

PSALM CXVIII.

AUTHOR AND SUBJECT.—*In the book of Ezra, iii. 10, 11, we read that “when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.”* Now the words mentioned in *Ezra* are the first and last sentences of this Psalm, and we therefore conclude that the people chanted the whole of this sublime song; and, moreover, that the use of this composition on such occasions was ordained by David, whom we conceive to be its author. The next step leads us to believe that he is its subject, at least in some degree; for it is clear that the writer is speaking concerning himself in the first place, though he may not have strictly confined himself to all the details of his own personal experience. That the Psalmist had a prophetic view of our Lord Jesus is very manifest; the frequent quotations from this song in the New Testament prove this beyond all question; but at the same time it could not have been intended that every particular line and sentence should be read in reference to the Messiah, for this requires very great ingenuity, and ingenious interpretations are seldom true. Certain devout expositors have managed to twist the expression of the seventeenth verse, “*I shall not die, but live,*” so as to make it applicable to our Lord, who did actually die, and whose glory it is that he died; but we cannot bring our minds to do such violence to the words of holy writ.

The Psalm seems to us to describe either David or some other man of God who was appointed by the divine choice to a high and honourable office in Israel. This elect champion found himself rejected by his friends and fellow-countrymen, and at the same time violently opposed by his enemies. In faith in God he battles for his appointed place, and in due time he obtains it in such a way as greatly to display the power and goodness of the Lord. He then goes up to the house of the Lord to offer sacrifice, and to express his gratitude for the divine interposition, all the people blessing him, and wishing him abundant prosperity. This heroic personage, whom we cannot help thinking to be David himself, broadly typified our Lord, but not in such a manner that in all the minutiae of his struggles and prayers we are to hunt for parallels. The suggestion of Alexander that the speaker is a typical individual representing the nation, is exceedingly well worthy of attention; but it is not inconsistent with the idea that a personal leader may be intended, since that which describes the leader will be in a great measure true of his followers. The experience of the Head is that of the members, and both may be spoken of in much the same terms. Alexander thinks that the deliverance celebrated cannot be identified with any one so exactly as with that from the Babylonian exile; but we judge it best to refer it to no one incident in particular, but to regard it as a national song, adapted alike for the rise of a chosen hero, and the building of a temple. Whether a nation is re-founded by a conquering prince, or a temple founded by the laying of its corner-stone in joyful state, the Psalm is equally applicable.

DIVISION.—We propose to divide the Psalm thus, from verses 1 to 4 the faithful are called upon to magnify the everlasting mercy of the Lord; from 5 to 18 the Psalmist gives forth a narrative of his experience, and an expression of his faith; in verses 19 to 21 he asks admittance into the house of the Lord, and begins the acknowledgment of the divine salvation. In verses 22 to 27 the priests and people recognize their ruler, magnify the Lord for him, declare him blessed, and bid him approach the altar with his sacrifice. In the two closing verses the grateful hero himself exalts God the ever-merciful.

EXPOSITION.

○ GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*; because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

z Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

1. "*O give thanks unto the LORD.*" The grateful hero feels that he cannot himself alone sufficiently express his thankfulness, and therefore he calls in the aid of others. Grateful hearts are greedy of men's tongues, and would monopolize them all for God's glory. The whole nation was concerned in David's triumphant accession, and therefore it was right that they should unite in his adoring song of praise. The thanks were to be rendered unto Jehovah alone, and not to the patience or valour of the hero himself. It is always well to trace our mercies to him who bestows them, and if we cannot give him anything else, let us at any rate give him our thanks. We must not stop short at the second agent, but rise at once to the first cause, and render all our praises *unto the Lord* himself. Have we been of a forgetful or murmuring spirit? Let us hear the lively language of the text, and allow it to speak to our hearts: "Cease your complainings, cease from all self-glorification, and give thanks unto the Lord." "*For he is good.*" This is reason enough for giving him thanks; goodness is his essence and nature, and therefore he is always to be praised whether we are receiving anything from him or not. Those who only praise God because he *does* them good should rise to a higher note and give thanks to him because he *is* good. In the truest sense he alone is good, "There is none good but one, that is God"; therefore in all gratitude the Lord should have the royal portion. If others seem to be good, he *is* good. If others are good in a measure, he is good beyond measure. When others behave badly to us, it should only stir us up the more heartily to give thanks unto the Lord, because he is good; and when we ourselves are conscious that we are far from being good, we should only the more reverently bless him that "*he is good.*" We must never tolerate an instant's unbelief as to the goodness of the Lord; whatever else may be questionable, this is absolutely certain, that Jehovah is good; his dispensations may vary, but his nature is always the same, and always good. It is not only that he was good, and will be good, but he *is* good, let his providence be what it may. Therefore let us even at this present moment, though the skies be dark with clouds, yet give thanks unto his name.

"*Because his mercy endureth for ever.*" Mercy is a great part of his goodness, and one which more concerns us than any other, for we are sinners and have need of his mercy. Angels may say that he is good, but they need not his mercy and cannot therefore take an equal delight in it; inanimate creation declares that *he is good*, but it cannot feel his *mercy*, for it has never transgressed; but man, deeply guilty and graciously forgiven, beholds mercy as the very focus and centre of the goodness of the Lord. The endurance of the divine mercy is a special subject for song: notwithstanding our sins, our trials, our fears, his mercy *endureth for ever*. The best of earthly joys pass away, and even the world itself grows old and hastens to decay, but there is no change in the mercy of God; he was faithful to our forefathers, he is merciful to us, and will be gracious to our children and our children's children. It is to be hoped that the philosophical interpreters who endeavour to clip the word "*for ever*" into a mere period of time will have the goodness to let this passage alone. However, whether they do or not, we shall believe in endless mercy—mercy to eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the grand incarnation of the mercy of God, calls upon us at every remembrance of him to give thanks unto the Lord, for "*he is good.*"

2. "*Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*" God had made a covenant with their forefathers, a covenant of mercy and love, and to that covenant he was faithful evermore. Israel sinned in Egypt, provoked the Lord in the wilderness, went astray again and again under the judges, and transgressed at all times; and yet the Lord continued to regard them as his people, to favour them with his oracles, and to forgive their sins. He speedily ceased from the chastisements which they so richly deserved, because he had a favour towards them. He put his rod away the moment they repented, because his heart was full of compassion. "His mercy endureth for ever" was Israel's national hymn, which, as a people, they had been called upon to sing upon many former occasions; and now their leader, who had at last gained the place for which Jehovah had destined him, calls upon the whole nation to join with him in extolling, in this particular instance of the divine goodness, the eternal mercy of the Lord. David's success was mercy to Israel, as well as mercy to himself. If Israel does not sing, who will? If Israel

does not sing of mercy, who can? If Israel does not sing when the Son of David ascends the throne, the very stones will cry out.

3. "Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever." The sons of Aaron were specially set apart to come nearest to God, and it was only because of his mercy that they were enabled to live in the presence of the thrice holy Jehovah, who is a consuming fire. Every time the morning and evening lamb was sacrificed, the priests saw the continual mercy of the Lord, and in all the holy vessels of the sanctuary, and all its services from hour to hour, they had renewed witness of the goodness of the Most High. When the high priest went in unto the holy place and came forth accepted, he might, above all men, sing of the eternal mercy. If this Psalm refers to David, the priests had special reason for thankfulness on his coming to the throne, for Saul had made a great slaughter among them, and had at various times interfered with their sacred office. A man had now come to the throne who for their Master's sake would esteem them, give them their dues, and preserve them safe from all harm. Our Lord Jesus, having made all his people priests unto God, may well call upon them in that capacity to magnify the everlasting mercy of the Most High. Can any one of the royal priesthood be silent?

4. "Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy endureth for ever." If there were any throughout the world who did not belong to Israel after the flesh, but nevertheless had a holy fear and lowly reverence of God, the Psalmist calls upon them to unite with him in his thanksgiving, and to do it especially on the occasion of his exaltation to the throne; and this is no more than they would cheerfully agree to do, since every good man in the world is benefited when a true servant of God is placed in a position of honour and influence. The prosperity of Israel through the reign of David was a blessing to all who feared Jehovah. A truly God-fearing man will have his eye much upon God's mercy, because he is deeply conscious of his need of it, and because that attribute excites in him a deep feeling of reverential awe. "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared."

In the three exhortations, to Israel, to the house of Aaron, and to them that fear the Lord, there is a repetition of the exhortation to say, "that his mercy endureth for ever." We are not only to believe, but to declare the goodness of God; truth is not to be hushed up, but proclaimed. God would have his people act as witnesses, and not stand silent in the day when his honour is impugned. Specially is it our joy to speak out to the honour and glory of God when we think upon the exaltation of his dear Son. We should shout "Hosannah," and sing loud "Hallelujahs" when we behold the stone which the builders rejected lifted into its proper place.

In each of the three exhortations notice carefully the word "now." There is no time like time present for telling out the praises of God. The present exaltation of the Son of David now demands from all who are the subjects of his kingdom continual songs of thanksgiving to him who hath set him on high in the midst of Zion. Now with us should mean always. When would it be right to cease from praising God, whose mercy never ceases?

The fourfold testimonies to the everlasting mercy of God which are now before us speak like four evangelists, each one declaring the very pith and marrow of the gospel; and they stand like four angels at the four corners of the earth holding the winds in their hands, restraining the plagues of the latter days that the mercy and long-suffering of God may endure towards the sons of men. Here are four cords to bind the sacrifice to the four horns of the altar, and four trumpets with which to proclaim the year of jubilee to every quarter of the world. Let not the reader pass on to the consideration of the rest of the Psalm until he has with all his might lifted up both heart and voice to praise the Lord, "for his mercy endureth for ever."

"Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for he is kind;
For his mercies shall endure
Ever faithful, ever sure."

5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.

6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations compassed me about : but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

11 They compassed me about ; yea, they compassed me about : but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

12 They compassed me about like bees ; they are quenched as the fire of thorns : for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall : but the LORD helped me.

14 The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous : the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted : the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened me sore : but he hath not given me over unto death.

5. "*I called upon the LORD in distress,*" or, "out of anguish I invoked Jah." Nothing was left him but prayer, his agony was too great for aught beside ; but having the heart and the privilege to pray he possessed all things. Prayers which come out of distress generally come out of the heart, and therefore they go to the heart of God. It is sweet to recollect our prayers, and often profitable to tell others of them after they are heard. Prayer may be bitter in the offering, but it will be sweet in the answering. The man of God had called upon the Lord when he was not in distress, and therefore he found it natural and easy to call upon him when he was in distress. He worshipped, he praised, he prayed : for all this is included in calling upon God, even when he was in a straitened condition. Some read the original "a narrow gorge" ; and therefore it was the more joy to him when he could say "The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place." He passed out of the defile of distress into the well-watered plain of delight. He says, "Jah heard me in a wide place," for God is never shut up, or straitened. In God's case hearing means answering, hence the translators rightly put, "The Lord answered me," though the original word is "*heard.*" The answer was appropriate to the prayer, for he brought him out of his narrow and confined condition into a place of liberty where he could walk at large, free from obstruction and oppression. Many of us can join with the Psalmist in the declarations of this verse : deep was our distress on account of sin, and we were shut up as in a prison under the law, but in answer to the prayer of faith we obtained the liberty of full justification wherewith Christ makes men free, and we are free indeed. It was the Lord who did it, and unto his name we ascribe all the glory ; we had no merits, no strength, no wisdom, all we could do was to call upon him, and even that was his gift ; but the mercy which is to eternity came to our rescue, we were brought out of bondage, and we were made to delight ourselves in the length and breadth of a boundless inheritance. What a large place is that in which the great God has placed us ! All things are ours, all times are ours, all places are ours, for God himself is ours ; we have earth to lodge in and heaven to dwell in,—what larger place can be imagined ? We need all Israel, the whole house of Aaron, and all them that fear the Lord, to assist us in the expression of our gratitude ; and when they have aided us to the utmost, and we ourselves have done our best, all will fall short of the praises that are due to our gracious Lord.

6. "*The LORD is on my side,*" or, he is "for me." Once his justice was against me, but now he is my reconciled God, and engaged on my behalf. The Psalmist naturally rejoiced in the divine help ; all men turned against him, but God was his defender and advocate, accomplishing the divine purposes of his grace. The expression may also be translated "to me," that is to say, Jehovah belongs to me, and is mine. What infinite wealth is here ! If we do not magnify the Lord we are of all men most brutish. "*I will not fear.*" He does not say that he should

not suffer, but that he would not fear : the favour of God infinitely outweighed the hatred of men, therefore setting the one against the other he felt that he had no reason to be afraid. He was calm and confident, though surrounded with enemies, and so let all believers be, for thus they honour God. "*What can man do unto me ?*" He can do nothing more than God permits ; at the very uttermost he can only kill the body, but he hath no more that he can do. God having purposed to set his servant upon the throne, the whole race of mankind could do nothing to thwart the divine decree : the settled purpose of Jehovah's heart could not be turned aside, nor its accomplishment delayed, much less prevented, by the most rancorous hostility of the most powerful of men. Saul sought to slay David, but David outlived Saul, and sat upon his throne. Scribe and Pharisee, priest and Herodian, united in opposing the Christ of God, but he is exalted on high none the less because of their enmity. The mightiest man is a puny thing when he stands in opposition to God, yea, he shrinks into utter nothingness. It were a pity to be afraid of such a pitiful, miserable, despicable object as a man opposed to the almighty God. The Psalmist here speaks like a champion throwing down the gauntlet to all comers, defying the universe in arms ; a true Bayard, without fear and without reproach, he enjoys God's favour, and he defies every foe.

7. "*The LORD taketh my part with them that help me.*" Jehovah condescended to be in alliance with the good man and his comrades ; his God was not content to look on, but he took part in the struggle. What a consolatory fact it is that the Lord takes our part, and that when he raises up friends for us he does not leave them to fight for us alone, but he himself as our chief defender deigns to come into the battle and wage war on our behalf. David mentioned those that helped him, he was not unmindful of his followers ; there is a long record of David's mighty men in the book of Chronicles, and this teaches us that we are not to disdain or think little of the generous friends who rally around us ; but still our great dependence and our grand confidence must be fixed upon the Lord alone. Without him the strong helpers fail ; indeed, apart from him in the sons of men there is no help ; but when our gracious Jehovah is pleased to support and strengthen those who aid us, they become substantial helpers to us.

"*Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*" The words, "*my desire,*" are added by the translators ; the Psalmist said, "*I shall look upon my haters : I shall look them in the face, I shall make them cease from their contempt, I shall myself look down upon them instead of their looking down upon me. I shall see their defeat, I shall see the end of them.*" Our Lord Jesus does at this moment look down upon his adversaries, his enemies are his footstool ; he shall look upon them at his second coming, and at the glance of his eyes they shall flee before him, not being able to endure that look with which he shall read them through and through.

8. "*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*" It is better in all ways, for first of all it is wiser : God is infinitely more able to help, and more likely to help, than man, and therefore prudence suggests that we put our confidence in him above all others. It is also morally better to do so, for it is the duty of the creature to trust in the Creator. God has a claim upon his creatures' faith, he deserves to be trusted ; and to place our reliance upon another rather than upon himself, is a direct insult to his faithfulness. It is better in the sense of safer, since we can never be sure of our ground if we rely upon mortal man, but we are always secure in the hands of our God. It is better in its effect upon ourselves : to trust in man tends to make us mean, crouching, dependent ; but confidence in God elevates, produces a sacred quiet of spirit, and sanctifies the soul. It is, moreover, much better to trust in God, as far as the result is concerned ; for in many cases the human object of our trust fails from want of ability, from want of generosity, from want of affection, or from want of memory ; but the Lord, so far from failing, does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think. This verse is written out of the experience of many who have first of all found the broken reeds of the creature break under them, and have afterwards joyfully found the Lord to be a solid pillar sustaining all their weight.

9. "*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*" These should be the noblest of men, chivalrous in character, and true to the core. The royal word should be unquestionable. They are noblest in rank and mightiest in power, and yet as a rule princes are not one whit more reliable than the rest of mankind. A gilded vane turns with the wind as readily as a meaner weathercock. Princes are

but men, and the best of men are poor creatures. In many troubles they cannot help us in the least degree ; for instance, in sickness, bereavement, or death ; neither can they assist us one jot in reference to our eternal state. In eternity a prince's smile goes for nothing ; heaven and hell pay no homage to royal authority. The favour of princes is proverbially fickle, the testimonies of worldlings to this effect are abundant. All of us remember the words put by the world's great poet into the lips of the dying Wolsey ; their power lies in their truth :—

" O how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours !
There is betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
More pangs and fears than wars or women have ;
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again."

Yet a prince's smile has a strange witchery to many hearts, few are proof against that tuft-hunting which is the index of a weak mind. Principle has been forgotten and character has been sacrificed to maintain position at court ; yea, the manliness which the meanest slave retains has been basely bartered for the stars and garters of a profligate monarch. He who puts his confidence in God, the great King, is thereby made mentally and spiritually stronger, and rises to the highest dignity of manhood ; in fact, the more he trusts the more is he free, but the fawning sycophant of greatness is meaner than the dirt he treads upon. For this reason and a thousand others it is infinitely better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

10. "*All nations compassed me about.*" The hero of the Psalm, while he had no earthly friend upon whom he could thoroughly rely, was surrounded by innumerable enemies, who heartily hated him. He was hemmed in by his adversaries, and scarce could find a loophole of escape from the bands which made a ring around him. As if by common consent all sorts of people set themselves against him, and yet he was more than a match for them all, because he was trusting in the name of the Lord. Therefore does he joyfully accept the battle, and grasp the victory, crying, "*but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them,*" or "*cut them in pieces.*" They thought to destroy *him*, but he was sure of destroying *them* ; they meant to blot out his name, but he expected to render not only his own name but the name of the Lord his God more illustrious in the hearts of men. It takes grand faith to be calm in the day of actual battle, and especially when that battle waxes hot ; but our hero was as calm as if no fight was raging. Napoleon said that God was always on the side of the biggest battalions, but the Psalmist-warrior found that the Lord of hosts was with the solitary champion, and that in his name the battalions were cut to pieces. There is a grand touch of the *ego* in the last sentence, but it is so overshadowed with the name of the Lord that there is none too much of it. He recognized his own individuality, and asserted it : he did not sit still supinely and leave the work to be done by God by some mysterious means ; but he resolved with his own trusty sword to set about the enterprise, and so become in God's hand the instrument of his own deliverance. He did all in the name of the Lord, but he did not ignore his own responsibility, nor screen himself from personal conflict, for he cried, "*I will destroy them.*" Observe that he does not speak of merely escaping from them like a bird out of the snare of the fowler, but he vows that he will carry the war into his enemies' ranks, and overthrow them so thoroughly that there should be no fear of their rising up a second time.

11. "*They compassed me about ; yea, they compassed me about.*" He had such a vivid recollection of his danger that his enemies seem to live again in his verses. We see their fierce array, and their cruel combination of forces. They made a double ring, they surrounded him in a circle of many ranks, they not only talked of doing so, but they actually shut him up and enclosed him as within a wall. His heart had vividly realized his position of peril at the time, and now he delights to call it again to mind in order that he may the more ardently adore the mercy which made him strong in the hour of conflict, so that he broke through a troop, yea, swept a host to destruction. "*But in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.*" I will subdue them, get them under my feet, and break their power in pieces. He is as certain about the destruction of his enemies as he was assured of their having compassed him about. They made the circle three and four times deep, but for all that he felt confident of victory. It is grand to hear a man speak in this fashion when it is not boasting, but the calm declaration of his heartfelt trust in God.

12. "*They compassed me about like bees.*" They seemed to be everywhere, like a swarm of bees, attacking him at every point; nimbly flying from place to place, stinging him meanwhile, and inflicting grievous pain. They threatened at first to baffle him: what weapon could he use against them? They were so numerous, so inveterate; so contemptible, yet so audacious; so insignificant and yet so capable of inflicting agony, that to the eye of reason there appeared no possibility of doing anything with them. Like the swarm of flies in Egypt, there was no standing against them; they threatened to sting a man to death with their incessant malice, their base insinuations, their dastardly falsehoods. He was in an evil case, but even there faith availed. All-powerful faith adapts itself to all circumstances, it can cast out devils, and it can drive out bees. Surely, if it outlives the sting of death, it will not die from the sting of a bee. "*They are quenched as the fire of thorns.*" Their fierce attack soon came to an end, the bees lost their stings and the buzz of the swarm subsided: like thorns which blaze with fierce crackling and abundant flame, but die out in a handful of ashes very speedily, so did the nations which surrounded our hero soon cease their clamour and come to an inglorious end. They were soon hot and soon cold, their attack was as short as it was sharp. He had no need to crush the bees, for like crackling thorns they died out of themselves. For a third time he adds, "*for in the name of the LORD will I destroy them,*" or "*cut them down,*" as men cut down thorns with a scythe or reaping-hook.

What wonders have been wrought in the name of the Lord! It is the battle-cry of faith before which its adversaries fly apace. "*The sword of the Lord and of Gideon*" brings instant terror into the midst of the foe. The name of the Lord is the one weapon which never fails in the day of battle: he who knows how to use it may chase a thousand with his single arm. Alas! we too often go to work and to conflict in our own name, and the enemy knows it not, but scornfully enquires, "*Who are ye?*" Let us take care never to venture into the presence of the foe without first of all arming ourselves with this impenetrable mail. If we knew this name better, and trusted it more, our life would be more fruitful and sublime.

"Jesus, the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky,
Angels and men before it fall;
And devils fear and fly."

13. "*Thou hast thrust sore at me,*" "*Thrusting, thou hast thrust at me.*" It is a vigorous apostrophe, in which the enemy is described as concentrating all his thrusting power into the thrusts which he gave to the man of God. He thrust again and again with the keenest point, even as bees thrust their stings into their victim. The foe had exhibited intense exasperation, and fearful determination, nor had he been without a measure of success; wounds had been given and received, and these smarted much, and were exceeding sore. Now, this is true of many a tried child of God who has been wounded by Satan, by the world, by temptation, by affliction; the sword has entered into his bones, and left its mark. "*That I might fall.*" This was the object of the thrusting: to throw him down, to wound him in such a way that he would no longer be able to keep his place, to make him depart from his integrity, and lose his confidence in God. If our adversaries can do this they will have succeeded to their heart's content: if we fall into grievous sin they will be better pleased than even if they had sent the bullet of the assassin into our heart, for a moral death is worse than a physical one. If they can dishonour us, and God in us, their victory will be complete. "*Better death than false of faith*" is the motto of one of our noble houses, and it may well be ours. It is to compass our fall that they compass us; they fill us with their venom that they may fill us with their sin. "*But the LORD helped me*"; a blessed "*but.*" This is the saving clause. Other helpers were unable to chase away the angry nations, much less to destroy all the noxious swarms; but when the Lord came to the rescue the hero's single arm was strong enough to vanquish all his adversaries. How sweetly can many of us repeat in the retrospect of our past tribulations this delightful sentence, "*But the LORD helped me.*" I was assailed by innumerable doubts and fears, but the Lord helped me; my natural unbelief was terribly inflamed by the insinuations of Satan, but the Lord helped me; multiplied trials were rendered more intense by the cruel assaults of men, and I knew not what to do, but the Lord helped me. Doubtless, when we land on the hither shore of Jordan, this will be one of our songs, "*Flesh and heart were failing me, and the adversaries of my soul surrounded me in the swellings of Jordan, but the LORD helped me. Glory be unto his name.*"

14. "*The LORD is my strength and song,*" my strength while I was in the conflict, my song now that it is ended ; my strength against the strong, and my song over their defeat. He is far from boasting of his own valour ; he ascribes his victory to its real source, he has no song concerning his own exploits, but all his peans are unto *Jehovah Victor*, the Lord whose right hand and holy arm had given him the victory. "*And is become my salvation.*" The poet warrior knew that he was saved, and he not only ascribed that salvation unto God, but he declared God himself to be his salvation. It is an all-comprehending expression, signifying that from beginning to end, in the whole and in the details of it, he owed his deliverance entirely to the Lord. Thus can all the Lord's redeemed say, "Salvation is of the Lord." We cannot endure any doctrine which puts the crown upon the wrong head and defrauds the glorious King of his revenue of praise. *Jehovah* has done it all ; yea, in Christ Jesus he is all, and therefore in our praises let him alone be extolled. It is a happy circumstance for us when we can praise God as alike our strength, song, and salvation ; for God sometimes gives a secret strength to his people, and yet they question their own salvation, and cannot, therefore, sing of it. Many are, no doubt, truly saved, but at times they have so little strength, that they are ready to faint, and therefore they cannot sing : when strength is imparted and salvation is realised then the song is clear and full.

15. "*The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.*" They sympathised in the delight of their leader and they abode in their tents in peace, rejoicing that one had been raised up who, in the name of the Lord, would protect them from their adversaries. The families of believers are happy, and they should take pains to give their happiness a voice by their family devotion. The dwelling-place of saved men should be the temple of praise ; it is but righteous that the righteous should praise the righteous God, who is their righteousness. The struggling hero knew that the voice of woe and lamentation was heard in the tents of his adversaries, for they had suffered severe defeat at his hands ; but he was delighted by the remembrance that the nation for whom he had struggled would rejoice from one end of the land to the other at the deliverance which God had wrought by his means. That hero of heroes, the conquering Saviour, gives to all the families of his people abundant reasons for incessant song now that he has led captivity captive and ascended up on high. Let none of us be silent in our households : if we have salvation let us have joy, and if we have joy let us give it a tongue wherewith it may magnify the Lord. If we hearken carefully to the music which comes from Israel's tents, we shall catch a stanza to this effect, "*the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly*" : *Jehovah* has manifested his strength, given victory to his chosen champion, and overthrown all the armies of the foe. "*The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name.*" When he comes to blows, woe to his mightiest opponent.

16. "*The right hand of the LORD is exalted,*" lifted up to smite the foe, or extolled and magnified in the eyes of his people. It is the Lord's *right* hand, the hand of his skill, the hand of his greatest power, the hand which is accustomed to defend his saints. When that is lifted up, it lifts up all who trust in him, and it casts down all who resist him. "*The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.*" The Psalmist speaks in triplets, for he is praising the triune God, his heart is warm and he loves to dwell upon the note ; he is not content with the praise he has rendered, he endeavours to utter it each time more fervently and more jubilantly than before. He had dwelt upon the sentence, "they compassed me about," for his peril from encircling armies was fully realised ; and now he dwells upon the valour of *Jehovah's* right hand, for he has as vivid a sense of the presence and majesty of the Lord. How seldom is this the case ; the Lord's mercy is forgotten and only the trial is remembered.

17. "*I shall not die, but live.*" His enemies hoped that he would die, and perhaps he himself feared he should perish at their hand : the news of his death may have been spread among his people, for the tongue of rumour is ever ready with ill news, the false intelligence would naturally cause great sorrow and despondency, but he proclaims himself as yet alive and as confident that he shall not fall by the hand of the destroyer. He is cheerfully assured that no arrow could carry death between the joints of his harness, and no weapon of any sort could end his career. His time had not yet come, he felt immortality beating within his bosom. Perhaps he had been sick, and brought to death's door, but he had a presentiment that the sickness was not unto death, but to the glory of God. At any rate, he knew that he should

not so die as to give victory to the enemies of God ; for the honour of God and the good of his people were both wrapped up in his continued success. Feeling that he would live he devoted himself to the noblest of purposes : he resolved to bear witness to the divine faithfulness, "*and declare the works of the LORD.*" He determined to recount the works of Jah ; and he does so in this Psalm, wherein he dwells with love and admiration upon the splendour of Jehovah's prowess in the midst of the fight. While there is a testimony for God to be borne by us to any one, it is certain that we shall not be hurried from the land of the living. The Lord's prophets shall live on in the midst of famine, and war, and plague, and persecution, till they have uttered all the words of their prophecy ; his priests shall stand at the altar unharmed till their last sacrifice has been presented before him. No bullet will find its billet in our hearts till we have finished our allotted period of activity.

"Plagues and deaths around me fly,
Till he please I cannot die :
Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit."

18. "*The LORD hath chastened me sore.*" This is faith's version of the former passage, "Thou hast thrust sore at me ;" for the attacks of the enemy are chastisements from the hand of God. The devil tormented Job for his own purposes, but in reality the sorrows of the patriarch were chastisements from the Lord. "Chastening, Jah hath chastened me," says our poet : as much as to say that the Lord had smitten him very severely, and made him sorrowfully to know the full weight of his rod. The Lord frequently appears to save his heaviest blows for his best-beloved ones ; if any one affliction be more painful than another it falls to the lot of those whom he most distinguishes in his service. The gardener prunes his best roses with most care. Chastisement is sent to keep successful saints humble, to make them tender towards others, and to enable them to bear the high honours which their heavenly Friend puts upon them. "*But he hath not given me over unto death.*" This verse, like the thirteenth, concludes with a blessed "but," which constitutes a saving clause. The Psalmist felt as if he had been beaten within an inch of his life, but yet death did not actually ensue. There is always a merciful limit to the scourging of the sons of God. Forty stripes save one were all that an Israelite might receive, and the Lord will never allow that one, that killing stroke, to fall upon his children. They are "chastened, but not killed" ; their pains are for their instruction, not for their destruction. By these things the ungodly die, but gracious Hezekiah could say, "By these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." No, blessed be the name of God, he may chastise us, but he will not condemn us ; we must feel the smarting rod, but we shall not feel the killing sword. He does not give us over unto death at any time, and we may be quite sure that he has not done so while he condescends to chasten us, for if he intended our final rejection he would not take the pains to place us under his fatherly discipline. It may seem hard to be under the afflicting rod, but it would be a far more dreadful thing if the Lord were to say, "He is given unto idols, let him alone." Even from our griefs we may distil consolation, and gather sweet flowers from the garden in which the Lord has planted salutary rue and wormwood. It is a cheering fact that if we endure chastening God dealeth with us as with sons, and we may well be satisfied with the common lot of his beloved family.

The hero, restored to health, and rescued from the dangers of battle, now lifts up his own song unto the Lord, and asks all Israel, led on by the goodly fellowship of the priests, to assist him in chanting a joyful Te Deum.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness : I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD :

20 This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee : for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

19. "*Open to me the gates of righteousness.*" The grateful champion having reached the entrance of the temple, asks for admission in set form, as if he felt that he could only approach the hallowed shrine by divine permission, and wished only to enter in the appointed manner. The temple of God was meant for the righteous to enter and offer the sacrifices of righteousness, hence the gates are called the gates

of righteousness. Righteous deeds were done within its walls, and righteous teachings sounded forth from its courts. The phrase "the gate" is sometimes used to signify power or empire; as, for instance, "the Sublime Porte" signifies the seat of empire of Turkey; the entrance to the temple was the true Sublime Porte, and what is better, it was the *porta justitiæ*, the gate of righteousness, the palace of the great King, who is in all things just. "I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord." Only let the gate be opened, and the willing worshipper will enter; and he will enter in the right spirit, and for the best of purposes, that he may render homage unto the Most High. Alas, there are multitudes who do not care whether the gates of God's house are opened or not; and although they know that they are opened wide they never care to enter, neither does the thought of praising God so much as cross their minds. The time will come for them when they shall find the gates of heaven shut against them, for those gates are peculiarly the gates of righteousness through which there shall by no means enter anything that defileth. Our champion might have praised the Lord in secret, and doubtless he did so; but he was not content without going up to the assembly, there to register his thanksgivings. Those who neglect public worship generally neglect all worship; those who praise God within their own gates are among the readiest to praise him within his temple gates. Our hero had also in all probability been sore sick, and therefore like Hezekiah he says, "The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of my life in the house of the Lord." Public praise for public mercies is every way most appropriate, most acceptable to God, and most profitable to others.

20. "This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter." The Psalmist loves the house of God so well that he admires the very gate thereof, and pauses beneath its arch to express his affection for it. He loved it because it was the gate of the Lord, he loved it because it was the gate of righteousness, because so many godly people had already entered it, and because in all future ages such persons will continue to pass through its portals. If the gate of the Lord's house on earth is so pleasant to us, how greatly shall we rejoice when we pass that gate of pearl, to which none, but the righteous shall ever approach, but through which all the just shall in due time enter to eternal felicity. The Lord Jesus has passed that way, and not only set the gate wide open, but secured an entrance for all those who are made righteous in his righteousness: all the righteous must and shall enter there, whoever may oppose them. Under another aspect our Lord is himself that gate, and through him, as the new and living Way, all the righteous delight to approach unto the Lord. Whenever we draw near to praise the Lord we must come by this gate; acceptable praise never climbs over the wall, or enters by any other way, but comes to God in Christ Jesus; as it is written, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Blessed, for ever blessed, be this wondrous gate of the person of our Lord.

21. Having entered, the champion exclaims, "I will praise thee," not "I will praise the Lord," for now he vividly realizes the divine presence, and addresses himself directly to Jehovah, whom his faith sensibly discerns. How well it is in all our songs of praise to let the heart have direct and distinct communion with God himself! The Psalmist's song was personal praise too:—"I will praise thee"; resolute praise, for he firmly resolved to offer it; spontaneous praise, for he voluntarily and cheerfully rendered it, and continuous praise, for he did not intend soon to have done with it. It was a life-long vow to which there would never come a close, "I will praise thee." "For thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation." He praises God by mentioning his favours, weaving his song out of the divine goodness which he had experienced. In these words he gives the reason for his praise,—his answered prayer, and the deliverance which he had received in consequence. How fondly he dwells upon the personal interposition of God! "Thou hast heard me." How heartily he ascribes the whole of his victory over his enemies to God; nay, he sees God himself to be the whole of it: "Thou art become my salvation." It is well to go directly to God himself, and not to stay even in his mercy, or in the acts of his grace. Answered prayers bring God very near to us; realised salvation enables us to realise the immediate presence of God. Considering the extreme distress through which the worshipper had passed, it is not at all wonderful that he should feel his heart full of gratitude at the great salvation which God had wrought for him, and should at his first entrance into the temple lift up his voice in thankful praise for personal favours so great, so needful, so perfect.

22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

23 This is the LORD'S doing ; it *is* marvellous in our eyes.

24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD : O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD : we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

27 God *is* the LORD, which hath showed us light : bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

This passage will appear to be a mixture of the expressions of the people and of the hero himself.

22. "*The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*" Here the people magnify God for bringing his chosen servant into the honourable office, which had been allotted to him by divine decree. A wise king and valiant leader is a stone by which the national fabric is built up. David had been rejected by those in authority, but God had placed him in a position of the highest honour and the greatest usefulness, making him the chief corner-stone of the state. In the case of many others whose early life has been spent in conflict, the Lord has been pleased to accomplish his divine purposes in like manner ; but to none is this text so applicable as to the Lord Jesus himself : he is the living stone, the tried stone, elect, precious, which God himself appointed from of old. The Jewish builders, scribe, priest, Pharisee, and Herodian, rejected him with disdain. They could see no excellence in him that they should build upon him ; he could not be made to fit in with their ideal of a national church, he was a stone of another quarry from themselves, and not after their mind nor according to their taste ; therefore they cast him away and poured contempt upon him, even as Peter said, " This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders " : they reckoned him to be as nothing, though he is Lord of all. In raising him from the dead the Lord God exalted him to be the head of his church, the very pinnacle of her glory and beauty. Since then he has become the confidence of the Gentiles, even of them that are afar off upon the sea, and thus he has joined the two walls of Jew and Gentile into one stately temple, and is seen to be the binding corner-stone, making both one. This is a delightful subject for contemplation.

Jesus in all things hath the pre-eminence, he is the principal stone of the whole house of God. We are accustomed to lay some one stone of a public building with solemn ceremony, and to deposit in it any precious things which may have been selected as a memorial of the occasion : henceforth that corner-stone is looked upon as peculiarly honourable, and joyful memories are associated with it. All this is in a very emphatic sense true of our blessed Lord, " The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." God himself laid him where he is, and hid within him all the precious things of the eternal covenant ; and there he shall for ever remain, the foundation of all our hopes, the glory of all our joys, the uniting bond of all our fellowship. He is " the head over all things to the church," and by him the church is fitly framed together, and groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. Still do the builders refuse him : even to this day the professional teachers of the gospel are far too apt to fly to any and every new philosophy sooner than maintain the simple gospel, which is the essence of Christ : nevertheless, he holds his true position amongst his people, and the foolish builders shall see to their utter confusion that his truth shall be exalted over all. Those who reject the chosen stone will stumble against him to their own hurt, and ere long will come his second advent, when he will fall upon them from the heights of heaven, and grind them to powder.

23. "*This is the LORD'S doing.*" The exalted position of Christ in his church is not the work of man, and does not depend for its continuation upon any builders or ministers ; God himself has wrought the exaltation of our Lord Jesus. Considering the opposition which comes from the wisdom, the power, and the authority of this world, it is manifest that if the kingdom of Christ be indeed set up and maintained in the world it must be by supernatural power. Indeed, it is so even in the smallest detail. Every grain of true faith in this world is a divine creation, and every hour

in which the true church subsists is a prolonged miracle. It is not the goodness of human nature, nor the force of reasoning, which exalts Christ, and builds up the church, but a power from above. This staggers the adversary, for he cannot understand what it is which baffles him : of the Holy Ghost he knows nothing. "*It is marvellous in our eyes.*" We actually see it ; it is not in our thoughts and hopes and prayers alone, but the astonishing work is actually before our eyes. Jesus reigns, his power is felt, and we perceive that it is so. Faith sees our great Master, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; she sees and marvels. It never ceases to astonish us, as we see, even here below, God by means of weakness defeating power, by the simplicity of his word baffling the craft of men, and by the invisible influence of his Spirit exalting his Son in human hearts in the teeth of open and determined opposition. It is indeed "*marvellous in our eyes,*" as all God's works must be if men care to study them. In the Hebrew the passage reads, "*It is wonderfully done*" : not only is the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth itself wonderful, but the way in which it is brought about is marvellous : it is wonderfully done. The more we study the history of Christ and his church the more fully shall we agree with this declaration.

24. "*This is the day which the LORD hath made.*" A new era has commenced. The day of David's enthronement was the beginning of better times for Israel ; and in a far higher sense the day of our Lord's resurrection is a new day of God's own making, for it is the dawn of a blessed dispensation. No doubt the Israelitish nation celebrated the victory of its champion with a day of feasting, music and song ; and surely it is but meet that we should reverently keep the feast of the triumph of the Son of David. We observe the Lord's-day as henceforth our true Sabbath, a day made and ordained of God, for the perpetual remembrance of the achievements of our Redeemer. Whenever the soft Sabbath light of the first day of the week breaks upon the earth, let us sing,

' This is the day the Lord hath made,
He calls the hours his own ;
Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.'

We by no means wish to confine the reference of the passage to the Sabbath, for the whole gospel day is the day of God's making, and its blessings come to us through our Lord's being placed as the head of the corner. "*We will rejoice and be glad in it.*" What else can we do ? Having obtained so great a deliverance through our illustrious leader, and having seen the eternal mercy of God so brilliantly displayed, it would ill become us to mourn and murmur. Rather will we exhibit a double joy, rejoice in heart and be glad in face, rejoice in secret and be glad in public, for we have more than a double reason for being glad in the Lord. We ought to be specially joyous on the Sabbath : it is the queen of days, and its hours should be clad in royal apparel of delight. George Herbert says of it :—

" Thou art a day of mirth,
And where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher as thy birth."

Entering into the midst of the church of God, and beholding the Lord Jesus as all in all in the assemblies of his people, we are bound to overflow with joy. Is it not written, " then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord " ? When the King makes the house of prayer to be a banqueting house, and we have grace to enjoy fellowship with him, both in his sufferings and in his triumphs, we feel an intense delight, and we are glad to express it with the rest of his people.

25. "*Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD.*" Hosanna ! God save our king ! Let David reign ! Or as we who live in these latter days interpret it,—Let the Son of David live for ever, let his saving help go forth throughout all nations. This was the peculiar shout of the feast of tabernacles ; and so long as we dwell here below in these tabernacles of clay we cannot do better than use the same cry. Perpetually let us pray that our glorious King may work salvation in the midst of the earth. We plead also for ourselves that the Lord would save us, deliver us, and continue to sanctify us. This we ask with great earnestness, beseeching it of Jehovah. Prayer should always be an entreating and beseeching. "*O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*" Let the church be built up : through the salvation of sinners may

the number of the saints be increased ; through the preservation of saints may the church be strengthened, continued, beautified, perfected. Our Lord Jesus himself pleads for the salvation and the prosperity of his chosen ; as our Intercessor before the throne he asks that the heavenly Father would save and keep those who were of old committed to his charge, and cause them to be one through the indwelling Spirit. Salvation had been given, and therefore it is asked for. Strange though it may seem, he who cries for salvation is already in a measure saved. None can so truly cry, " Save, I beseech thee," as those who have already participated in salvation ; and the most prosperous church is that which most imploringly seeks prosperity. It may seem strange that, returning from victory, flushed with triumph, the hero should still ask for salvation ; but so it is, and it could not be otherwise. When all our Saviour's work and warfare were ended, his intercession became even more prominently a feature of his life ; after he had conquered all his foes he made intercession for the transgressors. What is true of him is true of his church also, for whenever she obtains the largest measure of spiritual blessing she is then most inclined to plead for more. She never pants so eagerly for prosperity as when she sees the Lord's doings in her midst, and marvels at them. Then, encouraged by the gracious visitation, she sets apart her solemn days of prayer, and cries with passionate desire, " Save now," and " Send now prosperity." She would fain take the tide at the flood, and make the most of the day of which the Lord has already made so much.

26. "*Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD.*" The champion had done everything " in the name of the Lord " : in that name he had routed all his adversaries, and had risen to the throne, and in that name he had now entered the temple to pay his vows. We know who it is that cometh in the name of the Lord beyond all others. In the Psalmist's days he was The Coming One, and he is still The Coming One, though he hath already come. We are ready with our hosannas both for his first and second advent ; our inmost souls thankfully adore and bless him and invoke upon his head unspeakable joys. " Prayer also shall be made for him continually ; and daily shall he be praised." For his sake everybody is blessed to us who comes in the name of the Lord, we welcome all such to our hearts and our homes ; but chiefly, and beyond all others, we welcome *himself* when he deigns to enter in and sup with us and we with him. O sacred bliss, fit antepast of heaven ! Perhaps this sentence is intended to be the benediction of the priests upon the valiant servant of the Lord, and if so, it is appropriately added, "*We have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.*" The priests whose business it was to bless the people, in a sevenfold degree blessed the people's deliverer, the one chosen out of the people whom the Lord had exalted. All those whose high privilege it is to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, because they are made priests unto God in Christ Jesus, can truly say that they bless the Christ who has made them what they are, and placed them where they are. Whenever we feel ourselves at home with God, and feel the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, " Abba Father," the first thought of our hearts should be to bless the elder Brother, through whom the privilege of sonship has descended to such unworthy ones. In looking back upon our past lives we can remember many delightful occasions in which with joy unutterable we have in the fulness of our heart blessed our Saviour and our King ; and all these memorable seasons are so many foretastes and pledges of the time when in the house of our great Father above we shall for ever sing, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," and with rapture bless the Redeemer's name.

27. "*God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light,*" or " God is Jehovah," the only living and true God. There is none other God but he. The words may also be rendered, " Mighty is Jehovah." Only the power of God could have brought us such light and joy as spring from the work of our Champion and King. We have received light, by which we have known the rejected stone to be the head of the corner, and this light has led us to enlist beneath the banner of the once despised Nazarene, who is now the Prince of the kings of the earth. With the light of knowledge has come the light of joy ; for we are delivered from the powers of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Our knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ came not by the light of nature, nor by reason, nor did it arise from the sparks which we ourselves had kindled, nor did we receive it of men ; but the mighty God alone hath showed it to us. He made a day on purpose that he might shine upon us like the sun, and he made our faces to shine in the light of that day, according to the declaration of the twenty-fourth verse. Therefore,

unto him be all the honour of our enlightenment. Let us do our best to magnify the great Father of lights from whom our present blessedness has descended. "*Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*" Some think that by this we are taught that the king offered so many sacrifices that the whole area of the court was filled, and the sacrifices were bound even up to the altar; but we are inclined to keep to our own version, and to believe that sometimes restive bullocks were bound to the altar before they were slain, in which case Mant's verse is correct:—

"He, Jehovah, is our Lord:
He, our God, on us hath shined:
Bind the sacrifice with cord,
To the horned altar bind."

The word rendered "cords" carries with it the idea of wreaths and boughs, so that it was not a cord of hard, rough rope, but a decorated band; even as in our case, though we are bound to the altar of God, it is with the cords of love and the bands of a man, and not by a compulsion which destroys the freedom of the will. The sacrifice which we would present in honour of the victories of our Lord Jesus Christ is the living sacrifice of our spirit, soul, and body. We bring ourselves to his altar, and desire to offer him all that we have and are. There remains a tendency in our nature to start aside from this; it is not fond of the sacrificial knife. In the warmth of our love we come willingly to the altar, but we need constraining power to keep us there in the entirety of our being throughout the whole of life. Happily there is a cord which, twisted around the atonement, or, better still, around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our only Altar, can hold us, and does hold us: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." We are bound to the doctrine of atonement; we are bound to Christ himself, who is both altar and sacrifice; we desire to be more bound to him than ever, our soul finds her liberty in being tethered fast to the altar of the Lord. The American Board of Missions has for its seal an ox, with an altar on one side and a plough on the other, and the motto "Ready for either,"—ready to live and labour, or ready to suffer and die. We would gladly spend ourselves for the Lord actively, or be spent by him passively, whichever may be his will; but since we know the rebellion of our corrupt nature we earnestly pray that we may be kept in this consecrated mind, and that we may never, under discouragements, or through the temptations of the world, be permitted to leave the altar, to which it is our intense desire to be for ever fastened. Such consecration as this, and such desires for its perpetuity, well beseem that day of gladness which the Lord hath made so bright by the glorious triumph of his Son, our covenant head, our well-beloved.

28 Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee: *thou art* my God, I will exalt thee.

29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Now comes the closing song of the champion, and of each one of his admirers. 28. "*Thou art my God, and I will praise thee,*" my mighty God who hath done this mighty and marvellous thing. Thou shalt be mine, and all the praise my soul is capable of shall be poured forth at thy feet. "*Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.*" Thou hast exalted me, and as far as my praises can do it, I will exalt thy name. Jesus is magnified, and he magnifies the Father according to his prayer, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." God hath given us grace and promised us glory, and we are constrained to ascribe all grace to him, and all the glory of it also. The repetition indicates a double determination, and sets forth the firmness of the resolution, the heartiness of the affection, the intensity of the gratitude. Our Lord Jesus himself saith, "I will praise thee"; and well may each one of us, humbly and with confidence in divine grace add, on his own account, the same declaration, "*I will praise thee.*" However others may blaspheme thee, I will exalt thee: however dull and cold I may sometimes feel myself, yet will I rouse up my nature, and determine that as long as I have any being that being shall be spent to thy praise. For ever thou art my God, and for ever I will give thee thanks.

29. "*O give thanks unto the LORD ; for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever.*" The Psalm concludes as it began, making a complete circle of joyful adoration. We can well suppose that the notes at the close of the loud hallelujah were more swift, more sweet, more loud than at the beginning. To the sound of trumpet and harp, Israel, the house of Aaron, and all that feared the Lord, forgetting their distinctions, joined in one common hymn, testifying again to their deep gratitude to the Lord's goodness, and to the mercy which is unto eternity. What better close could there be to this right royal song? The Psalmist would have risen to something higher, so as to end with the climax, but nothing loftier remained. He had reached the height of his grandest argument, and there he paused. The music ceased, the song was suspended, the great *hallel* was all chanted, and the people went every one to his own home, quietly and happily musing upon the goodness of the Lord, whose mercy fills eternity.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—This is the last of those Psalms which form the great *Hallel*, which the Jews sang at the end of the passover.—*Adam Clarke.*

Whole Psalm.—The whole Psalm has a peculiar formation. It resembles the *Maschal* Psalms, for each verse has of itself its completed sense, its own scent and hue ; one thought is joined to another as branch to branch and flower to flower.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—Nothing can surpass the force and majesty, as well as the richly varied beauty, of this Psalm. Its general burden is quite manifest. It is the prophetic expression, by the Spirit of Christ, of that exultant strain of anticipative triumph, wherein the virgin daughter of Zion will laugh to scorn, in the immediate prospect of her Deliverer's advent, the congregated armies of the Man of Sin (verses 10—13).—*Arthur Pridham.*

Whole Psalm.—The two Psalms, 117th and 118th, are placed together because, though each is a distinct portion in itself, the 117th is an exordium to that which follows it, an address and an invitation to the Gentile and heathen world to acknowledge and praise Jehovah.

We are now arrived at the concluding portion of the hymn, which Christ and his disciples sung preparatory to their going forth to the Mount of Olives. Nothing could be more appropriate or better fitted to comfort and encourage, at that awful period, than a prophecy which, overleaping the suffering to be endured, showed forth the glory that was afterwards to follow, and a song of triumph, then only recited, but in due time to be literally acted, when the cross was to be succeeded by a crown. This Psalm is not only frequently quoted in the New Testament, but it was also partially applied at one period of our Saviour's sojourn on earth, and thus we are afforded decisive testimony to the purpose for which it is originally and prophetically destined. It was partially used at the time when Messiah, in the days of his humiliation, was received with triumph and acclamation into Jerusalem ; and we may conclude it will be fully enacted, when our glorified and triumphant Lord, coming with ten thousand of his saints, will again stand upon the earth and receive the promised salutation, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of Jehovah." This dramatic representation of Messiah coming in glory, to take his great power and reign among us, is apportioned to the chief character, "the King of kings and Lord of lords," to his saints following him in procession, and to priests and Levites, representing the Jewish nation.

The Conqueror and his attendants sing the 117th Psalm, an introductory hymn, inviting all, Jews and Gentiles, to share in the merciful kindness of God, and to sing his praises. It is a gathering together of all the Lord's people, to be witnesses and partakers of his glory. The first, second, and third verses of the 118th Psalm are sung by single voices. As the procession moves along, the theme of rejoicing is announced. The first voice repeats, "*O give thanks unto the LORD ; for he is good, because his mercy endureth for ever.*" Another single voice calls on Israel to acknowledge this great truth ; and a third invites the house of Aaron, the priesthood,

to acknowledge their share in Jehovah's love. The fourth verse is a chorus; the whole procession, the living, and the dead who are raised to meet Christ (1 Thess. iv. 16), shout aloud the burden of the song, verse 1. Arrived at the temple gate, or rather, the gate of Jerusalem, the Conqueror alone sings, verses 5, 6, 7. He begins by recounting the circumstances of his distress. Next, he tells of his refuge: I betook me to God, I told him my sorrows, and he heard me. The procession, in chorus, sings verses 8 and 9, taking up the substance of Messiah's chaunt, and fully echoing the sentiment, "*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*" The Conqueror alone again sings verses 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. He enlarges on the magnitude of his dangers, and the hopelessness of his situation. It was not a common difficulty, or a single enemy, whole nations compassed him about. The procession in chorus, verses 15, 16, attributes their Lord's great deliverance to his righteous person, and to his righteous cause. Justice and equity and truth, all demanded that Messiah should not be trodden down. "Was it not thine arm, O Jehovah, which has gotten thee the victory?" Messiah now takes up the language of a conqueror, verses 17, 18, 19. My sufferings were sore, but they were only for a season. I laid down my life, and I now take it up again: and then, with a loud voice, as when he roused Lazarus out of the grave, he cries to those within the walls, "*Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD.*" The priests and Levites within instantly obey his command, and while they throw open the gates, they sing, "*This is the gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.*" As he enters, the Conqueror alone repeats verse 21. His sorrows are ended, his victory is complete. The objects for which he lived and died, and for which his prayers were offered, are now fulfilled, and thus, in a few short words, he expresses his joy and gratitude to God. The priests and Levites sing in chorus verses 22, 23, 24. Depositaries and expounders of the prophecies as they had long been, they now for the first time, quote and apply one, Isai. xxviii. 16, which held a conspicuous place, but never before was intelligible to Jewish ears. "The man of sorrows," the stone which the builders refused, is become the headstone of the corner. The Conqueror is now within the gates, and proceeds to accomplish his good purpose, Luke i. 68. "*Hosannah, save thy people, O LORD, and send them now prosperity,*" verse 25. The priests and Levites are led by the Spirit to use the words foretold by our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 39. Now at length the veil is removed, and his people say, "*Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD,*" verse 26. The Conqueror and his train (verse 27) now praise God, who has given light and deliverance and salvation, and they offer to him the sacrifice of thanksgiving for all that they enjoy. The Conqueror alone (verse 28) next makes a solemn acknowledgment of gratitude and praise to Jehovah, and then, all being within the gates, the united body, triumphant procession, priests and Levites, end, as they commenced, "*O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*"—R. H. Ryland, in "*The Psalms restored to Messiah,*" 1853.

Whole Psalm.—It was Luther's favourite Psalm, his beauteous *Confitemini*, which "had helped him out of what neither emperor nor king, nor any other man on earth, could have helped him." With the exposition of this his noblest jewel, his defence and his treasure, he occupied himself in the solitude of his Patmos (Coburg).—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—This is my Psalm, my chosen Psalm. I love them all; I love all holy Scripture, which is my consolation and my life. But this Psalm is nearest my heart, and I have a peculiar right to call it mine. It has saved me from many a pressing danger, from which nor emperor, nor kings, nor sages, nor saints, could have saved me. It is my friend; dearer to me than all the honours and power of the earth. . . . But it may be objected, that this Psalm is common to all; no one has a right to call it his own. Yes; but Christ is also common to all, and yet Christ is mine. I am not jealous of my property; I would divide it with the whole world. . . . And would to God that all men would claim the Psalm as especially theirs! It would be the most touching quarrel, the most agreeable to God—a quarrel of union and perfect charity.—*Luther. From his Dedication of his Translation of Psalm CXVIII. to the Abbot Frederick of Nuremberg.*

Verse 1.—"For he is good." The praise of God could not be expressed in fewer words than these, "*For he is good.*" I see not what can be more solemn than this brevity, since goodness is so peculiarly the quality of God, that the Son of God himself when addressed by some one as "Good Master," by one, namely, who

beholding his flesh, and comprehending not the fulness of his divine nature, considered him as man only, replied, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." And what is this but to say, If thou wishest to call me good, recognize me as God?—*Augustine*.

Verse 1.—"His mercy endureth for ever." What the close of Ps. cxvii. says of God's truth, viz., that it endureth for ever, the beginning of Ps. cxviii. says of its sister, his mercy or loving-kindness.—*Franz Delitzsch*.

Verses 1-4.—As the salvation of the elect is one, and the love of God to them one, so should their song be one, as here four several times it is said, "His mercy endureth for ever."—*David Dickson*.

Verses 1-4.—Because we hear the sentence so frequently repeated here, that "the mercy of the LORD endureth for ever," we are not to think that the Holy Spirit has employed empty tautology, but our great necessity demands it: for in temptations and dangers the flesh begins to doubt of the mercy of God: therefore nothing should be so frequently impressed on the mind as this, that the mercy of God does not fail, that the Eternal Father wearies not in remitting our sins.—*Solomon Gesner*.

Verse 2.—"Let Israel now say." Albeit all the elect have interest in God's praise for mercies purchased by Christ unto them, yet the elect of Israel have the first room in the song; for Christ is first promised to them, and came of them according to the flesh, and will be most marvellous about them.—*David Dickson*.

Verse 2.—"Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever." Let such who have had an experience of it, acknowledge and declare it to others; not only believe it with their hearts, and privately give thanks for it, but with the mouth make confession of it to the glory of divine grace.—*John Gill*.

Verses 2, 3, 4.—"Now." Beware of delaying. Delays be dangerous, our hearts will cool, and our affections will fall down. It is good then to be doing while it is called *to-day*, while it is called *now*. *Now, now, now*, saith David; there be three *nows*, and all to teach us that for aught we know, it is *now* or never, *to-day* or not at all; we must praise God while the heart is hot, else our iron will cool. Satan hath little hope to prevail unless he can persuade us to omit our duties when the clock strikes, and therefore his skill is to urge us to put it off till another time as fitter or better. Do it anon, next hour, next day, next week (saith he); and why not next year? Hereafter (saith he) it will be as well as now. This he saith indeed, but his meaning (by hereafter) is never: and he that is not fit *to-day*, hath no promise but he shall be more unapt *to-morrow*. We have neither God nor our own hearts at command; and when we have lost the opportunity, God to correct us perhaps will not give us affections. The cock within shall not crow to awaken us, the sun shall not shine, and then we are in danger to give over quite; and if we come once to a total omission of one duty, why not of another, and of another, and so of all? and then farewell to us.—*Richard Capel* (1586-1656) in "*Tentations, their Nature, Danger, Cure*."

Verse 4.—"Them that fear the LORD." Who were neither of "the house of Aaron," that is, of the priests or Levites; nor of "the house of Israel," that is, native Jews; yet might be of the Jewish religion, and "fear the LORD." These were called *proselytes*, and are here invited to praise the Lord.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 4.—"God's mercy endureth for ever." That is, his covenant mercy, that precious church privilege: this is perpetual to his people, and should perpetually remain as a memorial in our hearts. And therefore it is that this is the foot or burthen of these first four verses. Neither is there any idle repetition, but a notable expression of the saints' insatiableness of praising God for his never failing mercy. These heavenly birds having got a note, sing it over and over. In the last Psalm there are but six verses, yet twelve Hallelujahs.—*Abraham Wright*.

Verse 5.—Perhaps verse 5, which says, "I called upon the LORD in distress" (literally, out of the narrow gorge), "and the LORD answered me on the open plain"—which describes the deliverance of Israel from their captivity,—may have been sung as they defiled from a narrow ravine into the plain; and when they arrived at the gate of the temple, then they broke forth in full chorus into the words, "Open to me the gates of righteousness" (ver. 19).—*Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 5.—It is said, "I called upon the LORD." Thou must learn to call, and

not to sit there by thyself, and lie on the bench, hang and shake thy head, and bite and devour thyself with thy thoughts; but come on, thou indolent knave, down upon thy knees, up with thy hands and eyes to heaven, take a Psalm or a prayer, and set forth thy distress with tears before God.—*Martin Luther.*

Verse 5.—"The LORD answered me, and set me in a large place." It may be rendered, *The LORD answered me largely*; as he did Solomon, when he gave him more than he asked for; and as he does his people, when he gives them a sufficiency and an abundance of his grace; not only above their deserts, but above their thoughts and expectations. See Eph. iii. 20.—*John Gill.*

Verse 6.—"The LORD is on my side." The reason which the Psalmist gives here for his trusting, or for his not fearing, is the great fact, that the Lord is on his side; and the prominent idea which this brings before us is *Alliance*; the making common cause, which the great God undoubtedly does, with imperfect, yet with earnest, trusting man.

We know very well the great anxiety shown by men, in all their worldly conflicts, to secure the aid of a powerful ally; in their lawsuits, to retain the services of a powerful advocate; or, in their attempts at worldly advancement, to win the friendship and interest of those who can further the aims they have in view. When Herod was highly displeased with the armies of Tyre and Sidon, they did not venture to approach him until they had made Blastus, the king's chamberlain, their friend. If such and such a person be on their side, men think that all must go well. Who so well off as he who is able to say, "*The LORD is on my side*"?—*Philip Bennet Power*, in "*The I Will's of the Psalms*," 1861.

Verse 6.—God is with those he calls and employs in public service. Joshua was exhorted to be strong and of good courage, "For the Lord thy God is with thee" (Josh. i. 9). So also was Jeremiah, "Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee" (Jer. i. 8). God's presence should put life into us. When inferior natures are backed with a superior, they are full of courage: when the master is by, the dog will venture upon creatures greater than himself and fear not; at another time he will not do it when his master is absent. When God is with us, who is the supreme, it should make us fearless. It did David; "*The LORD is on my side; I will not fear what man can do unto me.*" Let him do his worst, frown, threat, plot, arm, strike; the Lord is on my side, he hath a special care for me, he is a shield unto me, I will not fear, but hope; as it is in the next verse, "I shall see my desire on them that hate me," I shall see them changed or ruined. Our help is in the name of the Lord, but our fears are in the name of man.—*William Greenhill.*

Verse 6.—"I will not fear." David, (or God's people, if you will,) being taught by experience, exults in great confidence, but does not say, the Lord is my helper, and I shall suffer no more, knowing that while he is a pilgrim here below he will have much to suffer from his daily enemies; but he says, "*The LORD is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.*"—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 6.—"Man" does not here mean a man, but mankind, or man as opposed to God.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 8.—It may perhaps be considered beneath the dignity and solemnity of our subject to remark, that this 8th verse of this Psalm is the middle verse of the Bible. There are, I believe, 31,174 verses in all, and this is the 15,587th. I do not wish, nor would I advise you to occupy your time in counting for yourselves, nor should I indeed have noticed the subject at all, but that I wish to suggest one remark upon it, and that is, that though we may generally look upon such calculations as only laborious idleness,—and they certainly have been carried to the most minute dissection of every part of Scripture, such as to how many times the word "Lord," the word "God," and even the word "and," occurs,—yet I believe that the integrity of the holy volume owes a vast deal to this scruple-weighting of these calculators. I do not say, nor do I think, that they had such motives in their minds; but whatever their reasons were, I cannot but think that there was an overruling Providence in thus converting these trifling and apparently useless investigations into additional guards and fences around the sacred text.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verse 8.—"It is better to trust in the LORD," etc. Luther on this text calleth it, *artem artem, et mirificam, ac suam artem, non fidere hominibus*, that is, the art

of arts, and that which he had well studied, not to put confidence in man : as for trust in God, he calleth it *sacrificium omnium gratissimum et suavissimum, et cultum omnium pulcherrimum*, the most pleasant and sweetest of all sacrifices, the best of all services we perform to God.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 8.—“*It is better to trust in the LORD.*” All make this acknowledgment, and yet there is scarcely one among a hundred who is fully persuaded that God alone can afford him sufficient help. That man has attained a high rank among the faithful, who resting satisfied in God, never ceases to entertain a lively hope, even when he finds no help upon earth.—*John Calvin*.

Verse 8.—It is a great cause oftentimes why God blesseth not means, because we are so apt to trust in them, and rob God of his glory, not waiting for a blessing at his hands. This causeth the Lord to cross us, and to curse his own benefits, because we seek not him, but sacrifice to our own nets, putting confidence in outward means. Therefore when we hope for help from them, God bloweth upon them, and turneth them to our hurt and destruction.—*Abraham Wright*.

Verse 8.—When my enemies have been brought to contempt, let not my friend present himself unto me as a good man, and bid me repose my hope in himself ; for still must I trust in the Lord alone.—*Augustine*.

Verses 8, 9.—Nothing is more profitable than dwelling on familiar truths. Was there ever a good man who did not believe that it was better to trust in Jehovah than rely on any created arm ? Yet David here repeats this truth, that if possible it may sink deep into every mind.—*William S. Plumer*.

Verse 9.—“*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*” David knew that by experience, for he confided in Saul his king, at another time in Achish, the Philistine, at another time in Ahithophel his own most prudent minister, besides some others ; and they all failed him ; but he never confided in God without feeling the benefit of it.—*Robert Bellarmine*.

Verse 9.—“*It is better,*” etc. Literally, “*Good is it to trust in Jehovah more than to confide in man.*” This is the Hebrew form of comparison, and is equivalent to what is stated in our version. “*It is better,*” etc. It is better, (1) because man is weak,—but God is Almighty ; (2) because man is selfish,—but God is benevolent ; (3) because man is often faithless and deceitful,—God never ; (4) because there are emergencies, as death, in which man cannot aid us, however faithful, kind, and friendly he may be,—but there are no circumstances in this life, and none in death, where God cannot assist us ; and (5) because the ability of man to help us pertains at best only to the present life,—the power of God will be commensurate with eternity.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 9.—“*Than to put confidence in princes.*” Great men’s words, saith one, are like dead men’s shoes ; he may go barefoot that waiteth for them.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 9.—They who constantly attend upon God, and depend upon him, have a much sweeter life, than those that wait upon princes with great observance and expectation. A servant of the Lord is better provided for than the greatest favourites and minions of princes.—*Thomas Manton*.

Verse 10.—“*All nations compassed me about.*” A multitude of enemies everywhere cannot hinder the presence of God with us. Acts xvii. 28. They are without ; He is within, in our hearts ; they are flesh ; He is Spirit : they are frail ; He is immortal and invincible.—*Martin Geier*.

Verse 11.—Whether Tertullus persecute the church with his tongue, or Elymas with his hand, God hath the command of both. Indeed the wicked are the mediate causes of our troubles : the righteous are as the centre, the other the circumference ; which way soever they turn, they find themselves environed ; yet still the centre is fixed and immovable, being founded upon Christ. It is good for some men to have adversaries ; for often they more fear to sin, lest they should despise them, than dislike it for conscience, lest God should condemn them. They speak evil of us : if true, let us amend it ; if false, condemn it ; whether false or true, observe it. Thus we shall learn good out of their evil ; make them our tutors, and give them our pupilage. In all things let us watch them, in nothing fear them : “*which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to us of salvation,*” Phil. i. 28. The church is that tower of David ; if there be a thousand weapons to wound us, there are a thousand shields to guard us, Cant. iv. 4.—*Thomas Adams*.

Verse 12.—“*They compassed me about like bees.*” Christ’s enemies are so spiteful, that in fighting against his kingdom, they regard not what become of themselves, so they may hurt his people; but as the bee undoeth herself in stinging, and loseth her life or her power with her sting, so do they. All that the enemies of Christ’s church can do against his people is but to trouble them externally; their wounds are like the sting of a bee, that is, unto pain and swelling, and a short trouble only, but are not deadly.—*David Dickson.*

Verse 12.—“*They compassed me about like bees.*” Now, as the north-east wind of course was adverse to any north-east progress, it was necessary that the boat should be towed by the crew. As the rope was being drawn along through the grass on the banks it happened that it disturbed a swarm of bees. In a moment, like a great cloud, they burst upon the men who were dragging; everyone of them threw himself headlong into the water and hurried to regain the boat. The swarm followed at their heels, and in a few seconds filled every nook and cranny of the deck. What a scene of confusion ensued may readily be imagined.

Without any foreboding of ill, I was arranging my plants in my cabin, when I heard all around me a scampering which I took at first to be merely the frolics of my people, as that was the order of the day. I called out to enquire the meaning of the noise, but only got excited gestures and reproachful looks in answer. The cry of “*Bees! bees!*” soon broke upon my ear, and I proceeded to light a pipe. My attempt was entirely in vain; in an instant bees in thousands are about me, and I am mercilessly stung all over my face and hands. To no purpose do I try to protect my face with a handkerchief, and the more violently I fling my hands about, so much the more violent becomes the impetuosity of the irritated insects. The maddening pain is now on my cheek, now in my eye, now in my hair. The dogs from under my bed burst out frantically, overturning everything in their way. Losing well nigh all control over myself, I fling myself into the river; I dive down, but all in vain, for the stings rain down still upon my head. Not heeding the warnings of my people, I creep through the reedy grass to the swampy bank. The grass lacerates my hands, and I try to gain the mainland, hoping to find shelter in the woods. All at once four powerful arms seize me and drag me back with such force that I think I must be choked in the mud. I am compelled to go back on board, and flight is not to be thought of. . . . I felt ready, in the evening, for an encounter with half a score of buffaloes or a brace of lions rather than have anything more to do with bees; and this was a sentiment in which all the ship’s company heartily concurred.—*George Schweinfurth, in “The Heart of Africa,” 1873.*

Verse 12.—David said of his enemies, that they came about him like “*bees*”; he doth not say like wasps. For though they used their stings, yet he found honey in them too.—*Peter Smith, 1644.*

Verse 12.—“*They compassed me about like bees.*”

As wasps, provoked by children in their play,
Pour from their mansions by the broad highway,
In swarms the guiltless traveller engage,
Whet all their stings, and call forth all their rage,
All rise in arms, and with a general cry,
Assert their waxen domes, and buzzing progeny;
Thus from the tents the fervent legion swarms,
So loud their clamours, and so keen their arms.

—*Homer.*

Verse 12.—“*They are quenched as the fire of thorns.*” The illustration from the “*fire of thorns*” is derived from the fact that they quickly kindle into a blaze, and then the flame soon dies away. In Eastern countries it was common to burn over their fields in the dry time of the year, and thus to clear them of thorns and briars and weeds. Of course, at such a time they would kindle quickly, and burn rapidly, and would soon be consumed. So the Psalmist says it was with his enemies. He came upon them, numerous as they were, as the fire runs over a field in a dry time, burning everything before it.—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 12.—“*In the name of the LORD.*” This has been understood as the *tessera*, the sentence of attack, or signal to engage, like those of Cyrus—Jupiter is our leader and ally—Jupiter our captain and preserver. Cyropæd. l. 3 and 7; and Gideon, Judges vii. 18. This interpretation being only founded on the repetition, may it not more probably be designed as suited to the musical performance?—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 13.—“*Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall.*” The apostrophe is strong, and probably directed to some particular person in the battle, who had put David in great danger.—*Samuel Burder.*

Verse 13.—“*Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall.*” Thou hast indeed. Thou hast done thy part, O Satan, and it has been well done. Thou hast known all my weakest parts, thou hast seen where my armour was not buckled on tightly, and thou hast attacked me at the right time and in the right way. The great Spanish poet, Calderon, tells of one who wore a heavy suit of armour for a whole year, and laid it by for one hour, and in that hour the enemy came, and the man paid for his negligence with his life. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”—*John Mason Neale.*

Verse 14.—“*The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*” “*My strength,*” that I am able to resist my enemies; “*my salvation,*” that I am delivered from my enemies; “*my song,*” that I may joyfully praise him and sing of him after I am delivered.—*William Nicholson, 1662.*

Verse 14.—Good songs, good promises, good proverbs, good doctrines are none the worse for age. What was sung just after the passage of the Red Sea, is here sung by the prophet, and shall be sung to the end of the world by the saints of the Most High.—*William S. Plumer.*

Verse 14.—“*And is become my salvation.*” Not that he hath become anything which he was not before, but because his people, when they believed on him, became what they were not before, and then he began to be salvation unto them when turned towards him, which he was not to them when turned away from himself.—*Augustine.*

Verse 15.—“*The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.*” Every one should be careful that his dwelling is one of the *tabernacles of the righteous*, and that he himself together with his household should walk in righteousness (Luke i. 75). And he should be so diligent in hymns and sacred songs, that his rooms should resound with them.—*Martin Geier.*

Verse 16.—“*The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.*” Thrice he celebrateth God’s right hand, to set forth his earnest desire to say the utmost; or, in reference to the Sacred Trinity, as some will have it.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 17.—“*I shall not die, but live.*” As Christ is risen, “we shall not die, but live”; we shall not die eternally, but we shall live in this world, the life of grace, and in the world to come, the life of glory; that we may in both declare the “works” and chant the praises of God our Saviour. We are “chastened” for our sins, but “not given over to death” and destruction everlasting; nay, our being “chastened” is now a proof that we are not so given over; “for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” Heb. xii. 7.—*George Horne.*

Verse 17.—“*I shall not die, but live.*” To live, signifies, not barely to live, but to live comfortably, to have content with our life; to live is to prosper. Thus the word is often used in Scripture. “*I shall not die, but live.*” David did not look upon himself as immortal, or that he should never die; he knew he was subject to the statute of death: but the meaning is, I shall not die now, I shall not die by the hands of these men, I shall not die the death which they have designed me to; or when he saith, “*I shall not die, but live,*” his meaning is, I shall live comfortably and prosperously, I shall live as a king. That which we translate (1 Sam. x. 24) “God save the king,” is, “Let the king live,” that is, let him prosper, and have good days; let him have peace with all, or victory over his enemies.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 17.—“*I shall not die,*” etc. The following incident is worth recording: “Wicliffe was now getting old, but the Reformer was worn out rather by the harassing attacks of his foes, and his incessant and ever-growing labours, than with the weight of years, for he was not yet sixty. He fell sick. With unbounded joy the friars heard that their great enemy was dying. Of course he was overwhelmed with horror and remorse for the evil he had done them, and they would hasten to his bedside and receive the expression of his penitence and sorrow. In a trice a little crowd of shaven crowns assembled round the couch of the sick man—delegates from the four orders of friars. ‘They began fair,’ wishing him ‘health

and restoration from his distemper"; but speedily changing their tone, they exhorted him, as one on the brink of the grave, to make full confession, and express his unfeigned grief for the injuries he had inflicted on their order. Wicliffe lay silent till they should have made an end, then, making his servant raise him a little on his pillow, and fixing his keen eyes upon them, he said with a loud voice, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars.' The monks rushed in astonishment and confusion from the chamber.—*J. A. Wylie, in "The History of Protestantism."*

Verse 17.—"I shall not die," not absolutely, for see Psalm lxxxix. 48; Heb. ix. 27; but not in the midst of my days, Psalm cii. 24; nor according to the will of mine enemies, who "*thrust at me that I might fall,*" verse 13. But, on the contrary, *I shall live*, not simply as he had hitherto lived, in the greatest distress, which would be a wretched life, a living death: but lively, joyous, happy. Of this, he says he is secure; this the word asserts. On what foundation does he rest? Verses 14, 15, "*Because God had become his salvation,*" and "*the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.*"—*Jacob Atling.*

Verse 17.—"And declare the works of the LORD." Matter of praise abounds in all the divine works, both of the general creation and preservation and of the redemption of our souls: chiefly, that God, besides the life of nature, has given to us the life of grace, without which we could not properly praise God and declare his works.—*Rivcius.*

Verse 17.—"And declare the works of the LORD." In the second member of the verse, he points out the proper use of life, God does not prolong the lives of his people, that they may pamper themselves with meat and drink, sleep as much as they please, and enjoy every temporal blessing; but to magnify him for his benefits which he is daily heaping upon them.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 17.—According to Matthesius, Luther had this verse written against his study wall.

Verse 18.—"The LORD hath chastened me sore." Strong humours require strong physic to purge them out. Where corruption is deeply rooted in the heart, a light or small matter will not serve the turn to work it out. No; but a great deal of stir and ado must be made with it.—*Thomas Horton.*

Verse 18.—"But he hath not given me over unto death." It might have been worse, may the afflicted saint say, and it will be better; it is in mercy and in measure that God chastiseth his children. It is his care that "the spirit fail not before him, nor the souls which he hath made," Isai. lvii. 16. If his child swoons in the whipping, God lets fall the rod, and falls a kissing it, to fetch life into it again.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 19.—"Open to me the gates of righteousness." The gates won by his righteousness, to whom we daily say, "Thou only art holy"; the gates which needed the "Via Dolorosa" and the cross, before they could roll back on their hinges. On a certain stormy afternoon, after the sun had been for three hours darkened, the world again heard of that Eden from which, four thousand years before, Adam had been banished. "Verily I say unto thee, this day shall thou be with me in paradise." O blessed malefactor, who thus entered into the heavenly gardens! O happy thief, that thus stole the kingdom of heaven! And see how valiantly he now enters it. "*Open to me the gates of righteousness.*" Not "God be merciful to me a sinner"; not "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." But this is what is called the suppliant omnipotency of prayer. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—*John Mason Neale.*

Verse 21.—"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me." There is a point which we would especially notice, and that is, praise for *hearing prayer*. In this point, almost above all others, God is frequently robbed of his praise. Men pray; they receive an answer to their prayers; and then forget to praise. This happens especially in small things; we should ever remember that whatever is worth praying for, is worth praising for also. The fact is, we do not recognize God in these small things as much as we should; if we do praise, it is for the receipt of the blessing, with which we are pleased, leaving out of account the One from whom the blessing has come. This is not acceptable to God; we must see him in the blessing, if we

would really praise. The Psalmist says, "*I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me*"; he praised not only because he had *received*, but also because he had *heard*—because the living God, as a hearing God, was manifested in his mercies. And when we know that God has heard us, let us not delay our praise; if we put off our thanksgiving until perhaps only the evening, we may forget to praise at all; and if we do praise, it will in all probability be with only half the warmth which would animate our song at first. God loves a quick return for his blessings; one sentence of heartfelt thanksgiving is worth all the formalism of a more laboured service. There is a freshness about immediate praise which is like the bloom upon the fruit; its being spontaneous adds ineffably to its price.

Trace, then, dear reader, a connection between your God and your blessing. Recognize his hearing ear as well as his bounteous hand, and be yours the Psalmist's words, "*I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me.*"—*Philip Bennet Power.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone.*" "*The head stone of the corner.*" Christ Jesus is a stone: no firmness, but in him. A fundamental stone: no building, but on him. A corner stone: no piecing nor reconciliation, but in him.—*James Ford, 1856.*

Verse 22.—"*The Stone which the builders rejected,*" etc. To apply it to Christ "*The Stone*" is the ground of all. Two things befall it; two things as contrary as may be,—1. *Refused*, cast away; then, called for again, and *made head of the building*. So, two parts there are to the eye. 1. *The refusing*; 2. *the raising*; which are his two estates, his *humiliation*, and his *exaltation*. In either of these you may observe two degrees, a *quibus*, and *quosque*, by whom and how far. *By whom refused?* We weigh the word, *ædificantes*: not by men unskilful, but by workmen, *professed builders*; it is so much the worse. *How far?* We weigh the word,—*reprobaverunt*; *usque ad reprobari*, even to a reprobation. It is not *improbaverunt*, *disliked*, as not fit for some eminent place; but *reprobaverunt*, *utterly reprobate*, for any place at all.

Again, *exalted*, by whom? The next words are *a Domino*, by God, as good a *builder*, nay, better than the best of them; which makes amends for the former. And *How far?* Placed by him, not in any part of the *building*; but in the part most in the eye (*the corner*), and in the highest place of it, *the very head*.

So *rejected*, and that by the *builders*, and to the *lowest estate*: and from the *lowest estate exalted*, in *caput anguli*, to the chiefest place of all; and that by God himself.—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone which the builders refused,*" etc. We need not wonder, that not only the powers of the world are usually enemies to Christ, and that the contrivers of policies, those builders, leave out Christ in their building, but that the pretended builders of the church of God, though they use the name of Christ, and serve their turn with that, yet reject himself, and oppose the power of his spiritual kingdom. There may be wit and learning, and much knowledge of the Scriptures, amongst those that are haters of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the power of godliness, and corrupters of the worship of God. It is the spirit of humility and obedience, and saving faith, that teach men to esteem Christ, and build upon him. The vanity and folly of these builders' opinion appears in this, that they are overpowered by the great Architect of the church: his purpose stands. Notwithstanding their rejection of Christ, he is still made the head corner stone. They cast him away by their reproaches, and by giving him up to be crucified and then cast into the grave, causing a stone to be rolled upon this *stone* which they had so rejected, that it might appear no more, and so thought themselves sure. But even from thence did he arise, and "*became the head of the corner.*"—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 22.—"*The stone which the builders refused,*" etc. That is to say, God sent a living, precious, chosen stone on earth; but the Jews, who then had the building of the church, rejected that stone, and said of it, "This man, who observeth not the Sabbath, is not of God"; and, "We have no king but Cæsar," and, "That seducer said, I will arise after three days"; and many similiar things beside. But this stone, so rejected by the builders as unfit for raising the spiritual edifice, "*is become the head of the corner*"; has been made by God, the principal architect, the bond to connect the two walls and keep them together; that is to say, has been made the head of the whole church, composed of Jews and Gentiles; and such a head, that whoever is not under him cannot be saved; and whoever is built under him, the living stone, will certainly be saved. Now all this "*is the Lord's doing,*" done by his election and design, without any intervention on the part of

man, and therefore, "*it is wonderful in our eyes.*" For who is there that must not look upon it as a wonderful thing, to find a man crucified, dead and buried, rising, after three days, from the dead, immortal, with unbounded power, and declared Prince of men and angels, and a way opened through him for mortal man, to the kingdom of heaven, to the society of the angels, to a happy immortality?—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 22.—"The stone which the builders refused." Here we behold with how strong and impregnable a shield the Holy Ghost furnishes us against the empty vauntings of the Papal clergy. Be it so, that they possess the name, "chief-builders"; but if they disown Christ, does it necessarily follow that we must disown him also? Let us rather contemn and trample under our feet all their decrees, and let us reverence this precious stone upon which our salvation rests. By the expression, "*is become the head of the corner,*" we are to understand the real foundation of the church, which sustains the whole weight of the edifice; it being requisite that the corners should form the main strength of buildings.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 22.—"The stone," etc. That is I, whom the great men and rulers of the people rejected (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), as the builders of a house reject a stone unfit to be employed in it, am now become king over Israel and Judah; and a type of that glorious King who shall hereafter be in like manner refused (Luke xix. 14, and xx. 17), and then be by God exalted to be Lord of all the world, and the foundation of all men's happiness.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 22.—"The stone." The author of *Historia Scholastica* mentions it as a tradition that at the building of the second temple there was a particular stone of which that was literally true, which is here parabolically rehearsed, viz., that it had the hap to be often taken up by the builders, and as oft rejected, and at last was found to be perfectly fit for the most honourable place, that of the *chief corner-stone*, which coupled the sides of the walls together, the extraordinariness whereof occasioned the speech here following: "*This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*"—*Henry Hammond.*

Verse 22.—"The head stone of the corner." How of the "corner"? The corner is the place where two walls meet: and there be many twos in this building: the two walls of nations, *Jews and Gentiles*; the two of conditions, *bond and free*; the two of sex, *male and female*: the great two (which this [Easter] day we celebrate) of the *quick and the dead*; above all, the greatest two of all, *heaven and earth.*—*Lancelot Andrewes.*

Verse 22.—"Is become the head stone of the corner."

Higher yet and ever higher, passeth he those ranks above,
Where the seraphs are enkindled, with the flame of endless love
Passeth them, for not e'en seraphs ever loved so well as he
Who hath borne for his beloved, stripes, and thorns, and shameful tree;
Ever further, ever onward, where no angel's foot may tread,
Where the four-and-twenty elders prostrate fall in mystic dread:
Where the four strange living creatures sing their hymn before the throne.
The Despised One and rejected passeth, in his might alone;
Passeth through the dazzling rainbow, till upon the Father's right
He is seated, his Co-equal, God of God, and Light of Light.

R. F. Littledale.

Verse 22.—"Head stone of the corner." It is now clear to all by divine grace whom Holy Scripture calls the corner-stone. Him in truth who, taking unto himself from one side the Jewish, and from the other the Gentile people, unites, as it were, two walls in the one fabric of the Church; them of whom it is written "He hath made both one"; who exhibited himself as the Corner-stone, not only in things below, but in things above, because he united on earth the nations of the Gentiles to the people of Israel, and both together to angels. For at his birth the angels exclaimed, "On earth peace, good will toward men."—*Gregory, quoted by Henry Newland, 1860.*

Verse 22.—"The corner." By Bede it is rendered as a reason why the Jewish builders refused our Saviour Christ for the head-place, *Quia in uno pariete, stare amabant.* They could endure no corner; they must stand alone upon their own single wall; be of themselves, not join with Gentiles or Samaritans. And Christ they endured not, because they thought if he had been head he would have inclined that way. *Alias oves oportet me adducere* (John x. 16). *Alias* they could not abide. But sure, a purpose there must be, *alias oves adducendi*, of bringing in others, of joining

a corner, or else we do not *facere secundum exemplar*, build not according to Christ's pattern; our fashion of fabric is not like his.—*Lancelot Andrewes*.

Verses 22—27.—By the consent of all expositors, in this Psalm is typed the coming of Christ, and his kingdom of the gospel. This is manifested by an *exaltation*, by an *exultation*, by a *petition*, by a *benediction*. The *exaltation*: ver. 22, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." The Jews refused this stone, but God hath built his church upon it.

The *exaltation*: ver. 24, "This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." A more blessed day than that was wherein he made man, when he had done making the world; "Rejoice we, and be glad in it."

The *petition*: ver. 25, "Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." Thy justice would not suffer thee to save without the Messiah; he is come, "Save now, O LORD, I beseech thee." Our Saviour is come, let mercy and salvation come along with him.

The *benediction* makes all clear: ver. 26, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD." For what David here prophesied, the people after accomplished Matt. xxi. 9, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD." The corollary or sum is in my text: ver. 27, "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."—*Thomas Adams*.

Verse 24.—"This is the day which the LORD hath made." 1. Here is the doctrine of the Christian sabbath: "it is the day which the LORD hath made," has made remarkable, made holy, has distinguished it from other days; he has made it for man; it is therefore called the Lord's day, for it bears his image and superscription. 2. The duty of the Sabbath, "we will rejoice and be glad in it"; not only in the institution of the day, that there is such a day appointed, but in the occasion of it, Christ's becoming "the head of the corner." This we ought to rejoice in, both as his honour and our advantage. Sabbath days must be rejoicing days, and then they are to us as the days of heaven. See what a good Master we serve, who having instituted a day for his service, appoints it to be spent in holy joy.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 24.—"This is the day," etc. The "queen of days," as the Jews call the Sabbath. *Arnobius* interpreteth this text of the Christian Sabbath; others, of the day of salvation by Christ exalted to be the head corner-stone; in opposition to that dismal day of man's fall.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 24.—Because believers have ever cause for comfort, therefore they are commanded always to rejoice, Phil. iii. Whether their sins or sufferings come into their hearts, they must not sorrow as they that have no hope. In their saddest conditions, they have the Spirit of consolation. There is seed of joy sown within them when it is turned under the clods, and appears not above ground. But there are special times when God calls for this grain to spring up. They have some red letters, some holy days in the calendar of their lives, wherein this joy, as wine at a wedding, is most seasonable; but among all those days it never relisheth so well, it never tasteth so pleasantly, as on a Lord's-day. Joy suits no person so much as a saint, and it becomes no season so well as a Sabbath.

Joy in God on other days is like the birds chirping in winter, which is pleasing; but joy on the Lord's-day is like their warbling times and pretty notes in spring, when all other things look with a suitable delightful aspect. "This is the day which the LORD hath made," (he that made all days, so especially this day, but what follows?) "we will rejoice and be glad in it." In which words we have the church's solace, or joy, and the season, or day of it. Her solace was great: "We will rejoice and be glad." Those expressions are not needless repetitions, but shew the exuberancy or high degree of their joy. The season of it: "This is the day which the LORD hath made." Compare this place with Matt. xxi. 22, 23, and Acts iv. 11, and you will find that the precedent verses are a prophetic prediction of Christ's resurrection, and so this verse foretells the church's joy upon that memorable and glorious day. And, indeed, if "a feast be made for laughter," Eccles. x. 19, then that day wherein Christ feasteth his saints with the choicest mercies may well command their greatest spiritual mirth. A thanksgiving-day hath a double precedence of a fast-day. On a fast-day we eye God's anger; on a thanksgiving-day we look to God's favour, in the former we specially mind our corruptions; in the latter, God's compassions;—therefore a fast-day calls for sorrow, a thanksgiving-day for joy. But the Lord's-day is the highest thanksgiving-day, and deserveth much more than the Jewish Purim, to be a day of feasting and gladness, and a good day.—*George Swinnoek*.

Verse 24.—"Day which the LORD hath made." As the sun in heaven makes the natural day by his light, so does Christ the Sun of Righteousness make ours a spiritual day.—*Starkie*.

Verse 24.—"Day which the LORD hath made." Adam introduced a day of sadness, but another day is made by Christ: Abraham saw his day from afar, and was glad; we will walk even now in his light.—*Johann David Friesch, 1731*.

Verse 25.—"Save." With the Hebrews *salvation* is a wide word, comprising all the favours of God that may lead to preservation; and therefore the Psalmist elsewhere extends this act both to man and beast, and, as if he would comment upon himself, expounds *σωσω* *save*, by *εὐδωσω* *prosper*. It is so dear a title of God, that the prophet cannot have enough of it.—*Joseph Hall*.

Verse 25.—"Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD." Let him have the acclamations of the people as is usual at the inauguration of a prince; let every one of his loyal subjects shout for joy, "Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD." This is like *vival rex*, and speaks both a hearty joy for his accession to the crown, an entire satisfaction in his government, and a zealous affection to the interests and honour of it. Hosanna signifies, "Save now, I beseech thee." Lord, save me, I beseech thee; let this Saviour be my Saviour; and in order to that my Ruler; let me be taken under his protection, and owned as one of his willing subjects. His enemies are my enemies; Lord, I beseech thee, save me from them. Send me an interest in that prosperity which his kingdom brings with it to all those that entertain it. Let my soul prosper and be in health, in that peace and righteousness which his government brings. Ps. lxxii. 3. Let me have victory over those lusts that war against my soul, and let divine grace go on in my heart, conquering and to conquer.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 25.—"Save now," or, *hosanna*. Our thanksgivings on earth must always be accompanied with prayers for further mercies, and the continuance of our prosperity; our hallelujahs with hosannas.—*Ingram Cobbin*.

Verse 25.—"Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD," etc. Hosanna. The cry of the multitudes as they thronged in our Lord's triumphal procession into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 9, 18; Mar. xi. 9, 15, John xii. 13) was taken from this Psalm, from which they were accustomed to recite the 25th and 26th verses at the Feast of Tabernacles. On that occasion the great *Hallel*, consisting of Psalms cxlii.—cxlviii. was chanted by one of the priests and at certain intervals the multitudes joined in the responses, waving their branches of willow and palm, and shouting as they waved them, Hallelujah, or *Hosannah*, or "O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." This was done at the recitation of the first and last verses of Ps. cxviii.; but according to the school of Hillel, at the words "Save now, we beseech thee." The school of Shammai, on the contrary, say it was at the words, "Send now prosperity." Rabban Gamaliel and R. Joshua were observed by R. Akiba to wave their branches only at the words, "Save now, we beseech thee" (Mishna, *Succah*, iii. 9). On each of the seven days during which the feast lasted the people thronged the court of the temple, and went in procession about the altar, setting their boughs bending towards it; the trumpets sounding as they shouted *Hosanna*. But on the seventh day they marched seven times round the altar, shouting meanwhile the great Hosannah to the sound of the trumpets of the Levites (Lightfoot, *Temple Service*, xvi. 2). The very children who could wave the palm branches were expected to take part in the solemnity (Mishna, *Succah*, iii. 15; Matt iii. 15). From the custom of waving the boughs of myrtle and willow during the service the name Hosannah was ultimately transferred to the boughs themselves, so that according to Elias Levita (*Thisbi*. s. v.), "the bundles of the willows of the brook which they carry at the Feast of Tabernacles are called Hosannahs."—*William Aldis Wright, in "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible," 1863*.

Verse 25.—"Send now prosperity." God will send it, but his people must pray for it. "I came for thy prayers," Dan. x. 12.—*John Trapp*.

Verse 26.—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD." The difference between Christ and Antichrist is to be noticed, because Christ did not come in his own name, but in the name of the Father; of which he himself testified, John v., "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Thus all faithful ministers of the Church must not come in their own name, or the name of Baal, or of Mammon and their own

belly, but in the name of God, with a lawful call ; concerning which see Heb. v., Rom. x. and xv.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 27.—"God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light." The Psalmist was clearly possessed of light, for he says, "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light." He was evidently, then, possessed of light ; and this light was in him as "the light of life." This light had shone into his heart ; the rays and beams of divine truth had penetrated into his conscience. He carried about with him a light which had come from God ; in this light he saw light, and in this light he discerned everything which the light manifested. Thus by this internal light he knew what was good and what was evil, what was sweet and what was bitter, what was true and what was false, what was spiritual and what was natural. He did not say, This light came from creature exertion, this light was the produce of my own wisdom, this light was nature transmuted by some action of my own will, and thus gradually rose into existence from long and assiduous cultivation. But he ascribes the whole of that light which he possessed unto God the Lord, as the sole author and the only giver of it. Now, if God the Lord has ever showed you and me the same light which he showed his servant of old, we carry about with us more or less of a solemn conviction that we have received this light from him. There will indeed, be many clouds of darkness to cover it ; there will often be doubts and fears, hovering like mists and fogs over our souls, whether the light which we have received be from God or not. But in solemn moments when the Lord is pleased a little to revive his work ; at times and seasons when he condescends to draw forth the affections of our hearts unto himself, to bring us into his presence, to hide us in some measure in the hollow of his hand, and give us access unto himself, at such moments and seasons we carry about with us, in spite of all our unbelief, in spite of all the suggestions of the enemy, in spite of all doubts and fears and suspicions that rise from the depths of the carnal mind, in spite of all these counter-workings and underminings, we carry about with us at these times a solemn conviction that we have light, and that this light we have received from God. And why so ? Because we can look back to a time when we walked in no such light, when we felt no such light, when everything spiritual and heavenly was dark to us, and we were dark to them.

Those things which the Spirit of God enables a man to do, are in Scripture sometimes called *sacrifices*. "That we may offer," we read, "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The apostle speaks of "receiving of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from the brethren at Philippi ; an odour of a sweet smell ; a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God." Phil. iv. 18. So he says to the Hebrew church : "But to do good and to communicate (that is, to the wants of God's people), forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Heb. xiii. 16. Well, then, these spiritual sacrifices which a man offers unto God are bound also to the horns of the altar. They are not well-pleasing in the sight of God, except they are bound to the horns of the altar, so as to derive all their acceptance from the altar. Our prayers are only acceptable to God as they are offered through the cross of Jesus. Our praises and thanksgivings are only acceptable to God as they are connected with the cross of Christ, and ascend to the Father through the propitiation of his dear Son. The ordinances of God's house are only acceptable to God as spiritual sacrifices, when they are bound to the horns of the altar. Both the ordinances of the New Testament—baptism and the Lord's supper—have been bound by the hands of God himself to the horns of the altar ; and no one either rightly went through the one, or rightly received the other, who had not been first spiritually bound by the same hand to the horns of the altar. Every act of liberality, every cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, every feeling of sympathy and affection, every kind word, every compassionate action shown to a brother ; all and each are only acceptable to God as they ascend to him through the mediation of his dear Son. And, therefore, every sacrifice of our own comfort, or of our own advantage, of our own time, or of our own money, for the profit of God's children, is only a spiritual and acceptable sacrifice so far as it is bound to the horns of the altar, linked on to the cross of Jesus, and deriving all its fragrance and odour from its connection with the incense there offered by the Lord of life and glory.—*J. C. Philpot.*

Verse 27.—How comfortable is the light ! 'Tis so comfortable that light and comfort are often put for the same thing : "God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light," that is, the light of counsel what to do, and the light of comfort in what

we do, or after all our sufferings. Light is not only a candle held to us to do our work by, but it comforts and cheereth us in our work. Eccl. xi. 7.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 27.—“*Shewed us light:*” “*bind the sacrifice.*” Here is somewhat received; somewhat to be returned. God hath blessed us, and we must bless God. His grace and our gratitude, are the two lines my discourse must run upon. They are met in my text; let them as happily meet in your hearts, and they shall not leave you till they bring you to heaven.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 27.—“*Bind the sacrifice with cords,*” etc. The sacrifice we are to offer to God, in gratitude for redeeming love, is ourselves, not to be slain upon the altar, but “*living sacrifices*” (Rom. xii. 1) to be bound to the altar; spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, in which our hearts must be fixed and engaged, as the sacrifice was bound “*with cords to the horns of the altar.*”—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 27.—“*Bind the sacrifice,*” etc. ‘Tis a saying among the Hebrews, that the beasts that were offered in sacrifice, they were the most struggling beasts of all the rest; such is the nature of us unthankful beasts, when we should love God again, we are readier to run away from him; we must be tied to the altar with cords, to draw from us love or fear.—*Abraham Wright.*

Verse 27.—“*With cords.*” This word is sometimes used for thick *twisted cords*, Judges xv. 13; sometimes for *thick branches* of trees, used at some feasts, Ezek. xix. 11, Levit. xxiii. 40. Hereupon this sentence may two ways be read; *bind the feast with thick branches*, or *bind the sacrifice with cords*; both mean one thing that men should keep the festivity with joy and thanks to God, as Israel did at their solemnities.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 27.—“*Even unto the horns of the altar.*” Before these words must be understood, *lead it:* for the victims were bound to rings fixed in the floor. “*The horns*” were architectural ornaments, a kind of capitals, made of iron or of brass, somewhat in the form of the curved horns of an animal, projecting from the four angles of the altar. The officiating priest, when he prayed, placed his hands on them, and sometimes sprinkled them with the blood of the sacrifice: compare Exod. xxx. 3; Lev. iv. 7, 18. At the end of this verse the word *saying* must be supplied.—*Daniel Cresswell.*

Verse 27.—“*Unto the horns.*” That is, all the court over, until you come even to the horns of the altar, intending hereby many sacrifices or boughs.—*Henry Ainsworth.*

Verse 28.—“*God.*” The original for “*God*” gives force to this passage: Thou art my “*El*”—the Mighty One; therefore will I praise thee: my “*Eloah*”—a varied form with substantially the same sense, “and I will extol thee”—lift thee high in glory and honour.—*Henry Cowles.*

Verse 28.—This “*extolling the Lord*” will accomplish one of the great ends of praise, viz., his exaltation. It is true that God both can and will exalt himself but it is at once the duty and the privilege of his people to exalt him. His name should be upborne and magnified by them; the glory of that name is now, as it were, committed to them: what use are we making of the opportunity and the privilege?—*Philip Bennet Power.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verses 1–4.—I. The subject of song—“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.” II. The chorus—“His mercy endureth for ever.” III. The choir—“Let Israel now say,” etc.; “Let the house of Aaron,” etc.; “Let them that fear the Lord,” etc. IV. The rehearsal—“Let them now say,” that they may be better prepared for universal praise hereafter.

Verse 5.—I. The season for prayer—“in distress.” II. The answer in season—“The Lord answered me.” III. The answer beyond the request—“And set me,” etc.

Verse 6.—I. When may a man know that God is on his side? II. What confidence may that man enjoy who is assured of divine aid?

Verse 7.—I. The value of true friends. II. The greater value of help from above.

Verses 8, 9.—“*Better.*” It is wiser, surer, morally more right, more ennobling, more happy in result.

Verse 10.—Take a wide range and consider what has been done, should be done, and may be done “in the name of the Lord.”

Verse 12.—I. Faith’s innumerable annoyances. II. Their speedy end. III. Faith’s complete victory.

Verse 13.—I. Our great antagonist. II. His fierce attacks. III. His evident object: “that I might fall.” IV. His failure: “but the Lord helped me.”

Verse 14.—I. Strength under affliction. II. Song in hope of deliverance. III. Salvation, or actual escape out of trial.

Verse 15.—The joy of Christian households. It is joy in salvation: it is expressed,—“The voice”: it abides: “the voice is”: it is joy in the protection and honour given by the Lord’s right hand.

Verses 15, 16.—I. True joy is peculiar to the righteous. II. *In* their tabernacles: in their pilgrimage state. III. *For* salvation: rejoicing and salvation go together. IV. *From* God: “the right hand,” etc.: three right hands; both the salvation and the joy are from the hand of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; the right hand of each doeth valiantly.—*G. R.*

Verse 17.—I. Good men are often in special danger: Joseph in the pit; Moses in the ark of bulrushes; Job on the dunghill; David’s narrow escapes from the hand of Saul; Paul let down in a basket; what a fruit basket was that! How much was suspended upon that cord! The salvation of how many! II. Good men have often a presentiment of their recovery from special danger: “I shall not die, but live.” III. Good men have a special desire for the preservation of their lives: “live and declare the works of the Lord.”—*G. R.*

Verses 17, 19, 22.—The victory of the risen Saviour and its far-reaching consequences: (1) Death is vanquished; (2) the gates of righteousness are opened; (3) the corner-stone of the church is laid.—*Deichert, in Lange’s Commentary.*

Verse 18.—I. The afflictions of the people of God are chastisements. “The Lord hath chastened me.” II. Those chastisements are often severe: “hath chastened me sore.” III. The severity is limited: “it is not unto death.”—*G. R.*

Verse 19.—I. Access to God desired. II. Humbly requested: “Open to me.” III. Boldly accepted: “I will go into them.” IV. Gratefully enjoyed: “And praise the Lord.”

Verse 22.—In these words we may notice the following particulars. I. The metaphorical view in which the church is here represented, namely, that of a *house* or *building*. II. The character that our Immanuel bears with respect to this building; he is *the stone* in a way of eminence, without whom there can be no building, no house for God to dwell in among the children of men. III. The character of the workmen employed in this spiritual structure; they are called *builders*. IV. A fatal error they are charged with in building the house of God; they *refuse* the stone of God’s choosing; they do not allow him a place in his own house. V. Notice the place that Christ should and shall have in this building, let the builders do their worst; he *is made the head stone of the corner*. The words immediately following declare how this effected, and how the saints are affected with the views of his exaltation, notwithstanding the malice of hell and earth: “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.”—*Ebenezer Erskine.*

Verses 22, 23.—I. The mystery stated. 1. That which is least esteemed by men as a means of salvation is most esteemed by God. 2. That which is most esteemed by God when made known is least esteemed by man. II. The mystery explained. The way of salvation is the Lord’s doing, therefore marvellous in our eyes.—*G. R.*

Verses 22—25.—I. Christ rejected. II. Christ exalted. III. His exaltation is due to God alone. IV. His exaltation commences a new era. V. His exaltation suggests a new prayer. See Spurgeon’s Sermon, No. 1,420.

Verse 24.—I. What is spoken of. 1. The gospel day. 2. The sabbath day. II. What is said of it. 1. It is given by God. 2. To be joyfully received by man.—*G. R.*

Verse 25.—What is church prosperity? Whence must it come? How can we obtain it?

Verse 25.—I. The object of the prayer. 1. Salvation from sin. 2. Prosperity

in righteousness. II. The earnestness of the prayer: "I beseech thee, I beseech thee." III. The urgency of the prayer, "now—now"—now that the gates of righteousness are open, now that the foundation stone is laid, now that the gospel day has come—now, Lord! now!—*G. R.*

Verse 27.—"Bind the sacrifice," etc. Devotion is the mother, and she hath four daughters. 1. Constancy: "Bind the sacrifice." 2. Fervency: Bind it "with cords." 3. Wisdom. Bind it "to the altar." 4. Confidence. Even to the "horns" of the altar.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 27.—"Bind the sacrifice with cords," etc. I. What is the sacrifice? Our whole selves, every talent, all our time, property, position, mind, heart, temper, life to the last. II. Why does it need binding? It is naturally restive. Long delay, temptations, wealth, rank, discouragement, scepticism, all tend to drive it from the altar. III. To what is it bound? To the doctrine of atonement. To Jesus and his work. To Jesus and our work. IV. What are the cords? Our own vows. The need of souls. Our joy in the work. The great reward. The love of Christ working upon us by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 28.—I. The gladdest fact in all the world: "Thou art my God." II. The fittest spirit in which to enjoy it: "Praise thee."

Verse 28.—I. The effect of Christ being sacrificed for us: "Thou art my God." II. The effect of our being offered as an acceptable sacrifice to him. "I will praise thee, I will exalt thee." Or, I. The covenant blessing: "Thou art my God." II. The covenant obligation: "I will praise thee."—*G. R.*

Verse 29.—I. The beginning and the end of salvation is mercy. II. The beginning and end of its requirements is thanksgiving.—*G. R.*