm and cheerful submission to God’s will, delight in his service, satisfaction in his presence, and joy in communion begun with him here below, which is to be perfected above in its full fruition. Holy souls rest in God, and in his will; in his will of precept as their sovereign Lord, whose commands concerning all things are right, and in the keeping of which there is great reward; in his will of providence as their absolute owner, and who does all things well; in himself as their God, their portion, and their chief good, in whom they shall have all that they can need, or are capable of enjoying to complete their blessedness for ever.—*Daniel Wilcox.*

Verse 7.—“*Return unto thy rest.*” Return to that rest which Christ gives to the weary and heavy laden, Matt. xi. 28. Return to thy Noah, his name signifies *rest*, as the dove when she found no rest returned to the ark. I know no word more proper to close our eyes when at night when we go to sleep, nor to close them with at death, that long sleep, than this, “*Return unto thy rest, O my soul.*”—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 7.—“*Return unto thy rest.*” Consider the variety of aspects of that rest which a good man seeks, and the ground upon which he will endeavour to realize it. It consists in, 1. Rest from the perplexities of ignorance, and the wanderings of error. 2. Rest from the vain efforts of self-righteousness, and the disquietude of a proud and legal spirit. 3. Rest from the alarms of conscience, and the apprehensions of punishment hereafter. 4. Rest from the fruitless struggles of our degenerate nature, and unaided conflicts with indwelling sin. 5. Rest from the fear of temporal suffering and solicitude arising from the prospect of danger and trial. 6. Rest from the distraction of uncertainty and indecision of mind, and from the fluctuations of undetermined choice.—*R. S. M’All.*

Verse 7.—“*Return,*” *שׁוּב*. This is the very word which the angel used to Hagar when she fled from her mistress, “*Return,*” Gen. xvi. 9. As Hagar through her mistress’ rough dealing with her fled from her, so the soul of this prophet by reason of affliction fell from its former quiet confidence in God. As the angel therefore biddeth Hagar “*return to her mistress,*” so the understanding of this prophet biddeth his soul return to its rest.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 7.—“*Rest.*” The word “*rest*” is put in the plural, as indicating complete and entire rest, at all times, and under all circumstances.—*A. Edersheim.*

Verses 7, 8.—“*For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*” He hath dealt indeed most bountifully with thee, for where thou didst make suit but for one thing, he hath granted thee three. Thou didst ask but to have my soul delivered, and he hath delivered mine eyes and my feet besides; and with a deliverance in each of them the greatest that could be: for what greater deliverance to my soul than to be delivered from death? What greater deliverance to my eyes than to be delivered from tears? What to my feet than to be delivered from falling? That if now, O my soul, thou return not to thy rest, thou wilt show thyself to be most insatiable; seeing thou hast not only more than thou didst ask, but as much indeed as was possible to be asked.

But can my soul die? and if not, what bounty is it to deliver my soul from that to which it is not subject? The soul indeed, though immortal, hath yet her

ways of dying. It is one kind of death to the soul to be parted from the body, but the truest kind is to be parted from God; and from both these kinds of death he hath delivered my soul. From the first, by delivering me from a dangerous sickness that threatened a dissolution of my soul and body; from the other, by delivering me from the guilt of sin, which threatened a separation from the favour of God; and are not these bounties so great as to give my soul just cause of returning to her rest?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verses 7, 9.*—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." . . . "I will walk." How can these two stand together? *Motus et quies private opponuntur*, saith the philosopher, motion and rest are opposite; now walking is a motion, as being an act of the locomotive faculty. How then could David return to his rest and yet walk? You must know that walking and rest here mentioned, being of a divine nature, do not oppose each other; spiritual rest maketh no man idle, and therefore it is no enemy to walking; spiritual walking maketh no man weary, and therefore it is no enemy to rest. Indeed, they are so far from being opposite that they are subservient to each other, and it is hard to say whether that rest be the cause of this walking, or this walking a cause of that rest. Indeed, both are true, since he that rests in God cannot but walk before him, and by walking before, we come to rest in God. Returning to rest is an act of confidence, since there is no rest to be had but in God, nor in God but by believing affiance in, and reliance on him. Walking before God is an act of obedience; when we disobey we wander and go astray, only by obedience we walk. Now these two are so far from being enemies, that they are companions and ever go together; confidence being a means to quicken obedience, and obedience to strengthen confidence.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

*Verse 8.*—"Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." Lo, here a deliverance, not from one, but many dangers, to wit, "death," "tears," "falling." Single deliverances are as threads; but when multiplied, they become as a cord twisted of many threads, more potent to draw us to God. Any one mercy is as a link, but many favours are as a chain consisting of several links, to bind us the closer to our duty; *vis unita fortior*. Frequent droppings of the rain cannot but make an impression even on the stone, and renewed mercies may well prevail with the stony heart. *Parisiensis* relateth a story of a man whom (notwithstanding his notorious and vicious courses) God was pleased to accumulate favours upon, so that at last he cried out, "*Vicisti, benignissime Deus, indefatigabili tua bonitate*, Most gracious God, thy unwearied goodness hath overcome my obstinate wickedness"; and from that time devoted himself to God's service. No wonder, then, if David upon deliverance from such numerous and grievous afflictions, maketh this his resolve, to "walk before the Lord in the land of the living."—*Nathanael Hardy.*

*Verse 8.*—As an humble and sensible soul will pack up many troubles in one, so a thankful soul will divide one mercy into sundry particular branches, as here the Psalmist distinguisheth, the delivery of his soul from death, of his eyes from tears, and of his feet from falling.—*David Dickson.*

*Verse 8.*—Some distinguish the three particulars thus: "He hath delivered my soul from death," by giving me a good conscience; "mine eyes from tears," by giving a quiet conscience; "my feet from falling," by giving an enlightened and assured conscience.—*William Gouge.*

*Verse 8.*—"My feet from falling." Whether means he, into penal misery and mischief, or into sin? There is a *lapsus moralis*, as 1 Cor. x. 12. Err I? or would David here be understood of sinning? So Ps. lxxiii. 2: "My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." And if I be not deceived, the text leans to that meaning, rising still from the less to the greater. First. It is more bounty to be kept from grief than from death, for there is a greater enlargement from misery. It is not more bounty to be kept from the sense of affliction than to be kept from death, which is the greatest of temporal evils; but it is more bounty in a gracious eye to be kept from sin than from death. Secondly. *How his eyes from tears?* If not kept from sin? That had surely cost him many a tear, as Peter (Matt. xxvi. 75). But understand it *de lapsu morali*, so the gradation still riseth to enlarge God's bounty; yea, which I count the greatest blessing, in these afflictions he kept me steady in my course of piety, and suffered not afflictions to sway my heart from him. Still, in a gracious eye, the benefit seems greater to be delivered from sinning than from the greatest outward affliction. That is the reason Paul (Rom. viii. 37) triumphs over all afflictions. 2 Cor. xi. and xii. He counts them his glory, his



crown; but speaking of the prevailing of corruption in particular, he bemoans himself as the miserablist man alive. Rom. vii. 24.—*William Slater.*

Verse 9.—“*I will walk,*” etc. It is a holy resolution which this verse records. The previous verse had mentioned among the mercies vouchsafed, “Thou hast delivered my feet from falling”; and the first use of the restored limb is, “*I will walk before the LORD.*” It reminds one of the crippled beggar at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, to whom Peter had said, “In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk”; and “immediately his ankle-bones received strength, and he leaping up stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” It is a very sure mark of a grateful heart to employ the gift to the praise of the giver, in such a manner as he would most wish it to be employed.—*Barton Bourchier.*

Verse 9.—When thou, my soul, returnest to this rest, thou shalt walk in order that thou mayest have some exercise in thy rest, that thy resting may not make thee restive. “*I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.*” For now that my feet are delivered from falling, how can I better employ them than in walking? Were they delivered from falling that they should stand still and be idle? No, my soul, but to encourage me to walk: and where is so good walking as in the land of the living? Alas! what walking is it in the winter, when all things are dead, when the very grass lies buried under ground, and scarce anything that has life in it is to be seen? But then is the pleasant walking, when nature spreads her green carpet to walk upon, and then it is the land of the living, when the trees shew they live, by bringing forth, if not fruits, at least leaves; when the valleys shew they live, by bringing forth sweet flowers to delight the smell, at least fresh grass to please the eyes. But is this the walking in the land of the living that David means? O my soul, to walk in the land of the living is to walk in the paths of righteousness: for there is no such death to the soul as sin, no such cause of tears to the eyes as guiltiness of conscience, no such falling of the feet as to fall from God: and therefore, to say the truth, the soul can never return to its rest if we walk not within in the paths of righteousness; and we cannot well say whether this rest be a cause of the walk, or the walking be a cause of the resting: but this we may say, they are certainly companions the one to the other, which is in effect but this—that justification can never be without sanctification. Peace of conscience, and godliness of life, can never be one without the other. Or is it perhaps that David means that land of the living where Enoch and Elias are living, with the living God? But if he mean so, how can he speak so confidently, and say, “*I will walk in the land of the living*”? as though he could come to walk there by his own strength, or at his own pleasure? He therefore gives his reason: “*I believed, and therefore I spake,*” for the voice of faith is strong, and speaks with confidence; and because in faith he believes that he should come to walk in the land of the living, therefore with confidence he speaks it, “*I will walk in the land of the living.*”—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 9.—“*I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living,*” i.e., I shall pass the whole of my life under his fatherly care and protection. The prophet has regard to the custom of men, and chiefly of parents: for those who ardently love their children have them always in their thoughts and carry them there, never ceasing from care and anxiety about them, but being always attentive to their safety. *Omnis enim in natis chari stat cura parentis.* Children are, therefore, said to walk before and in the sight of their parents, because they have them as constant guardians of their health and safety. Thus also the godly in this life walk before God, that is to say, are defended by his care and protection.—*Mollerus.*

Verse 9.—“*I will walk before the LORD.*” According to a different reading of the first word, “*I shall,*” and, “*I will,*” the clause puts on several senses; if read “*I shall walk,*” they are words of *confident expectation*; if “*I will,*” they are words of *obedient resolution.* According to the former, the Psalmist promiseth somewhat to himself from God; according to the latter, he promiseth somewhat of himself to God. Both these constructions are probable and profitable. “*Before God*”; that is, in his service; or, “*before God,*” that is, under his care. Let us consider both senses. 1. “*I shall walk before the LORD in the land of the living*”; that is, by continuing in this world, I shall have opportunity of doing God service. It was not because those holy men had less assurance of God’s love than we, but because they had greater affections to God’s service than we, that this life was so amiable in their eyes. To this purpose the reasonings of David and Hezekiah concerning death and the grave

are very observable. "Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth"? so David, Ps. xxx. 9. "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee"; so Hezekiah, Isal. xxxviii. 18. They saw death would render them useless for God's honour, and therefore they prayed for life.

It lets us see why a religious man may desire life, that he may "*walk before the LORD,*" and minister to him in the place wherein he hath set him. Indeed, that joy, hope, and desire of life which is founded upon this consideration is not only lawful, but commendable: and truly herein is a vast difference between the wicked and the godly. To walk in the land of the living is the wicked man's desire, yea, were it possible he would walk here for ever; but for what end? only to enjoy his lusts, have his fill of pleasure, and increase his wealth: whereas the godly man's aim in desiring to live is that he may "*walk before God,*" advance his glory, and perform his service. Upon this account it is that one hath fitly taken notice how David doth not say, I shall now satiate myself with delights in my royal city, but, "*I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*"

2. And most suitably to this interpretation, this "*before the LORD,*" means *under the Lord's careful eye.* The words according to the Hebrew may be read, *before the face of the LORD,* by which is meant his presence, and that not general, before which all men walk, but special, before which only good men walk. Indeed, in this sense *God's face* is as much as his favour; and as to be cast out of his sight is to be under his anger, so to walk before his face is to be in favour with him: so that the meaning is, as the Psalmist had said, I shall live securely and safely in this world under the careful protection of the Almighty; and this is the confidence which he here seemeth to utter with so much joy, that God's gracious providence should watch over him the remainder of his days.—*Nathanael Hardy, in a Sermon entitled "Thankfulness in Grain," 1654.*

*Verse 9.*—"In the land of the living." These words admit of a threefold interpretation, being understood by some, especially for the land of Judea. By others, erroneously for the Jerusalem which is above. By the most, and most probably, for this habitable earth, the present world.

1. That exposition which Cajetan, Lorinus, with others, give of the words, would not be rejected, who conceive that by "*the land of the living*" David here meaneth Judea, in which, or rather over which being constituted king, he resolveth to walk before God, and do him service. This is not improbably that "*land of the living*" in which the Psalmist when an exile "believed to see the goodness of the Lord"; this is certainly that "*land of the living*" wherein God promiseth to "set his glory"; nor was this title without just reason appropriated to that country. (1.) *Partly,* because it was a "*land*" which afforded the most plentiful supports and comforts of natural life, in regard of the wholesomeness of the climate, the goodness of the soil, the overflowing of milk and honey, with other conveniences both for food and delight. (2.) *Chiefly,* because it was the "*land*" in which the living God was worshipped, and where he vouchsafed to place his name; whereas the other parts of the world worshipped lifeless things, of which the Psalmist saith, "They have mouths, and speak not; eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not."

2. "*The land of the living*" is construed by the ancients to be that *heavenly country,* the place of the blessed. Indeed, this appellation does most fitly agree with heaven: this world is *desertum mortuorum,* a desert of dead, at least, dying men; that only is *regio vivorum,* a region of living saints. "He who is our life" is in heaven, yea, "our life is hid with him in God," and therefore we cannot be said to live till we come thither. . . . In this sense no doubt that devout bishop and martyr, Babilas, used the words, who being condemned by Numerianus, the emperor, to an unjust death, a little before his execution repeated this and the two preceding verses, with a loud voice. Nor is it unfit for any dying saint to comfort himself with the like application of these words, and say in a confident hope of that blessed sight, "*I shall walk before the LORD in the land of the living.*"

3. But doubtless the literal and proper meaning of these words is of *David's abode in the world;* during which time, wheresoever he should be, he would "*walk before God*"; for that seems to be the emphasis of the plural number, *lands,* according to the original. The world consists of many countries, several lands, and it is possible for men either by force, or unwillingly, to remove from one country to another: but a good man when he changeth his country, yet altereth not his religion, yea, wherever he is he resolveth to serve his God.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

*Verse 9.*—"Land of the living." How unmeet, how shameful, how odious a

thing it is that dead men should be here on the face of the earth, which is "*the land of the living*." That there are such is too true. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," 1 Tim. v. 6; Sardis had a name that she lived, but was dead, Rev. iii. 1; "The dead bury their dead," Matt. viii. 22; all natural men are "dead in sins," Eph. ii. 1, 2 Cor. v. 14.—*William Gouge*.

Verses 9, 12, etc.—The Hebrew word that is rendered *walk*, signifies a continued action, or the reiteration of an action. David resolves that he will not only take a turn or two with God, or walk a pretty way with God, as Orpah did with Ruth, and then take his leave of God, as Orpah did of her mother, Ruth i. 10—15; but he resolves, whatever comes on it, that he will walk constantly, resolutely, and perpetually before God; or before the face of the Lord. Now, walking before the face of the Lord doth imply a very exact, circumspect, accurate, and precise walking before God; and indeed, no other walking is either suitable or pleasing to the eye of God. But is this all that he will do upon the receipt of such signal mercies? Oh, no! for he resolves to take the cup of salvation, and to call upon the name of the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, vers. 13, 17. But is this all that he will do? Oh, no! for he resolves that he will presently pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all his people, vers. 14, 18. But is this all that he will do? Oh, no! for he resolves that he will love the Lord better than ever and more than ever, vers. 1, 2. He loved God before with a real love, but having now received such rare mercies from God, he is resolved to love God with a more raised love, and with a more inflamed love, and with a more active and stirring love, and with a more growing and increasing love than ever.—*Thomas Brooks*.

Verse 10.—"*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" It is not sufficient to believe, unless thou also openly confessest before unbelievers, tyrants, and all others. Next to believing follows confession; and therefore, those who do not make a confession ought to fear; as, on the contrary, those should hope who speak out what they have believed.—*Paulus Palanterius*.

Verse 10.—"*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" That is to say, I firmly believe what I say, therefore I make no scruple of saying it. This should be connected with the preceding verse, and the full stop should be placed at "*spoken.*"—*Samuel Horsley*.

Verse 10.—"*I believed,*" etc. Some translate the words thus: *I believed when I said, I am greatly afflicted*: I believed when I said in my haste, "*all men are liars*"; *q.d.*, Though I have had my *offs* and my *ons*, though I have passed several frames of heart and tempers of soul in my trials, yet I believed still, I never let go my hold, my grip of God, in my perturbation.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 10.—The heart and tongue should go together. The tongue should always be the heart's interpreter, and the heart should always be the tongue's suggester; what is spoken with the tongue should be first stamped upon the heart and wrought off from it. Thus it should be in all our communications and exhortations, especially when we speak or exhort about the things of God, and dispense the mysteries of heaven. David spake from his heart when he spake from his faith. "*I believed, therefore have I spoken.*" Believing is an act of the heart, "with the heart man believeth"; so that to say, "*I believed, therefore have I spoken,*" is as if he had said, I would never have spoken these things, if my heart had not been clear and upright in them. The apostle takes up that very protestation from David (2 Cor. iv. 13): "According as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak"; that is, we move others to believe nothing but what we believe, and are fully assured of ourselves.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 10.—"*I was greatly afflicted.*" After that our minstrel hath made mention of faith and of speaking the word of God, whereby are to be understood all good works that proceed and come forth out of faith, he now singeth of the cross, and sheweth that he was very sore troubled, grievously threatened, uncharitably blasphemed, evil reported, maliciously persecuted, cruelly troubled, and made to suffer all kinds of torments for uttering and declaring the word of God. "*I believed,*" saith he, "*therefore have I spoken; but I was very sore troubled.*" Christ's word and the cross are companions inseparable. As the shadow followeth the body, so doth the cross follow the word of Christ: and as fire and heat cannot be separated, so cannot the gospel of Christ and the cross be plucked asunder.—*Thomas Becon* (1511—1567 or 1570).

Verses 10, 11.—The meaning seems to be this—I spake as I have declared (ver. 4)

because I trusted in God. I was greatly afflicted, I was in extreme distress, I was in great astonishment and trembling (as the word rendered "*haste*" signifies trembling as well as haste, as it is rendered in Deut. xx. 3;) and in these circumstances I did not trust in man; I said, "*all men are liars*"—i.e., not fit to be trusted in; those that will fail and deceive the hopes of those who trust in them, agreeable to Psalm lxi. 8, 9.—*Jonathan Edwards*.

Verse 11.—"*I said in my haste, All men are liars,*" Rather, in an ecstasy of despair, I said, the whole race of man is a delusion.—*Samuel Horsley*.

Verse 11.—"*All men are liars.*" That is to say, every man who speaks in the ordinary manner of men concerning happiness, and sets great value on the frail and perishable things of this world, is a liar; for true and solid happiness is not to be found in the country of the living. This explanation solves the sophism proposed by St. Basil. If every man be a liar, then David was a liar; therefore he lies when he says, every man is a liar—thus contradicting himself, and destroying his own position. This is answered easily; for when David spoke he did so not as man, but from an inspiration of the Holy Ghost.—*Robert Bellarmine*.

Verse 11.—"*All men are liars.*" Juvenal said, "Dare to do something worthy of transportation and imprisonment, if you mean to be of consequence. Honesty is praised, but starves." A pamphlet was published some time ago with the title, "*Whom shall we hang?*" A very appropriate one might now be written with a slight change in the title—"Whom shall we trust?"—From "*A New Dictionary of Quotations,*" 1872.

Verses 11—15.—It seems that to give the lie was not so heinous an offence in David's time as it is in these days; for else how durst he have spoken such words, "*That all men are liars,*" which is no less than to give the lie to the whole world? and yet no man, I think, will challenge him for saying so; no more than challenge St. John for saying that all men are sinners, and indeed how should any man avoid being a liar, seeing the very being of man is itself a lie? not only is it a vanity, and put in the balance less than vanity; but a very lie, promising great matters, and able to do just nothing, as Christ saith, "without me ye can do nothing": and so Christ seems to come in, to be David's second, and to make his word good, that *all men are liars*. And now let the world do its worst, and take the lie how it will, for David having Christ on his side, will always be able to make his part good against all the world, for Christ hath overcome the world.

But though all men may be said to be liars, yet not all men in all things; for then David himself should be a liar in this: but all men perhaps in something or other, at sometime or other, in some kind or other. Absolute truth is not found in any man, but in that man only who was not man only; for if he had been so, it had not perhaps been found in him neither, seeing absolute truth and deity are as relatives, never found to be asunder.

But in what thing is it that all men should be liars? Indeed, in this for one; to think that God regards not, and loves not them whom he suffers to be afflicted; for we may rather think he loves them most whom he suffers to be most afflicted; and we may truly say he would never have suffered his servant Job to be afflicted so exceeding cruelly, if he had not loved him exceeding tenderly; for there is nothing lost by suffering afflictions. No, my soul, they do but serve to make up the greater weight of glory, when it shall be revealed.

But let God's afflictions be what they can be, yet I will always acknowledge they can never be in any degree so great as his benefits: and oh, that *I could think of something that I might render to him for all his benefits*: for shall I receive such great, such infinite benefits from him, and shall I render nothing to him by way of gratefulness? But, alas, what have I to render? All my rendering to him will be but taking more from him: for all I can do is but to "*take the cup of salvation, and call upon his name,*" and what rendering is there in this taking? If I could take the cup of tribulation, and drink it off for his sake, this might be a rendering of some value; but this, God knows, is no work for me to do. It was his work, who said, "Can ye drink of the cup, of which I shall drink?" Indeed, he drank of the cup of tribulation, to the end that we might take the cup of salvation; but then in taking it we must call upon his name; upon his name and upon no other; for else we shall make it a cup of condemnation, seeing there is no name under heaven, in which we may be saved, but only the name of Jesus.

Yet it may be some rendering to the Lord if I pay my vows, and do, as it were,

my penance openly ; “ *I will therefore pay my vows to the LORD, in the presence of all his people.* ” But might he not pay his vows as well in his closet, between God and himself, as to do it publicly ? No, my soul, it serves not his turn, but he must pay them in the presence of all his people ; yet not to the end he should be applauded for a just prayer ; for though he pay them, yet he can never pay them to the full ; but to the end, that men seeing his good works, may glorify God by his example. And the rather perhaps, for that David was a king, and the king’s example prevails much with the people, to make them pay their vows to God : but most of all, that by this means David’s piety may not be barren, but may make a breed of piety in the people also : which may be one mystical reason why it was counted a curse in Israel to be barren ; for he that pays not his vows to God in the presence of his people may well be said to be barren in Israel seeing he begets no children to God by his example. And perhaps, also, the vows which David means here was the doing of some mean things, unfit in show for the dignity of a king ; as when it was thought a base thing in him to dance before the ark ; he then vowed he would be baser yet : and in this case, to pay his vows before the people becomes a matter of necessity : for as there is no honour to a man whilst he is by himself alone, so there is no shame to a man but before the people : and therefore to shew that he is not ashamed to do any thing how mean soever, so it may tend to the glorifying of God ; “ *he will pay his vows in the presence of all his people.* ” And he will do it though it cost him his life, for if he die for it he knows that “ *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.* ” But that which is precious is commonly desired : and doth God then desire the death of his saints ? He desires, no doubt, that death of his saints which is to die to sin : but for any other death of his saints, it is therefore said to be precious in his sight, because he lays it up with the greater carefulness. And for this it is there are such several mansions in God’s house, that to them whose death is precious in his sight he may assign the most glorious mansions. This indeed is the reward of martyrdom, and the encouragement of martyrs, though their sufferings be most insufferable, their troubles most intolerable ; yet this makes amends for all ; that “ *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.* ” For if it be so great a happiness to be acceptable in his sight, how great a happiness must it be to be precious in his sight ? When God, at the creation looked upon all his works, it is said he saw them to be all exceeding good : but it is not said that any of them were precious in his sight. How then comes death to be precious in his sight, that was none of his works, but is a destroyer of his works ? Is it possible that a thing which destroys his creatures should have a title of more value in his sight, than his creatures themselves ? O, my soul, this is one of the miracles of his saints, and perhaps one of those which Christ meant, when he said to his apostles, that greater miracles than he did they should do themselves : for what greater miracle than this, that death, which of itself is a thing most vile in the sight of God, yet once embraced by his saints, as it were by their touch only, becomes precious in his sight ? To alter a thing from being vile to be precious, is it not a greater miracle than to turn water into wine ? Indeed so it is ; death doth not damnify his saints, but his saints do dignify death. Death takes nothing away from his saints’ happiness, but his saints add lustre to death’s vileness. It is happy for death that ever it met with any of God’s saints ; for there was no way for it else in the world, to be ever had in any account : but why say I, in the world ? For it is of no account in the world for all this : it is but only in the sight of God ; but indeed this only is all in all ; for to be precious in God’s sight is more to be prized than the world itself. For when the world shall pass away, and all the glory of it be laid in the dust ; then shall trophies be erected for the death of his saints : and when all monuments of the world shall be utterly defaced, and all records quite raised out ; yet the death of his saints shall stand registered still, in fair red letters in the calendar of heaven. If there be glory laid up for them that die in the Lord ; much more shall they be glorified that die for the Lord.

I have wondered oftentimes, why God will suffer his saints to die ; I mean not the death natural, for I know *statutum est omnibus semel mori* ; but the death that is by violence, and with torture : for who could endure to see them he loves so cruelly handled ? But now I see the reason of it ; for, “ *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.* ” And what marvel then if he suffer his saints to die ; when by dying they are wrought, and made fit jewels to be set in his cabinet : for as God has a bottle which he fills up with the tears of his saints, so I may say he hath a cabinet which he decks up with the deaths of his saints : and, O my soul,

if thou couldst but comprehend what a glory it is to serve for a jewel in the decking up of God's cabinet, thou wouldest never wonder why he suffers his saints to be put to death, though with never so great torments, for it is but the same which Saint Paul saith : " The afflictions of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed."—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 12.*—"What shall I render unto the LORD?" Rendering to the true God, in a true and right manner, is the sum of true religion. This notion is consonant to the scriptures: thus: "Render unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii. 21. As true loyalty is a giving to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, so true piety is the giving to God the things that are God's. And so, in that parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, all we owe to God is expressed by the rendering the fruit of the vineyard; Matt. xxi. 41. Particular acts of religion are so expressed in the Scriptures Psalm lvi. 12; Hosea xiv. 2; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. Let this, then, be the import of David's מָה אֶעֱבֹד לַיהוָה, "What shall I render unto the LORD?" "In what things, and by what means, shall I promote religion in the exercise thereof? How shall I show myself duly religious towards him who hath been constantly and abundantly munificent in his benefits towards me?"—*Henry Hurst.*

*Verse 12.*—"All his benefits toward me." What reward shall we give unto the Lord, for all the benefits he hath bestowed? From the cheerless gloom of non-existence he waked us into being; he ennobled us with understanding; he taught us arts to promote the means of life; he commanded the prolific earth to yield its nurture; he bade the animals to own us as their lords. For us the rains descend; for us the sun sheddeth abroad its creative beams; the mountains rise, the valleys bloom, affording us grateful habitation and a sheltering retreat. For us the rivers flow; for us the fountains murmur; the sea opens its bosom to admit our commerce; the earth exhausts its stores; each new object presents a new enjoyment; all nature pouring her treasures at our feet, through the bounteous grace of him who wills that all be ours.—*Basil, 326—379.*

*Verse 12.*—"All his benefits." As partial obedience is not good, so partial thanks is worthless: not that any saint is able to keep all the commands, or reckon up all the mercies of God, much less return particular acknowledgment for every single mercy; but as he "hath respect unto all the commandments" (Ps. cxix. 6), so he desires to value highly every mercy, and to his utmost power give God the praise of all. An honest soul would not conceal any debt he owes to God, but calls upon itself to give an account for all his benefits. The skipping over one note in a lesson may spoil the grace of the music; unthankfulness for one mercy disparageth our thanks for the rest.—*William Gurnall.*

*Verse 13.*—"I will take the cup of salvation." It may probably allude to the libation offering, Numb. xxviii. 7; for the three last verses seem to intimate that the Psalmist was now at the temple, offering the meat-offering, drink-offering, and sacrifices to the Lord. "Cup" is often used by the Hebrews to denote plenty or abundance. So, "the cup of trembling," an abundance of misery; "the cup of salvation," an abundance of happiness.—*Adam Clarke.*

*Verse 13.*—"Cup of salvation." In holy Scripture there is mention made of drink-offerings, Gen. xxv. 14; Levit. xxiii. 13; Num. xv. 5; which were a certain quantity of wine that used to be poured out before the Lord; as the very notation of the word importeth, coming from a root שָׁפַךְ, *effudit*, that signifieth to pour out. As the meat-offerings, so the drink-offerings, were brought to the Lord in way of gratulation and thanksgiving. Some therefore in allusion hereunto so expound the text, as a promise and vow of the Psalmist, to testify his public gratitude by such an external and solemn rite as in the law was prescribed. This he termeth a cup, because that drink-offering was contained in a cup and poured out thereof; and he adds this epithet, "salvation," because that rite was an acknowledgment of salvation, preservation and deliverance from the Lord.

After their solemn gratulatory sacrifices they were wont to have a feast. When David had brought the ark of God into the tabernacle, they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, which being finished, "he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine." 1 Chron. xvi. 3. Hereby is implied that he made so bountiful a feast, as he had to give thereof to all the people there assembled. In this feast the master thereof was wont to take a great cup, and in lifting it up to declare the occasion

of that feast, and then in testimony of thankfulness to drink thereof to the guests, that they in order might pledge him. This was called a cup of salvation, or deliverance, because they acknowledged by the use thereof that God had saved and delivered them. Almost in a like sense the apostle styleth the sacramental cup, the cup of blessing. Here the prophet useth the plural number, thus, "cup of *salvations*," whereby, after the Hebrew elegancy, he meaneth many deliverances, one after another; or some great and extraordinary deliverance which was instead of many, or which comprised many under it. The word translated *take* (קָחָהּ אֲנִי) properly signifieth to lift up, and in that respect may the more fitly be applied to the forementioned taking of the festival cup and lifting it up before the guests. Most of our later expositors of this Psalm apply this phrase, "I will take the cup of salvation," to the forenamed gratulatory drink-offering, or to the taking and lifting up of the cup of blessing in the feast, after the solemn sacrifice. Both of these import one and the same thing, which is, that saints of old were wont to testify their gratefulness for great deliverances with some outward solemn rite.—*William Gouge*.

Verse 13.—"*Cup of salvation.*" *Yeshuoth*: Ps. xviii. 50, xxviii. 8, liii. 6. The cup of salvation, symbolized by the eucharistic cup of the Passover Supper.—Zion that had drunk of the "cup of trembling" (Isai. li. 17, 22) might now rise and drink of the cup of salvation.

To the church these words have had a yet deeper significancy added to them by St. Matt. xxvi. 27. Jesus, on that Passover night, drank of the bitter wine of God's wrath, that he might refill the cup with joy and health for his people.—*William Kay*.

Verses 13, 14, 17—19.—A fit mode of expressing our thanks to God is by solemn acts of worship, secret, social, and public. "The closet will be the first place where the heart will delight in pouring forth its lively joys; thence the feeling will extend to the family altar; and thence again it will proceed to the sanctuary of the Most High." (*J. Morison*). To every man God has sent a large supply of benefits, and nothing but perverseness can deny to him the praise of our lips.—*William S. Plumer*.

Verse 14.—A man that would have his credit as to the truth of his word kept up, would choose those to be witnesses of his performing who were witnesses of his promising. I think David took this heed in his rendering and paying his vows: "*I will do it*," saith he, "*now in the presence of all his people.*" The people were witnesses to his straits, prayers, and vows; and he will honour religion by performing in their sight what he sealed, signed, and delivered as his vow to the Lord. Seek not more witnesses than providence makes conscious of thy vows, lest this be interpreted ostentation and vain self-glorying: take so many, lest the good example be lost, or thou suspected of falsifying thy vow. Briefly and plainly: Didst thou on a sick bed make thy vow before thy family, and before the neighbourhood? Be careful to perform it before them; let them see thou art what thou vowedst to be. This care in thy vow will be a means to make it most to the advantage of religion, whilst all that heard or knew thy vow bear thee testimony that thou art thankful, and thus thou givest others occasion to glorify thy Father who is in heaven.—*Henry Hurst* (1690) in "*The Morning Exercises.*"

Verse 14.—"*I will pay my vows,*" etc. Foxe, in his Acts and Monuments, relates the following concerning the martyr, John Philpot:—"He went with the sheriffs to the place of execution; and when he was entering into Smithfield the way was foul, and two officers took him up to bear him to the stake. Then he said merrily, What, will ye make me a pope? I am content to go to my journey's end on foot. But first coming into Smithfield, he kneeled down there, saying these words, "I will pay my vows in thee, O Smithfield."

Verse 15.—"*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*" It is of value or importance in such respects as the following:—(1) As it is the removal of another of the redeemed to glory—the addition of one more to the happy hosts above; (2) as it is a new triumph of the work of redemption,—showing the power and the value of that work; (3) as it often furnishes a more direct proof of the reality of religion than any abstract argument could do. How much has the cause of religion been promoted by the patient deaths of Ignatius, Polycarp, and Latimer, and Ridley, and Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and the hosts of martyrs! What does not the world owe, and the cause of religion owe, to such scenes as occurred on the death-beds of Baxter, and Thomas Scott, and Halyburton, and Payson! What an argument for the truth of religion,—what an illustration of its sustaining power.—

what a source of comfort to those who are about to die,—to reflect that religion does not leave the believer when he most needs its support and consolation; that it can sustain us in the severest trial of our condition here; that it can illuminate what seems to us of all places *most* dark, cheerless, dismal, repulsive—"the valley of the shadow of death."—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 15.—"*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*" The death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight. First, because he "*seeth not as man seeth.*" He judgeth not according to the appearance; he sees all things as they really are, not partially: he traces the duration of his people, not upon the map of time, but upon the infinite scale of eternity; he weighs their happiness, not in the little balance of earthly enjoyment, but in the even and equipoised balance of the sanctuary. In the next place, I think the death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight, because *they are taken from the evil to come*; they are delivered from the burden of the flesh; and ransomed by the blood of the Redeemer, they are his purchased possession, and now he receives them to himself. Sin and sorrow for ever cease; there is no more death, the death of Christ is their redemption; by death he overcame him that had the power of death; therefore, they in him are enabled to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Again, the death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight, for in it *he often sees the very finest evidences of the work of his own Spirit upon the soul*; he sees faith in opposition to sense, leaning upon the promises of God. Reposing upon him who is mighty to save, he sees hope even against hope, anchoring the soul secure and steadfast on him who is passed within the veil; he sees patience acquiescing in a Father's will—humility bending beneath his sovereign hand—love issuing from a grateful heart. Again, the death of the saints is precious in the Lord's sight, *as it draws out the tenderness of surviving Christian friends*, and is abundant in the thanksgivings of many an anxious heart; it elicits the sympathies of Christian charity, and realises that communion of saints, of which the Apostle speaks, when he says, "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one rejoice they all joy." . . . The death of saints is precious, because the sympathy of prayer is poured forth from many a kindly Christian heart. . . . Nor is this all—the death of saints is precious, for *that is their day of seeing Jesus face to face.*—*Patrick Poun- den's Sermon in "The Irish Pulpit," 1831.*

Verse 15.—"*Precious.*" Their death is precious (*jakar*); the word of the text is, *in pretio fuit, magni estimatum est.* See how the word is translated in other texts. 1. Honourable, Isai. xliii. 4 (*jakarta*); "thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable." 2. Much set by, 1 Sam. xviii. 30; "His name was much set by." 3. Dear, Jer. xxxi. 20. *An filius (jakkir) pretiosus mihi Ephraim*: "Is Ephraim my dear son?" 4. Splendid, clear, or glorious, Job xxxi. 16. *Si vidi lunam (jaker) pretiosam et abeuntem*: "the moon walking in brightness."

Put all these expressions together, and then we have the strength of David's word, "*The death of the saints is precious*"; that is, 1. honourable; 2. much set by; 3. dear; 4. splendid and glorious in the sight of the Lord.—*Samuel Torshell, in "The House of Mourning," 1660.*

Verse 15.—"*Precious.*" It is proper to advert, in the first place, to the apparent primary import of the phrase, namely, *Almighty God watches over, and sets a high value upon the holy and useful lives of his people*, and will not lightly allow those lives to be abbreviated or destroyed. In the second place, the words lead us to advert to the *control which he exercises over the circumstances of their death.* These are under his special arrangement. They are too important in his estimation to be left to accident. In fact, chance has no existence. In the intervention of second causes, he takes care always to overrule and control them for good. Let the weakest believer among you be quite sure, be "confident of this very thing," that he will never suffer your great enemy to take advantage of anything in the manner of your death, to do you spiritual harm. No, on the contrary, he takes all its circumstances under his immediate and especial disposal. The sentiment will admit, perhaps, of a third illustration; *when the saints are dying, the Lord looks upon them, and is merciful unto them.* Who can say how often he answers prayer, even in the cases of dying believers? Never does he fail to support, even where he does not see good to spare. By the whispers of his love, by the witness of his Spirit, by the assurance of his presence, by the preparatory revelation of heavenly glory, he strengthens his afflicted ones, he makes all their bed in their sickness. Ah! and when, perhaps, they scarcely possess a bed to languish upon, when poverty or other calamitous circumstances



leave them, in the sorrow of sickness, no place of repose but the bare ground for their restless bodies, and his bosom for their spirits, do they ever find God fail them? No; many a holy man has slept the sleep of death with the missionary Martyn, in a strange and inhospitable land, or with the missionary Smith, upon the floor of a dungeon, and yet

“ Jesus has made their dying bed  
As soft as downy pillows are.”

When no other eye saw, when no other heart felt, for these two never-to-be-forgotten martyrs, murdered men of God, and apostles of Jesus, then were they precious in God's sight, and he was present with them. And so it is with all his saints, who are faithful unto death. Fourthly, we are warranted by the text and the tenor of Scripture, in affirming that *the Lord attaches great importance to the death-bed itself*. This is in his estimate—whatever it may be in ours—too precious, too important, to be overlooked; and hence it is often with emphasis, though always with a practical bearing, recorded in Scripture. It is possible, certainly, to make too much of it, by substituting, as a criterion of character, that which may be professed under the excitement of dying sufferings, for the testimony of a uniform, conspicuous career of holy living. But it is equally indefensible, and even ungrateful to God, to make too little of it, to make too little account of a good end, when connected with a good beginning and with a patient continuance in well-doing.

“ The chamber where the good man meets his fate  
Is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life.”

Its transactions are sometimes as fraught with permanent utility as with present good. The close of a Christian's career on earth, his defiance, in the strength of his Saviour, of his direst enemy, the good confession which he acknowledges when he is enabled to witness before those around his dying bed, all these are precious and important in the sight of the Lord, and ought to be so in our view, and redound, not only to his own advantage, but to the benefit of survivors, “to the praise of the glory of his grace.”—*W. M. Bunting, in a Sermon at the City Road Chapel, 1836.*

*Verse 15.*—Why need they beforehand be afraid of death, who have the Lord to take such care about it as he doth? We may safely, without presuming, we ought securely without wavering, to rest upon this, that our blood being precious in God's eyes, either it shall not be split, or it is seasonable, and shall be profitable to us to have it split. On this ground “the righteous are bold as a lion,” Prov. xxviii. 1. “Neither do they fear what man can do unto them.” Heb. xiii. 6. Martyrs were, without question, well instructed herein, and much supported hereby. When fear of death hindereth from any duty, or draweth to any evil, then call to mind this saying, “*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his favourites.*” For who would not valiantly, without fainting, take such a death as is precious in God's sight.—*William Gouge.*

*Verse 15.*—“*His saints*” imports *appropriation*. Elsewhere Jehovah asserts, “All souls are mine.” But he has an especial property in—and therefore claim upon—all saints. It is he that made them such. Separate from God there could be no sanctity. And as his right, his original right, in all men, is connected with the facts of their having been created and endowed by his hand, and thence subjected to his moral government, so, and much more, do all holy beings, all holy men, who owe to his grace their very existence as such, who must cease to be saints, if they could cease to be *his saints*, whom he has created anew in Christ Jesus by the communication of his own love, his own purity, his own nature, whom he continually upholds in this exalted state, so, and much more, do such persons belong to God. They are “*his saints*” through him and in him, saints of his making, and modelling, and establishing, and therefore *his* exclusively. Let this reference to the mighty working of God by his Spirit in you, your connection, your spiritual connection, with him, and your experience of his saving power,—let this reference convert the *mystery* into the *mercy* of sanctification in your hearts.

“*His saints*” denotes, in the second place, *devotedness*. They are saints not only *through* him, but *to* him; holy unto the Lord, sanctified or set apart to his service, self-surrendered to the adorable Redeemer.

“*His saints*” may import *resemblance*—close resemblance. Such characters are emphatically *God-like*, holy and pure; children of their Father which is in heaven;

certifying to all around their filial relationship to him, by their manifest participation of his nature, by their reflection of his image and likeness.

"His saints" suggests associations of *endearment*, of complacency. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in all them that hope in his mercy"; "a people near unto him"; "the Lord's portion is his people"; and "Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."—*Condensed from a Sermon by W. M. Bunting, 1836.*

Verse 15.—"Saints." The persons among whom implicitly he reckons himself, styled *saints*, are in the original set out by a word (סַדִּיקִים) that importeth an especial respect of God towards them. The root whence that word issueth signifieth *mercy* (סָדַק *consecravit, benefecit*). Whereupon the Hebrews have given such a name to a stork, which kind among fowls is the most merciful; and that not only the old to their young ones, as most are, but also the young ones to the old, which they use to feed and carry when through age they are not able to help themselves.

This title is attributed to men in a double respect; 1. Passively, in regard of God's mind and affection to them; 2. Actively, in regard of their mind and affection to others. God's merciful kindness is great towards them; and their mercy and kindness are great towards their brethren. They are, therefore, by a kind of excellency and property styled "men of mercy." Isai. lvii. 1. In regard of his double acceptation of the word, some translate it, "merciful, tender, or courteous," Ps. xviii. 25. Others with a paraphrase with many words, because they have not one fit word to express the full sense, thus, "Those whom God followeth with bounty, or to whom God extendeth his bounty." This latter I take to be the most proper to this place; for the word being passively taken for such as are made partakers of God's kindness, it sheweth the reason of that high account wherein God hath them, even his own grace and favor. We have a word in English that in this passive signification fitly answereth the Hebrew, which is this, *favourite*.—*William Gouge.*

Verse 15.—*Death* now, as he hath done also to mine, has paid full many a visit to your house; and in very deed, he has made fell havoc among our comforts. We shall yet be avenged on this enemy—this King of Terrors. I cannot help at times clenching my fist in his face, and roaring out in my agony and anguish, "Thou shalt be swallowed up in victory!" There is even, too, in the meantime, this consolation; "O Death, where is thy sting?" "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death for his saints," in the first place; in the second place, and resting on the propitiatory death, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The Holy Ghost, Psalm cxvi. 15, states the first; our translators, honest men, have very fairly and truly inferred the second. We are obliged to them. The death of your lovely child, loveliest in the beauties of holiness, with all that was most afflictive and full of sore trial in it, is nevertheless, among the things in your little family which are right precious in the sight of the Lord; and this in it, is that which pleases you most; precious, because of the infinite, the abiding, and the unchanging worth of the death of God's own holy child Jesus. The calm so wonderful, the consolation so felt, yea, the joy in tribulation so great, have set before your eyes a new testimony, heart-touching indeed, that, after eighteen hundred years have passed, "*the death of his saints*" is still precious as ever in the sight of the Lord. Take your book of life, sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, and in your family record, put the death of Rosanna down among the precious things in your sight also—I should rather have said likewise.

Present my kindest regards to Miss S—. Tell her to wipe that tear away—Rosanna needs it not. I hope they are all well at L—, and that your young men take the way of the Lord in good part. My dear Brother, "Go thy way, thy child liveth," is still as fresh as ever it was, from the lips of Him that liveth for ever and ever, and rings with a loftier and sweeter sound, even than when it was first heard in the ears and heart of the parent who had brought and laid his sick and dying at the feet of Him who hath the keys of hell and of death.—*John Jameson, in "Letters; True Fame," etc., 1838.*

Verse 16.—"O LORD, truly I am thy servant." Thou hast made me free, and I am impatient to be bound again. Thou hast broken the bonds of sin; now, Lord, bind me with the cords of love. Thou hast delivered me from the tyranny of Satan, make me as one of thy hired servants. I owe my liberty, my life, and all that I have, or hope, to thy generous rescue: and now, O my gracious, my Divine Friend and Redeemer, I lay myself and my all at thy feet.—*Samuel Lavington, 1728—1807.*

*Verse 16.*—"I am thy servant." The saints have ever had a holy pride in being God's servants; there cannot be a greater honour than to serve such a Master as commands heaven, earth, and hell. Do not think thou dost honour God in serving him; but this is how God honours thee, in vouchsafing thee to be his servant. David could not study to give himself a greater style than—"O Lord, or, truly I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid," and this he spake, not in the phrase of a human compliment, but in the humble confession of a believer. Yea, so doth the apostle commend this excellency, that he sets the title of servant before that of an apostle; first servant, then apostle. Great was his office in being an apostle, greater his blessing in being a servant of Jesus Christ: the one is an outward calling, the other an inward grace. There was an apostle condemned, never any servant of God.—*Thomas Adams.*

*Verse 16.*—"I am thy servant." This expression of the king of Israel implies (1). *A humble sense of his distance from God and his dependence upon him.* This is the first view which a penitent hath of himself when he returns to God. It is the first view which a good man hath of himself in his approaches to, or communion with God. And, indeed, it is what ought to be inseparable from the exercise of every other pious affection. To have, as it were, high and honourable thoughts of the majesty and greatness of the living God, and a deep and awful impression of the immediate and continual presence of the heart-searching God, this naturally produces the greatest self-abasement, and the most unfeigned subjection of spirit before our Maker. It leads to a confession of him as Lord over all, and having the most absolute right, not only to the obedience, but to the disposal of all his creatures. I cannot help thinking this is conveyed to us in the language of the Psalmist, when he says, "*O LORD, truly I am thy servant.*" He was a prince among his subjects, and had many other honourable distinctions, both natural and acquired, among men; but he was sensible of his being a servant and subject of the King of kings; and the force of his expression, "*Truly, I am thy servant,*" not only signifies the certainty of the thing, but how deeply and strongly he felt a conviction of its truth.

This declaration of the Psalmist implies (2) *a confession of his being bound by particular covenant and consent unto God*, and a repetition of the same by a new adherence. This, as it was certainly true with regard to him, having often dedicated himself to God, so I take it to be confirmed by the reiteration of the expression here, "*O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant.*" As if he had said, "O Lord, it is undeniable; it is impossible to recede from it. I am thine by many ties. I am by nature thy subject and thy creature; and I have many times confessed thy right and promised my own duty." I need not mention to you, either the example in the Psalmist's writings, or the occasions in his history, on which he solemnly surrendered himself to God. It is sufficient to say, that it was very proper that he should frequently call this to mind, and confess it before God, for though it could not make his Creator's right any stronger, it would certainly make the guilt of his own violation of it so much the greater.

This declaration of the Psalmist is (3) *an expression of his peculiar and special relation to God.* "*I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.*" There is another passage of his writings where the same expression occurs: Ps. lxxxvi. 16. "O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid." There is some variation among interpreters in the way of illustrating this phrase. Some take it for a figurative way of affirming, that he was bound in the strongest manner to God, as those children who were born of a maid-servant, and born in his own house, were in the most absolute manner their master's property. Others take it to signify his being not only brought up in the visible church of God, but in a pious family, and educated in his fear; and others would have it to signify still more especially that the Psalmist's mother was an eminently pious woman. And indeed I do not think that was a circumstance, if true, either unworthy of him to remember, or of the Spirit of God to put upon record.—*John Witherspoon, 1722—1797.*

*Verse 16.*—O Lord, I am thy servant by a double right; (and, oh, that I could do thee double service;) as thou art the Lord of my life, and I am the son of thy handmaid: not of Hagar, but of Sarah; not of the bondwoman, but of the free; and therefore I serve thee not in fear, but in love; or therefore in fear, because in love: and then is service best done when it is done in love. In love indeed I am bound to serve thee, for, "*Thou hast loosed my bonds*"; the bonds of death which compassed me about, by delivering me from a dangerous sickness, and restoring me

to health : or in a higher kind ; thou hast loosed my bonds by freeing me from being a captive to be a servant ; and which is more, from being a servant to be a son : and more than this from being a son of thy handmaid, to be a son of thyself.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

*Verse 16.*—Bless God for the privilege of being the children of godly parents. Better be the child of a godly than of a wealthy parent. I hope none of you are of so vile a spirit as to contemn your parents because of their piety. Certainly it is a great privilege when you can go to God, and plead your Father's covenant : "*Lord, truly I am thy servant ; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid.*" So did Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 25, 26, "Lord, make good thy word to thy servant David, my father." That you are not born of infidels, nor of papists, nor of upholders of superstition and formality, but in a strict, serious, godly family, it is a great advantage that you have. It is better to be the sons of faithful ministers than of nobles.—*Thomas Manton, in a Sermon preached before the Sons of the Clergy.*

*Verse 16.*—"Thou hast loosed my bonds." Mercies are given to encourage us in God's service, and should be remembered to that end. Rain descends upon the earth, not that it might be more barren, but more fertile. We are but stewards ; the mercies we enjoy are not our own, but to be improved for our Master's service. Great mercies should engage to great obedience. God begins the Decalogue with a memorial of his mercy in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt,—"*I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.*" How affectionately doth the Psalmist own his relation to God as his servant, when he considers how God had loosed his bonds : "*O LORD, truly I am thy servant ; thou hast loosed my bonds !*" the remembrance of thy mercy shall make me know no relation but that of a servant to thee. When we remember what wages we have from God, we must withal remember that we owe more service, and more liveness in service, to him. Duty is but the ingenuous consequent of mercy. It is irrational to encourage ourselves in our way to hell by a remembrance of heaven, to foster a liberty in sin by a consideration of God's bounty. When we remember that all we have or are is the gift of God's liberality, we should think ourselves obliged to honour him with all that we have, for he is to have honour from all his gifts. It is a sign we aimed at God's glory in begging mercy, when we also aim at God's glory in enjoying it. It is a sign that love breathed the remembrance of mercy into our hearts, when at the same time it breathes a resolution into us to improve it. It is not our tongues, but our lives must praise him. Mercies are not given to one member, but to the whole man.—*Stephen Charnock.*

*Verse 17.*—"The sacrifice of thanksgiving."

"When all the heart is pure, each warm desire  
Sublimed by holy love's ethereal fire,  
On winged words our breathing thoughts may rise,  
And soar to heaven, a grateful sacrifice."

*James Scott.*

*Verse 18.*—"Vows." Are well-composed vows such promoters of religion ? and are they to be made so warily ? and do they bind so strictly ? Then be sure to wait until God give you just and fit seasons for vowing. Be not over-hasty to vow : it is an inconsiderate and foolish haste of Christians to make more occasions of vowing than God doth make for them. Make your vows, and spare not, so often as God bids you ; but do not do it oftener. You would wonder I should dissuade you from vowing often, when you have such constant mercies ; and wonder well you might, if God did expect your extraordinary bond and security for every ordinary mercy : but he requires it not ; he is content with ordinary security of gratitude for ordinary mercies ; when he calls for extraordinary security and acknowledgment, by giving extraordinary mercies, then give it and do it.—*Henry Hurst.*

*Verse 18.*—"Now."—God gave an order that no part of the thankoffering should be kept till the third day, to teach us to present our praises when benefits are newly received, which else would soon wax stale and putrefy as fish doth. "*I will pay my vows now,*" saith David.—*Samuel Clarke* (1599—1682) in "*A Mirrour or Looking-glasse, both for Saints and Sinners.*"

*Verse 18.*—"In the presence of all his people." For good example's sake. This also was prince-like, Ezek. xlvi. 10. The king's seat in the sanctuary was open, that all might see him there, 2 Kings xi. 14, and xxiii. 3.—*John Trapp.*

*Verse 18.*—"In the presence of all his people." Be bold, be bold, ye servants of the Lord, in sounding forth the praises of your God. Go into presses of people; and in the midst of them praise the Lord. Wicked men are over-bold in pouring forth their blasphemies to the dishonour of God; they care not who hear them. They stick not to do it in the midst of cities. Shall they be more audacious to dishonour God, than ye zealous to honour him? Assuredly Christ will shew himself as forward to confess you, as you are, or can be to confess him. Matt. x. 32. This holy boldness is the ready way to glory.—*William Gouge.*

*Verse 19 (second clause).*—He does not simply say in the midst of Jerusalem: but, "in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." He speaks to the city as one who loved it and delighted in it. We see here, how the saints were affected towards the city in which was the house of God. Thus we should be moved in spirit towards that church in which God dwells, the temple he inhabits, which is built up, not of stones, but of the souls of the faithful.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

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### HINTS TO PREACHERS.

*Verses 1, 2.*—I. Present—"I love." II. Past—"He hath." III. Future—"I will."

*Verses 1, 2.*—Personal experience in reference to prayer. I. We have prayed, often, constantly, in different ways, etc. II. We have been heard. A grateful retrospect of usual answers and of special answers. III. Love to God has thus been promoted. IV. Our sense of the value of prayer has become so intense that we cannot cease praying.

*Verses 1, 2, 9.*—If you cast your eyes on the first verse of the Psalm, you find a *profession of love*—"I love the LORD"; if on the second, a *promise of prayer*—"I will call on the LORD"; if on the ninth, a *resolve of walking*—"I will walk before the LORD." There are three things should be the object of a saint's care, the devotion of the soul, profession of the mouth, and conversation of the life: that is the sweetest melody in God's ears, when not only the voice sings, but the heartstrings keep tune, and the hand keepeth time.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

*Verse 2.*—"He hath," and therefore "I will." Grace moving to action.

*Verses 2, 4, 13, 17.*—Calling upon God mentioned four times very suggestively—I will do it (verse 2), I have tried it (4), I will do it when I take (13), and when I offer (17).

*Verses 2, 9, 13, 14, 17.*—The "I wills" of the Psalm. I will call (verse 2), I will walk (9), I will take (13), I will pay (14), I will offer (17).

*Verses 3, 4, 8.*—See Spurgeon's Sermon, "To Souls in Agony," Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 1216.

*Verses 3—5.*—The story of a tried soul. I. Where I was. Verse 3. II. What I did. Verse 4. III. What I learned. Verse 5.

*Verses 3—6.*—I. *The occasion.* 1. Bodily affliction. 2. Terrors of conscience. 3. Sorrow of heart. 4. Self-accusation: "I found," etc. II. *The petition.* 1. Direct: "I called," etc. 2. Immediate: "then," when the trouble came; prayer was the first remedy sought, not the last, as with many. 3. Brief—limited to the one thing needed: "deliver my soul." 4. Importunate: "O Lord, I beseech thee." III. *The restoration.* 1. Implied: "gracious," etc., v. 5. 2. Expressed, v. 6, generally: "The Lord preserveth," etc.; particularly: "I was brought low," etc.: helped me to pray, helped me out of trouble in answer to prayer, and helped me to praise him for the mercy, the faithfulness, the grace, shown in my deliverance. God is glorified through the afflictions of his people: the submissive are preserved in them, and the lowly are exalted by them.—*G. R.*

*Verse 5.*—I. Eternal grace, or the purpose of love. II. Infinite justice, or the difficulty of holiness. III. Boundless mercy, or the outcome of atonement.

*Verse 6.*—I. A singular class—"simple." II. A singular fact—"the Lord preserveth the simple." III. A singular proof of the fact—"I was," etc.

*Verse 7.*—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." Rest in God may be said to belong

to the people of God on a fourfold account. I. By designation. The rest which the people of God have in him is the result of his own purpose, and design, taken up from his mere good pleasure and love. II. By purchase. The rest which they wanted as *creatures* they had forfeited as *sinner*s. This, therefore, Christ laid down his life to procure. III. By promise. This is God's kind engagement. He has said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," Exod. xxxiii. 14. IV. By their own choice gracious souls have a rest in God.—*D. Wilcox.*

*Verse 7.*—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." When, or upon what occasion a child of God should use the Psalmist's language. I. After converse with the world in the business of his calling every day. II. When going to the sanctuary on the Lord's-day. III. In and under any trouble he may meet with. IV. When departing from this world at death.—*D. Wilcox.*

*Verse 7.*—I. The rest of the soul: "My rest," this is in God. 1. The soul was created to find its rest in God. 2. On that account it cannot find rest elsewhere. II. Its departure from that rest. This is implied in the word "Return." III. Its return. 1. By repentance. 2. By faith, in the way provided for its return. 3. By prayer. IV. Its encouragement to return. 1. Not in itself, but in God. 2. Not in the justice, but in the goodness of God: "for the Lord," etc. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."—*G. R.*

*Verse 8.*—The trinity of experimental godliness. I. It is a unity—"Thou hast delivered"; all the mercies come from one source. II. It is a trinity of deliverance, of soul, eyes, feet; from punishment, sorrow, and sinning; to life, joy, and stability. III. It is a trinity in unity: all this was done for me and in me—"my soul, mine eyes, my feet."

*Verse 9.*—The effect of deliverance upon ourselves. "I will walk," etc. I. Walk by faith in him. II. Walk in love with him. III. Walk by obedience to him.—*G. R.*

*Verses 10, 11.*—I. The rule: "I believed," etc. In general the Psalmist spoke what he had well considered and tested by his own experience, as when he said, "I was brought low and he helped me." "The Lord hath dealt bountifully with me." II. The exception: "I was greatly afflicted, I said," etc. 1. He spoke wrongfully: he said "All men are liars," which had some truth in it, but was not the whole truth. 2. Hastily: "I said in my haste," without due reflection. 3. Angrily, under the influence of affliction, probably from the unfaithfulness of others. Nature acts before grace—the one by instinct, the other from consideration.—*G. R.*

*Verse 11.*—A hasty speech. I. There was much truth in it. II. It erred on the right side, for it showed faith in God rather than in the creature. III. It did err in being too sweeping, too severe, too suspicious. IV. It was soon cured. The remedy for all such hasty speeches is—Get to work in the spirit of verse 12.

*Verse 12.*—Overwhelming obligations. I. A sum in arithmetic—"all his benefits." II. A calculation of indebtedness—"What shall I render?" III. A problem for personal solution—"What shall I?" See Spurgeon's Sermon, No. 910.

*Verses 12, 14.*—Whether well-composed religious vows do not exceedingly promote religion. Sermon by Henry Hurst, A.M., in "The Morning Exercises."

*Verse 13.*—Sermon on the Lord's supper. We take the cup of the Lord—I. In memory of him who is our salvation. II. In token of our trust in him. III. In evidence of our obedience to him. IV. In type of communion with him. V. In hope of drinking it new with him ere long.

*Verse 13.*—The various cups mentioned in Scripture would make an interesting subject.

*Verse 14.*—"Now." Or the excellence of time present.

*Verse 15.*—I. *The declaration.* Not the death of the wicked, nor even the death of the righteous is in itself precious; but, 1, because their persons are precious to him. 2. Because their experience in death is precious to him. 3. Because of their conformity in death to their Covenant-Head; and 4. Because it puts an end to their sorrows, and translates them to their rest. II. *Its manifestation.* 1. In preserving them from death. 2. In supporting them in death. 3. In giving them victory over death. 4. In glorifying them after death.

*Verse 15.*—See Spurgeon's Sermon, "Precious Deaths," No. 1036.

*Verse 16.*—*Holy Service.* I. Emphatically avowed. II. Honestly rendered—"truly." III. Logically defended—"son of thine handmaid." IV. Consistent with conscious liberty.

*Verse 17.*—This is due to our God, good for ourselves, and encouraging to others.

*Verse 17.*—“*The sacrifice of thanksgiving.*” I. How it may be rendered. In secret love, in conversation, in sacred song, in public testimony, in special gifts and works. II. Why we should render it. For answered prayers (verses 1, 2), memorable deliverances (3), choice preservation (6); remarkable restoration (7, 8), and for the fact of our being his servants (16). III. When should we render it. *Now*, while the mercy is on the memory, and as often as fresh mercies come to us.

*Verse 18.*—I. How vows may be paid in public. By going to public worship as the first thing we do when health is restored. By uniting heartily in the song. By coming to the communion. By special thankoffering. By using fit opportunities for open testimony to the Lord's goodness. II. The special difficulty in the matter. To pay them *to the Lord*, and not in ostentation or as an empty form. III. The peculiar usefulness of the public act. It interests others, touches their hearts, reproves, encourages, etc.

*Verse 19.*—The Christian at home. I. In God's house. II. Among the saints. III. At his favourite work, “Praise.”

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