

PSALM CXXVII.

TITLE.—A Song of Degrees for Solomon. *It was meet that the builder of the holy house should be remembered by the pilgrims to its sacred shrine. The title probably indicates that David wrote it for his wise son, in whom he so greatly rejoiced, and whose name Jedidiah, or "beloved of the Lord," is introduced into the second verse. The spirit of his name, "Solomon, or peaceable," breathes through the whole of this most charming song. If Solomon himself was the author, it comes fitly from him who reared the house of the Lord. Observe how in each of these songs the heart is fixed upon Jehovah only. Read the first verses of these Psalms, from Psalm cxx. to the present song, and they run thus: "I cried unto the Lord," "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills," "Let us go unto the house of the Lord," "Unto thee will I lift up mine eyes," "If it had not been the Lord," "They that trust in the Lord," "When the Lord turned again the captivity." The Lord and the Lord alone is thus lauded at each step of these songs of the ascents. O for a life whose every halting-place shall suggest a new song unto the Lord!*

SUBJECT.—God's blessing on his people as their one great necessity and privilege is here spoken of. We are here taught that builders of houses and cities, systems and fortunes, empires and churches all labour in vain without the Lord; but under the divine favour they enjoy perfect rest. Sons, who are in the Hebrew called "builders," are set forth as building up families under the same divine blessing, to the great honour and happiness of their parents. It is THE BUILDER'S PSALM. "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God," and unto God be praise.

EXPOSITION.

EXCEPT the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it :
except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

2 *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows : for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

3 *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD : and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*

4 *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man ; so are children of the youth.*

5 *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

1. "*Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*" The word *vain* is the key-note here, and we hear it ring out clearly three times. Men desiring to build know that they must labour, and accordingly they put forth all their skill and strength; but let them remember that if Jehovah is not with them their designs will prove failures. So was it with the Babel builders; they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower"; and the Lord returned their words into their own bosoms, saying, "Go to, let us go down and there confound their language." In vain they toiled, for the Lord's face was against them. When Solomon resolved to build a house for the Lord, matters were very different, for all things united under God to aid him in his great undertaking: even the heathen were at his beck and call that he might erect a temple for the Lord his God. In the same manner God blessed him in the erection of his own palace; for this verse evidently refers to all sorts of house-building. Without God we are nothing. Great houses have been erected by ambitious men; but like the baseless fabric of a vision they have passed away, and scarce a stone remains to tell where once they stood. The wealthy builder of a Non-such Palace, could he revisit the glimpses of the moon, would be perplexed to find a relic of his former pride: he laboured in vain, for the place of his travail knows not a trace of his handiwork. The like may be said of the builders of castles and abbeys: when the mode of life indicated by these piles ceased to be

endurable by the Lord, the massive walls of ancient architects crumbled into ruins, and their toil melted like the froth of vanity. Not only do we now spend our strength for nought without Jehovah, but all who have ever laboured apart from him come under the same sentence. Trowel and hammer, saw and plane are instruments of vanity unless the Lord be the Master-builder.

"Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Around the wall the sentinels pace with constant step; but yet the city is betrayed unless the unsleeping Watcher is with them. We are not safe because of watchmen if Jehovah refuses to watch over us. Even if the guards are wakeful, and do their duty, still the place may be surprised if God be not there. "I, the Lord, do keep it," is better than an army of sleepless guards. Note that the Psalmist does not bid the builder cease from labouring, nor suggest that watchmen should neglect their duty, nor that men should show their trust in God by doing nothing: nay, he supposes that they will do all that they can do, and then he forbids their fixing their trust in what they have done, and assures them that all creature effort will be in vain unless the Creator puts forth his power, to render second causes effectual. Holy Scripture endorses the order of Cromwell—"Trust in God, and keep your powder dry": only here the sense is varied, and we are told that the dried powder will not win the victory unless we trust in God. Happy is the man who hits the golden mean by so working as to believe in God, and so believing in God as to work without fear.

In Scriptural phrase a dispensation or system is called a house. Moses was faithful as a servant over all his house; and as long as the Lord was with that house it stood and prospered; but when he left it, the builders of it became foolish and their labour was lost. They sought to maintain the walls of Judaism, but sought in vain: they watched around every ceremony and tradition, but their care was idle. Of every church, and every system of religious thought, this is equally true: unless the Lord is in it, and is honoured by it, the whole structure must sooner or later fall in hopeless ruin. Much can be done by man; he can both labour and watch; but without the Lord he has accomplished nothing, and his wakefulness has not warded off evil.

2. *"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows."* Because the Lord is mainly to be rested in, all carking care is mere vanity and vexation of spirit. We are bound to be diligent, for this the Lord blesses; we ought not to be anxious, for that dishonours the Lord, and can never secure his favour. Some deny themselves needful rest; the morning sees them rise before they are rested, the evening sees them toiling long after the curfew has tolled the knell of parting day. They threaten to bring themselves into the sleep of death by neglect of the sleep which refreshes life. Nor is their sleeplessness the only index of their daily fret; they stint themselves in their meals, they eat the commonest food, and the smallest possible quantity of it, and what they do swallow is washed down with the salt tears of grief, for they fear that daily bread will fail them. Hard earned is their food, scantily rationed, and scarcely ever sweetened, but perpetually smeared with sorrow; and all because they have no faith in God, and find no joy except in hoarding up the gold which is their only trust. Not thus, not thus, would the Lord have his children live. He would have them, as princes of the blood, lead a happy and restful life. Let them take a fair measure of rest and a due portion of food, for it is for their health. Of course the true believer will never be lazy or extravagant; if he should be he will have to suffer for it; but he will not think it needful or right to be worried and miserly. Faith brings calm with it, and banishes the disturbers who both by day and by night murder peace.

"For so he giveth his beloved sleep." Through faith the Lord makes his chosen ones to rest in him in happy freedom from care. The text may mean that God gives blessings to his beloved in sleep, even as he gave Solomon the desire of his heart while he slept. The meaning is much the same: those whom the Lord loves are delivered from the fret and fume of life, and take a sweet repose upon the bosom of their Lord. He rests them; blesses them while resting; blesses them more in resting than others in their moiling and toiling. God is sure to give the best thing to his beloved, and we here see that he gives them sleep—that is a laying aside of care, a forgetfulness of need, a quiet leaving of matters with God: this kind of sleep is better than riches and honour. Note how Jesus slept amid the hurly-burly of a storm at sea. He knew that he was in his Father's hands, and

therefore he was so quiet in spirit that the billows rocked him to sleep : it would be much oftener the same with us if we were more like HIM.

It is to be hoped that those who built Solomon's temple were allowed to work at it steadily and joyfully. Surely such a house was not built by unwilling labourers. One would hope that the workmen were not called upon to hurry up in the morning nor to protract their labours far into the night ; but we would fain believe that they went on steadily, resting duly, and eating their bread with joy. So, at least, should the spiritual temple be erected ; though, truth to tell, the workers upon its walls are all too apt to grow cumbered with much serving, all too ready to forget their Lord, and to dream that the building is to be done by themselves alone. How much happier might we be if we would but trust the Lord's house to the Lord of the house ! What is far more important, how much better would our building and watching be done if we would but confide in the Lord who both builds and keeps his own church !

3. "*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD.*" This points to another mode of building up a house, namely, by leaving descendants to keep our name and family alive upon the earth. Without this what is a man's purpose in accumulating wealth ? To what purpose does he build a house if he has none in his household to hold the house after him ? What boots it that he is the possessor of broad acres if he has no heir ? Yet in this matter a man is powerless without the Lord. The great Napoleon, with all his sinful care on this point, could not create a dynasty. Hundreds of wealthy persons would give half their estates if they could hear the cry of a babe born of their own bodies. Children are a heritage which Jehovah himself must give, or a man will die childless, and thus his house will be unbuilt.

"*And the fruit of the womb is his reward,*" or a reward from God. He gives children, not as a penalty nor as a burden, but as a favour. They are a token for good if men know how to receive them, and educate them. They are "doubtful blessings" only because we are doubtful persons. Where society is rightly ordered children are regarded, not as an incumbrance, but as an inheritance ; and they are received, not with regret, but as a reward. If we are over-crowded in England, and so seem to be embarrassed with too large an increase, we must remember that the Lord does not order us to remain in this narrow island, but would have us fill those boundless regions which wait for the axe and the plough. Yet even here, with all the straits of limited incomes, our best possessions are our own dear offspring, for whom we bless God every day.

4. "*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man ; so are children of the youth.*" Children born to men in their early days, by God's blessing become the comfort of their riper years. A man of war is glad of weapons which may fly where he cannot : good sons are their father's arrows speeding to hit the mark which their sires aim at. What wonders a good man can accomplish if he has affectionate children to second his desires, and lend themselves to his designs ! To this end we must have our children in hand while they are yet children, or they are never likely to be so when they are grown up ; and we must try to point them and straighten them, so as to make arrows of them in their youth, lest they should prove crooked and unserviceable in after life. Let the Lord favour us with loyal, obedient, affectionate offspring, and we shall find in them our best helpers. We shall see them shot forth into life to our comfort and delight, if we take care from the very beginning that they are directed to the right point.

5. "*Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.*" Those who have no children bewail the fact ; those who have few children see them soon gone, and the house is silent, and their life has lost a charm ; those who have many gracious children are upon the whole the happiest. Of course a large number of children means a large number of trials ; but when these are met by faith in the Lord it also means a mass of love, and a multitude of joys. The writer of this comment gives it as his own observation, that he has seen the most frequent unhappiness in marriages which are unfruitful ; that he has himself been most grateful for two of the best of sons ; but as they have both grown up, and he has no child at home, he has without a tinge of murmuring, or even wishing that he were otherwise circumstanced, felt that it might have been a blessing to have had a more numerous family : he therefore heartily agrees with the Psalmist's verdict herein expressed. He has known a family in which there were some twelve daughters and three sons, and he never expects to witness upon earth greater domestic felicity than fell to the lot of their parents, who rejoiced in all their children, as the children also rejoiced

in their parents and in one another. When sons and daughters are arrows, it is well to have a quiver full of them; but if they are only sticks, knotty and useless, the fewer of them the better. While those are blessed whose quiver is full, there is no reason to doubt that many are blessed who have no quiver at all; for a quiet life may not need such a warlike weapon. Moreover, a quiver may be small and yet full; and then the blessing is obtained. In any case we may be sure that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of children that he possesseth.

"*They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*" They can meet foes both in law and in fight. Nobody cares to meddle with a man who can gather a clan of brave sons about him. He speaks to purpose whose own sons make his words emphatic by the resolve to carry out their father's wishes. This is the blessing of Abraham, the old covenant benediction, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies"; and it is sure to all the beloved of the Lord in some sense or other. Doth not the Lord Jesus thus triumph in his seed? Looked at literally, this favour cometh of the Lord: without his will there would be no children to build up the house, and without his grace there would be no good children to be their parent's strength. If this must be left with the Lord, let us leave every other thing in the same hands. He will undertake for us and prosper our trustful endeavours, and we shall enjoy a tranquil life, and prove ourselves to be our Lord's beloved by the calm and quiet of our spirit. We need not doubt that if God gives us children as a reward he will also send us the food and raiment which he knows they need.

He who is the father of a host of spiritual children is unquestionably happy. He can answer all opponents by pointing to souls who have been saved by his means. Converts are emphatically the heritage of the Lord, and the reward of the preacher's soul travail. By these, under the power of the Holy Ghost, the city of the church is both built up and watched, and the Lord has the glory of it.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Title.—"A Song of Degrees for Solomon." This Psalm has Solomon's name prefixed to the title, for the purpose that the very builder of the Temple may teach us that he availed nothing to build it without the help of the Lord.—*The Venerable Bede* (672-3—735), in *Neale and Littledale*.

Whole Psalm.—Viewed as one of the "Degrees" in Christian virtue, the ninth, the Psalm is directed against self-reliance.—*H. T. Armfield*.

Whole Psalm.—The steps or degrees in this Psalm, though distinctly marked, are not so regular as in some others.

The twice repeated "*in vain*" of verse 1 may be regarded as the motto or "degree" for verse 2. The correspondence between the two clauses in verse 1 is also very striking. It is as if, on entering on some spiritual undertaking, or even in referring to the present state of matters, the Psalmist emphatically disclaimed as *vain* every other interposition or help than that of Jehovah. And of this "*in vain*" it is well constantly to remind ourselves, especially in seasons of activity and in times of peace; for then we are most liable to fall into the snare of this *vanity*.

The next "degree" is that of success and prosperity (verses 3, 4), which is ascribed to the same Jehovah whose help and protection constituted the commencement and continuance, as now the completion of our well-being. Hence also verse 5 goes not beyond this, but contemplates the highest symbol of full security, influence, and power, in the figurative language of the Old Testament, which St. Augustine refers to "spiritual children, shot forth like arrows into all the world."—*Alfred Edersheim*, in "*The Golden Diary of Heart Converse with Jesus in the Book of Psalms*," 1877.

Whole Psalm.—Solomon, the wisest and richest of kings, after having proved, both from experience and careful observation, that there was nothing but vanity in the life and labours of man, comes to this conclusion, that there is nothing better for a man in this life than that he should moderate his cares and labours, enjoy

what he has, and fear God and keep his commandments: to this end he directs all that is debated in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Very similar are the argument and intention of the Psalm; the authorship of which is ascribed to Solomon in the Inscription, and which there is no reason to doubt. Nor would it be safe, either to call in doubt any inscription without an urgent reason, or to give any other sense to the letter ב than that of *authorship*, unless it be meant that all the inscriptions are uncertain. Again, if the collectors of the Psalms added *titles* according to their own opinion and judgment, there would be no reason why they should have left so many Psalms without any title. This Psalm, therefore, is *Solomon's*, with whose genius and condition it well agrees, as is clear from *Ecclesiastes*, with which it may be compared, and from many *proverbs* on the same subject. . . . The design is, to draw men away from excessive labours and anxious cares; and to excite godliness and faith in Jehovah. To this the Psalm manifestly tends: for since men, desirous of the happiness and stability of their houses, are unable to secure this by their own endeavours, but need the blessing of God, who gives prosperity with even lighter labours to those that fear him; it is their duty to put a limit to their labours and cares, and to seek the favour of God, by conforming their life and conduct to his will, and confiding in him.—*Herman Venema*, 1697—1787.

Verse 1.—"Except the LORD build." It is a fact that בן , *ben*, a son, and בית , *beth*, a daughter, and בית , *beth*, a house, come from the same root, בנה , *banah*, to build; because sons and daughters build up a household, or constitute a family, as much and as really as stones and timber constitute a building. Now it is true that unless the good hand of God be upon us we cannot prosperously build a place of worship for his name. Unless we have his blessing, a dwelling-house cannot be comfortably erected. And if his blessing be not on our children, the house (the family) may be built up; but instead of its being the house of God, it will be the synagogue of Satan. All marriages that are not under God's blessing will be a private and public curse.—*Adam Clarke*.

Verse 1.—"Except the LORD build the house," etc. He does not say, Unless the Lord consents and is willing that the house should be built and the city kept; but, "Unless the Lord build; unless he keep." Hence, in order that the building and keeping may be prosperous and successful, there is necessary, not only the consent of God, but also his working is required: and that working without which nothing can be accomplished, that may be attempted by man. He does not say, Unless the Lord help; but unless the Lord build, unless he keep; *i.e.*, Unless he do all himself. He does not say, To little purpose he labours and watches; but to no purpose he labours, both the builder and the keeper. Therefore, all the efficacy of labours and cares is dependent on the operation and providence of God; and all human strength, care, and industry is in itself vain.

It should be noticed, that he does not say, Because the Lord builds the house he labours in vain who builds it, and, because the Lord keeps the city the watchman waketh in vain: but, If the Lord do not build the house, if he do not keep the city; he labours in vain who builds the house, he waketh in vain who keeps the city. He is far from thinking that the care and human labour, which is employed in the building of houses and keeping of cities, is to be regarded as useless, because the Lord builds and keeps; since it is then the more especially useful and effectual when the Lord himself is the builder and keeper. The Holy Spirit is not the patron of lazy and inert men; but he directs the minds of those who labour to the providence and power of God.—*Wolfgang Musculus*, 1497—1563.

Verse 1.—"Except the LORD build the house." On the lintel of the door in many an old English house, we may still read the words, *Nisi Dominus frustra*—the Latin version of the opening words of the Psalm. Let us also trust in him, and inscribe these words over the portal of "the house of our pilgrimage"; and beyond a doubt all will be well with us, both in this world and in that which is to come.—*Samuel Cox*, in "The Pilgrim Psalms," 1874.

Verse 1.—"Except the LORD build the house," etc. In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favour. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten this powerful Friend?

or do we imagine we no longer need his assistance? I have lived for a long time [81 years]; and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall proceed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel: we shall be divided by our little, partial, local interests; our prospects will be confounded; and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter, from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing government by human wisdom, and leave it to chance, war, or conquest. I therefore beg leave to move that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service.—*Benjamin Franklin: Speech in Convention for forming a Constitution for the United States, 1787.*

Verse 1.—Note, how he puts first the building of the house, and then subjoins the keeping of the city. He advances from the part to the whole; and for the city consists of houses.—*Wolfgang Musculus.*

Verse 1.—"Except the LORD keep the city," etc. Fires may break out in spite of the watchmen; a tempest may sweep over it; bands of armed men may assail it; or the pestilence may suddenly come into it, and spread desolation through its dwellings.—*Albert Barnes (1798—1870), in "Notes on the Psalms."*

Verse 1.—One important lesson which Madame Guyon learned from her temptations and follies was that of her entire dependence on Divine grace. "I became," she says, "deeply assured of what the prophet hath said, 'Except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.' When I looked to thee, O my Lord! thou wast my faithful keeper; thou didst continually defend my heart against all kinds of enemies. But, alas! when left to myself, I was all weakness. How easily did my enemies prevail over me! Let others ascribe their victories to their own fidelity: as for myself, I shall never attribute them to anything else than thy paternal care. I have too often experienced, to my cost, what I should be without thee, to presume in the least on any wisdom or efforts of my own. It is to thee, O God, my Deliverer, that I owe everything! And it is a source of infinite satisfaction, that I am thus indebted to thee."—*From the Life of Jeanne Bouvier de la Mothe Guyon, 1648—1717.*

Verse 1.—

If God build not the house, and lay
The groundwork sure—whoever build,
It cannot stand one stormy day.
If God be not the city's shield,
If he be not their bars and wall,
In vain is watch-tower, men, and all.

Though then thou wak'st when others rest,
Though rising thou prevent'st the sun,
Though with lean care thou daily feast,
Thy labour's lost, and thou undone;
But God his child will feed and keep,
And draw the curtains to his sleep.

Phineas Fletcher, 1584—1650.

Verse 2.—"It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late," etc. The Psalmist is exhorting to give over undue and anxious labour to accomplish our designs. The phrases in the Hebrew are "making early to rise" and "making late to sit"—not "up," but *down*. This means an artificial lengthening of the day. The law of work is in our nature. The limitations of effort are set forth in nature. In order that all may be accomplished by the human race which is necessary to be done for human progress, all men must work. But no man should work beyond his physical and intellectual ability, nor beyond the hours which nature allots. No net result of good to the individual or to the race comes of any artificial prolonging of the day at either end. Early rising, eating one's breakfast by candlelight, and prolonged vigils, the scholar's "midnight oil," are a delusion and

a snare. Work while it is day. When the night comes, rest. The other animals do this, and, as races, fare as well as this anxious human race.

"*The bread of sorrows*" means the bread of toil, of wearisome effort. Do what you ought to do, and the Lord will take care of that which you cannot do. Compare Prov. x. 22 : "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it," which means, "The blessing of Jehovah maketh rich, and toil can add nothing thereto." Compare also Matt. vi. 25 : "Take no thought [be not anxious] for your life," etc.

"*For so he giveth his beloved sleep.*" The "*for*" is not in the original. "*So*" means "with just the same result" or "all the same," or "without more trouble." That is the signification of the Hebrew word as it occurs. "*His beloved*" may work and sleep; and what is needed will be provided just as certainly as if they laboured unduly, with anxiety. It has been suggested that the translation should be "*in sleep.*" While they are sleeping, the Heavenly Father is carrying forward his work for them. Or, while they wake and work, the Lord giveth to them, and so he does when they rest and sleep.—*Charles F. Deems, in "The Study," 1879.*

Verse 2.—The Lord's Temple was built without any looking unto or dependence on man; all human wisdom and confidence was rejected on the whole; the plan was given by the Lord God himself; the model of it was in Solomon's possession; nothing was left to the wit or wisdom of men; there was no reason to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, whilst engaged in the good work; no, I should conceive it was a season of grace to such as were employed in the building; somewhat like what it was with you and me when engaged in God's holy ordinances. I should conceive the minds of the workmen at perfect peace, their conversation together much on the grand subject of the Temple, and its intention as referring to the glorious Messiah, its grand and glorious antitype. I should conceive their minds were wholly disencumbered from all carking cares. They did not rise early without being refreshed in body and mind; they did not sit up late as though they wanted; they were not careful how they should provide for their families; they were, as the beloved of the Lord, perfectly contented; they enjoyed sweet sleep and refreshment by it, this was from the Lord; he giveth his beloved ones sleep.—*Samuel Eyles Pierce.*

Verse 2.—"*It is vain,*" etc. Some take this place in a more particular and restrained sense; as if David would intimate that all their agitations to oppose the reign of Solomon, though backed with much care and industry, should be fruitless; though Absalom and Adonijah were tortured with the care of their own ambitious designs, yet God would give Jedidiah, or his beloved, rest; that is, the kingdom should safely be devolved upon Solomon, who took no such pains to court the people, and to raise himself up into their esteem as Absalom and Adonijah did. The meaning is, that though worldly men fare never so hardily, beat their brains, tire their spirits, rack their consciences, yet many times all is for nothing; either God doth not give them an estate, or not the comfort of it. But his beloved, without any of these racking cares, enjoy contentment; if they have not the world, they have sleep and rest; with silence submitting to the will of God, and with quietness waiting for the blessing of God. Well, then, acknowledge the providence that you may come under the blessing of it: labour *without God* cannot prosper; *against God* and against his will in his word, will surely miscarry.—*Thomas Manton, 1620—1677.*

Verse 2.—"*It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*" No prayer without work, no work without prayer.—

By caring and fretting,
By agony and fear,
There is of God no getting,
But prayer he will hear.

From J. P. Lange's Commentary on James, 1862.

Verse 2.—"*Eat the bread of sorrows.*" Living a life of misery and labours, fretting at their own disappointments, eaten up with envy at the advancement of others, afflicted overmuch with losses and wrongs. There is no end of all their labours. Some have died of it, others been distracted and put out of their wits; so that you are never like to see good days as long as you cherish the love of the world, but will still lie under self-tormenting care and trouble of mind, by which a man grateth on his own flesh.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 2.—"So he giveth his beloved sleep." בן. וְתַן לְיָרִיבֵי שְׁנָיִם. These latter words are variously rendered, and sufficiently obscurely, because all take this בן as a particle of comparison, which does not seem to be in place here: some even omit it altogether. But בן also signifies "well," "rightly": 2 Kings vii. 9; Num. xxvii. 7. Why should we not render it here, "*He giveth to His beloved to sleep well*": i.e., While those who, mistrusting God, attribute all things to their own labour, do not sleep well; for truly they "*rise early and sit up late*"; he gives to his beloved this grace, that reposing in his fatherly care and goodness, they fully enjoy their sleep, as those who know that such anxious labour is not necessary for them: or, "*Truly, he giveth to his beloved sleep*;" as בן may be the same as אֵין. But אֵין may be taken for אֵין, and rendered, "*Truly, he giveth to his beloved in sleep*;" viz., that he should be refreshed by this means.—*Louis De Dieu*, 1590—1642.

Verse 2 (last clause).—The sentence may be read either, *he will give sleep to his beloved*, or, *he will give in sleeping*; that is, he will give them those things which unbelievers labour to acquire by their own industry. The particle בן, *ken*, thus, is put to express certainty; for with the view of producing a more undoubted persuasion of the truth—that God gives food to his people without any great care on their part—which seems incredible and a fiction, Solomon points to the thing as it were with the finger. He indeed speaks as if God nourished the slothfulness of his servants by his gentle treatment; but as we know that men are created with the design of their being occupied, and as in the subsequent Psalm we shall find that the servants of God are accounted happy when they eat the labour of their hands, it is certain that the word *sleep* is not to be understood as implying slothfulness, but a placid labour, to which true believers subject themselves by the obedience of faith. Whence proceeds this so great ardour in the unbelieving, that they move not a finger without a tumult or bustle, in other words, without tormenting themselves with superfluous cares, but because they attribute nothing to the providence of God! The faithful, on the other hand, although they lead a laborious life, yet follow their vocations with composed and tranquil minds. Thus their hands are not idle, but their minds repose in the stillness of faith, as if they were asleep.—*John Calvin*, 1509—1564.

Verse 2.—"He giveth his beloved sleep." It is a peculiar rest, it is a rest peculiar to sons, to saints, to heirs, to beloved ones. "So he gives his beloved rest," or as the Hebrew hath it, dearling, or dear beloved, quiet rest, without care or sorrow. The Hebrew word שְׁנָה, *shena*, is written with ש, a quiet, dumb letter, which is not usual, to denote the more quietness and rest. This rest is a crown that God sets only upon the head of saints; it is a gold chain that he only puts about his children's necks; it is a jewel that he only hangs between his beloved's breasts; it is a flower that he only sticks in his darlings' bosoms. This rest is a tree of life that is proper and peculiar to the inhabitants of that heavenly country; it is children's bread, and shall never be given to dogs.—*Thomas Brooks*, 1608—1680.

Verse 2 (last clause).—As the Lord gave a precious gift to his beloved, the first Adam, while he slept, by taking a rib from his side, and by building therefrom a woman, Eve his bride, the Mother of all living; so, while Christ, the Second Adam, the true Jedidiah, the Well-beloved Son of God, was sleeping in death on the cross, God formed for him, in his death, and by his death,—even by the life-giving streams flowing from his own precious side,—the Church, the spiritual Eve, the Mother of all living; and gave her to him as his bride. Thus he built for him in his sleep the spiritual Temple of his Church.—*Christopher Wordsworth*.

Verse 2.—Quiet sleep is the gift of God, and it is the love of God to give quiet sleep.

1. 'Tis God's gift when we have it: quiet sleep does revive nature as the dew or small rain does refresh the grass. Now, as the prophet speaks (Jer. xiv. 22), "Are there any of the gods of the heathen can cause rain, or can the heavens give showers?" so it may be said: Are there any of the creatures in earth or heaven that can give sleep? That God which gives showers of rain must give hours of rest: peaceable repose is God's peculiar gift.

2. 'Tis God's love when he gives it, "*for so he giveth his beloved sleep*"; that is, sleep with quietness: yea, the Hebrew word, *shena*, being with *aleph*, a quiet or resting letter, otherwise than is usual, it signifies the greater quietness in time of sleep. And whereas some apply the peace only to Solomon, who was called Jedidiah, the beloved of the Lord, to whom God gave sleep; the Septuagint turns the Hebrew word plurally, "*so God giveth his beloved ones sleep*"; to his saints in general God

gives quiet sleep as a token of his love ; yea, in the times of their greatest peril. Thus Peter in prison when he was bound with chains, beset with soldiers, and to die the next day, yet see how fast he was found asleep (Acts xii. 6, 7) : " The same night Peter was sleeping, and behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison," yet Peter slept till the angel smote him on the side and raised him up : so God " gives his beloved sleep," and let his beloved give him the honour ; and the rather because *herein God answers our prayer, herein God fulfils his promise.*

Is it not *our prayer* that God would prevent affrighting, and afford refreshing sleep ? and is it not God's answer when in sleep he doth sustain us ? " I cried (says David) unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. I laid me down and slept, for the Lord sustained me " : Ps. iii. 4, 5.

Is it not *God's promise* to vouchsafe sleep free from frights ? " When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid : yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet " : Prov. iii. 24. Hence God's servants while they are in the wilderness and woods of this world, they sleep safely, and devils as wild beasts can do them no harm. Ezek. xxxiv. 25. Have we through God's blessing this benefit, let us abundantly give praise and live praise unto God hereupon. Yea, large praise belongs to the Lord for quiet sleep from men of all sorts.—*Philip Goodwin, in "The Mystery of Dreams," 1658.*

Verse 2.—"So he giveth his beloved sleep." The world would give its favourites power, wealth, distinction ; God gives "sleep." Could he give anything better ? To give sleep when the storm is raging ; to give sleep when conscience is arraying a long catalogue of sins ; to give sleep when evil angels are trying to overturn our confidence in Christ ; to give sleep when death is approaching, when judgment is at hand—oh ! what gift could be more suitable ? what more worthy of God ? or what more precious to the soul ?

But we do not mean to enlarge upon the various senses which might thus be assigned to the gift. You will see for yourselves that sleep, as denoting repose and refreshment, may be regarded as symbolising "the rest which remaineth for the righteous," which is the gift of God to his chosen. "Surely he giveth his beloved sleep," may be taken as parallel to what is promised in Isaiah—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Whatever you can understand by the "peace" in the one case, you may also understand by the "sleep" in the other. But throughout the Old and New Testaments, and especially the latter, sleep, as you know, is often put for death. "He slept with his fathers" is a common expression in the Jewish Scriptures. To "sleep in Jesus" is a common way of speaking of those who die in the faith of the Redeemer.

Suppose, then, we take the "sleep" in our text as denoting death, and confine our discourse to an illustration of the passage under this one point of view. "*Surely he giveth his beloved sleep.*" What an aspect will this confer on death—to regard it as God's gift—a gift which he vouchsafes to those whom he loves !

It is not "he sendeth his beloved sleep," which might be true whilst God himself remained at a distance ; it is "he giveth his beloved sleep" ; as though God himself brought the sleep, and laid it on the eyes of the weary Christian warrior. And if God himself have to do with the dissolution, can we not trust him that he will loosen gently the silver cord, and use all kindness and tenderness in "taking down the earthly house of this tabernacle" ? I know not more comforting words than those of our text, whether for the being uttered in the sick-room of the righteous, or breathed over their graves. They might almost take the pain from disease, as they certainly do the dishonour from death. What is bestowed by God as a "gift on his beloved" will assuredly occupy his care, his watchfulness, his solicitude ; and I conclude, therefore, that he is present, in some special and extraordinary sense when the righteous lie dying ; ay, and that he sets his seal, and plants his guardianship where the righteous lie dead. "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?" Let the saint be but constant in the profession of godliness, and his last hours shall be those in which Deity himself shall stand almost visibly at his side, and his last resting-place that which he shall shadow with his wings. Sickness may be protracted and distressing ; "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," may be plaintively breathed over the unconscious dead ; but nothing in all this lengthened struggle, nothing in all this apparent defeat, can harm the righteous man—nay, nothing can be other than for his present good and his eternal glory, seeing that death with all its accompaniments is but joy—God's

gift to his beloved. Dry your tears, ye that stand around the bed of the dying believer, the parting moment is almost at hand—a cold damp is on the forehead—the eye is fixed—the pulse too feeble to be felt—are you staggered at such a spectacle? Nay! let faith do its part! The chamber is crowded with glorious forms; angels are waiting there to take charge of the disembodied soul; a hand gentler than any human is closing those eyes; and a voice sweeter than any human is whispering—“*Surely the Lord giveth his beloved sleep.*”—Henry Melvill (1798—1871), in a Sermon entitled “*Death the Gift of God.*”

Verse 2.—“*For so he giveth his beloved sleep.*” One night I could not rest, and in the wild wanderings of my thoughts I met this text, and communed with it: “*So he giveth his beloved sleep.*” In my reverie, as I was on the border of the land of dreams, methought I was in a castle. Around its massive walls there ran a deep moat. Watchmen paced the walls both day and night. It was a fine old fortress, bidding defiance to the foe; but I was not happy in it. I thought I lay upon a couch; but scarcely had I closed my eyes, ere a trumpet blew, “*To arms! To arms!*” and when the danger was overpast, I lay me down again. “*To arms! To arms!*” once more resounded, and again I started up. Never could I rest. I thought I had my armour on, and moved about perpetually clad in mail, rushing each hour to the castle top, aroused by some fresh alarm. At one time a foe was coming from the west; at another from the east. I thought I had a treasure somewhere down in some deep part of the castle, and all my care was to guard it. I dreaded, I feared, I trembled lest it should be taken from me. I awoke, and I thought I would not live in such a tower as that for all its grandeur. It was the castle of discontent, the castle of ambition, in which man never rests. It is ever, “*To arms! To arms!*” There is a foe here, or a foe there. His dear-loved treasure must be guarded. Sleep never crossed the drawbridge of the castle of discontent. Then I thought I would supplement it by another reverie. I was in a cottage. It was in what poets call a beautiful and pleasant place, but I cared not for that. I had no treasure in the world, save one sparkling jewel on my breast: and I thought I put my hand on that and went to sleep, nor did I wake till morning light. That treasure was a quiet conscience and the love of God—“*the peace that passeth all understanding.*” I slept, because I slept in the house of content, satisfied with what I had. Go, ye overreaching misers! Go, ye grasping, ambitious men! I envy not your life of inquietude. The sleep of statesmen is often broken; the dream of the miser is always evil; the sleep of the man who loves gain is never hearty; but God “*giveth,*” by contentment, “*his beloved sleep.*”—C. H. S.

Verse 2.—“*He giveth his beloved sleep.*”

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For giit or grace surpassing this—
“*He giveth his beloved sleep.*”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1809—1861.

Verse 3.—“*Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord.*” There is no reason, therefore, why you should be apprehensive for your families and country; there is no reason why you should weary yourselves with such great and such restless labour. God will be with you and your children, since they are his heritage.—Thomas Le Blanc.

Verse 3.—“*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD.*” That is, to many God gives children in place of temporal good. To many others he gives houses, lands, and thousands of gold and silver, and with them the womb that beareth not; and these are their inheritance. The poor man has from God a number of children, without lands or money; these are his inheritance; and God shows himself their father, feeding and supporting them by a chain of miraculous providences. Where is the poor man who would give up his six children with the prospect of having more, for the thousands or millions of him who is the centre of his own existence, and has neither roof nor branch but his forlorn solitary self upon the face of the earth? Let the fruitful family, however poor, lay this to heart. “*Children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*” And he who gave them will feed them; for it is a fact, and the maxim formed on it has never failed, “*Wherever God sends mouths, he sends meat.*” “*Murmur not,*” said an Arab to his friend,

“because thy family is large; know that it is for *their sakes* that God feeds thee.”—*Adam Clarke.*

Verse 3.—“*Children are an heritage of the Lord.*” The Hebrew seems to imply that children are an heritage belonging to the Lord, and not an heritage given by the Lord, as most English readers appear to take it. The Targum likewise bears this out.—*H. T. Armfield.*

Verse 3.—“*Children are an heritage of the Lord,*” etc. The Psalmist speaks of what children are unto godly and holy parents, for unto such only is any blessing given by God as a reward, and the Psalmist expressly speaks of blessings which God gives his beloved ones, and this blessing of children he makes to be the last and greatest. It is also as certain that he speaks of children as supposed to be holy and godly; for otherwise they are not a reward, but a curse, and a sorrow to him that begat them. The Psalm was made, as appears by the title of it, “*of or for Solomon,*” and therefore, as it is more than probable, was penned, as that other Psalm, the 72nd, which bears the same title, by David the father, of and for Solomon his son, who was, for his father’s sake, “the beloved of God” (2 Sam. xii. 24, 25), and upon whom the sure covenant and mercies of David were entailed, together with his kingdom. And what is said in this Psalm, in the verse before, fitly agrees to him, for he it was who was to build God’s house, to keep, and preserve Jerusalem the city, and the kingdom in peace, and to have rest, or as the Psalmist calls it (verse 3), quiet sleep given him by God, from all his enemies round about him. And for this, compare the prophecy of him (1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10) with the instructions here given him in the three first verses of this Psalm, and ye will see how fitly this Psalm concerns him.—*Thomas Goodwin.*

Verse 3.—“*Children are an heritage of the Lord.*” Hence note, ‘tis one of the greatest outward blessings to have a family full of dutiful children. To have many children is the next blessing to much grace. To have many children about us is better than to have much wealth about us. To have store of these olive plants (as the Psalmist calls them) round about our table is better than to have store of oil and wine upon our table. We know the worth of dead, or rather lifeless treasures, but who knows the worth of living treasures? Every man who hath children hath not a blessing in them, yet children are a blessing, and some have many blessings in one child. Children are chiefly a blessing to the children of God. “*Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*” But are not houses and lands, gold and silver, an heritage bestowed by the Lord upon his people? Doubtless they are, for the earth is his, and the fulness of it, and he gives it to the children of men. But though all things are of God, yet all things are not alike of him: children are more of God than houses and lands.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—Children!—might one say as the word was uttered—I left mine in my distant home, in poverty, their wants and numbers increasing, with the means of providing for their comfort daily narrowing. Even should my life be prolonged, they will be children of want, but with sickness and warnings of death upon me, they will soon be helpless and friendless orphans. Yes! but will God be neglectful of his own heritage? will he turn a gift into a sorrow? Poor as thou art, repine not at the number of thy children. Though lions lack thou shalt not, if thou seekest him; and know that it may be even for their sakes that he feedeth thee. If even thou wouldst not part with one of them for thousands of gold and silver, believe that he who is the fountain of all tenderness regards them with yet deeper love, and will make them now, in thy hour of trial, a means of increasing thy dependence on him, and soon thy support and pride.

Children!—might another say, as the Psalm referred to them—on their opening promise the breath of the destroyer has been poured. They are ripening visibly for the grave, and their very smile and caress cause my wounded heart to bleed anew. Yes, mourner; but *God’s heritage!* may he not claim his own? They are in safe keeping when in his, and will soon be restored to thee in the better land, where death will make them ministering angels at his throne; nay, they will be the first to welcome thee to its glories, to love and worship with thee throughout eternity.

Children! this word to a third, of an even sadder and more anxious spirit, might seem like the planting of a dagger in his heart. His children have forsaken their father’s God. Their associates were the vain and vicious; their pleasures were the pleasures of folly and shame; their lives barren of all promise, their souls destitute of all purpose, and steeled against all reproof. True, but *the heritage of the Lord still.* Hast thou, sorrowing parent, asked him for wisdom to keep it for him?

Have due thought, prayer, watchful and holy living been expended on that heritage of God? No culture, no harvest in the soil; no prayer, no blessing from the soul. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," is a promise that though sometimes, yet but seldom has missed fulfillment. Bring them to Jesus, and, unchanged in his tenderness, he will still lay his hands upon them and bless them.—*Robert Nisbet*.

Verse 3.—"*The fruit of the womb is his reward.*" John Howard Hinton's daughter said to him as she knelt by his death-bed:—"There is no greater blessing than for children to have godly parents." "And the next," said the dying father, with a beam of gratitude, "for parents to have godly children."—*Memoir in Baptist Handbook*, 1875.

Verse 4.—"*As arrows.*" Well doth David call children "*arrows*"; for if they be well bred, they shoot at their parents' enemies; and if they be evil bred, they shoot at their parents.—*Henry Smith*, 1560—1591.

Verse 4.—"*As arrows.*" Children are compared to "*arrows*." Now, we know that sticks are not by nature arrows; they do not grow so, but they are made so; by nature they are knotty and rugged, but by art they are made smooth and handsome. So children by nature are rugged and untoward, but by education are refined and reformed, made pliable to the divine will and pleasure.—*George Swinnoek*, 1627—1673.

Verse 4.—"*As arrows.*" "Our children are what we make them. They are represented '*As arrows in the hand of a mighty man,*' and *arrows* go the way we aim them."

Verse 4.—"*As arrows.*" In a collection of *Chinese Proverbs and Apophthegms*, subjoined to *Hau Kiou Chooan*, or, *The Pleasing History*, I find a proverb cited from *Du Halde*, which seems full to our purpose. It is this:—"When a son is born into a family, a bow and arrow are hung before the gate." To which the following note is added: "As no such custom appears to be literally observed, this should seem to be a metaphorical expression, signifying that a new protector is added to the family," equivalent to that of the Psalms,—"*as arrows,*" etc.—*James Merrick* (1720—1769), in "*Annotations on the Psalms.*"

Verse 4.—"*Children of the youth*" are "*arrows in the hand,*" which, with prudence, may be directed aright to the mark, God's glory, and the service of their generation; but afterwards, when they are gone abroad in the world, they are arrows out of the hand; it is too late to bend them then. But these "*arrows in the hand*" too often prove arrows in the heart, a constant grief to their godly parents, whose grey hairs they bring with sorrow to the grave.—*Matthew Henry*.

Verse 4.—"*Children of the youth.*" *Sons of youth*, i.e., born while their parents are still young. See Gen. xxxvii. 2; Isa. liv. 6. The allusion is not only to their vigour (Gen. xlix. 3), but the value of their aid to the parent in declining age.—*Joseph Addison Alexander*.

Verse 4.—"*Children of the youth.*" If the right interpretation is commonly given to this phrase, this Psalm greatly encourages early marriages. It is a growing evil of modern times that marriages are so often deferred till it is highly improbable that in the course of nature the father can live to mould his offspring to habits of honour and virtue.—*William Swan Plumer* (1802—1880), in "*Studies in the Book of Psalms.*"

Verse 5.—"*Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.*" Dr. Guthrie used to say, "I am rich in nothing but children." They were eleven in number.

Verse 5.—"*Quiver full.*" Many children make many prayers, and many prayers bring much blessing.—*German Proverb*.

Verse 5.—The Rev. Moses Browne had twelve children. On one remarking to him, "Sir, you have just as many children as Jacob," he replied, "Yes, and I have Jacob's God to provide for them."—*G. S. Bowes*.

Verse 5.—I remember a great man coming into my house, at Waltham, and seeing all my children standing in the order of their age and stature, said, "These are they that make rich men poor." But he straight received this answer, "Nay, my lord, these are they that make a poor man rich; for there is not one of these whom we would part with for all your wealth." It is easy to observe that none are so gripped and hardfisted as the childless; whereas those, who, for the maintenance of large families, are inured to frequent disbursements, find such experience

of Divine providence in the faithful management of their affairs, as that they lay out with more cheerfulness what they receive. Wherein their care must be abated when God takes it off from them to himself; and, if they be not wanting to themselves, their faith gives them ease in casting their burden upon him, who hath more power and more right to it, since our children are more his than our own. He that feedeth the young ravens, can he fail the best of his creatures?—*Joseph Hall*, 1574—1656.

Verse 5.—“*They shall not be ashamed,*” etc. Able enough he shall be to defend himself, and keep off all injuries, being fortified by his children; and if it happen that he hath a cause depending in the gate, and to be tried before the judges, he shall have the patronage of his children, and not suffer in his plea for want of advocates; his sons will stand up in a just cause for him.—*William Nicholson* (—1671), in “*David’s Harp Strung and Tuned,*”

Verse 5.—“*But they shall speak.*” “*But destroy*” is the marginal version, and is here much more emphatical than the rendering “*speak.*” For this sense see 2 Chron. xxii. 10. Others refer it to litigation, when they shall successfully defend the cause of their parents. But as I do not see how their number or vigour could add weight to their evidence in a judicial cause, I prefer the sense given.—*Benjamin Boothroyd*, 1768—1836.

Verse 5.—“*With the enemies in the gate.*” Probably the Psalmist alludes here to the defence of a besieged city; the gate was very commonly the point of attack, and the taking of it rendered the conquest of the place easy: compare Gen. xxii. 17; xxiv. 60.—*Daniel Cresswell* (1776—1844), in “*The Psalms . . . with Critical and Explanatory Notes,*” 1843.

Verse 5.—

This is the pride, the glory of a man,
To train obedient children in his house,
Prompt on his enemies t’ avenge his wrongs,
And with the father’s zeal in honour high
To hold his friends.

Sophocles’ “Antigone.” R. Potter’s Translation

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. The human hand without the hand of God is in vain. II. The human eye without the eye of God is in vain. Or, I. God is to be acknowledged in all our works. 1. By seeking his direction before them. 2. By depending upon his help in them. 3. By giving him the glory of them. II. In all our cares. 1. By owning our short sight. 2. By trusting to his foresight.—*G. R.*

Verse 1 (*first part*).—Illustrate the principles: I. In building up character. II. In constructing plans of life and of work. III. In framing schemes of happiness. IV. In rearing a hope of eternal life. V. In raising and enlarging the church.—*J. F.*

Verses 1, 2.—I. What we may not expect: namely, God to work without our building, watching, etc. II. What we may expect: Failure if we are without God. III. What we should not do: Fret, worry, etc. IV. What we may do: So trust as to rest in peace.

Verse 2 (*with Psalm cxxvi. 2*).—The labour of the law contrasted with the laughter of the gospel.

Verse 2.—“*The bread of sorrows.*” I. When God sends it, it is good to eat it. II. When we bake it ourselves, it is vain to eat it. III. When the devil brings it, it is deadly meat.

Verse 2 (*last clause*).—Blessings that come to us in sleep. 1. Renewed health and vigour of body. 2. Mental repose and refreshment. 3. Sweeter thoughts and holier purposes. 4. Providential gifts. The rains fall, the fruits of the earth grow and ripen, the mill wheel goes round, the ship pursues her voyage, etc., while we slumber. Often when we are doing nothing for ourselves God is doing most.—*W. H. J. P.*

Verse 2 (last clause).—See “Spurgeon’s Sermons,” No. 12: “The Peculiar Sleep of the Beloved.”

Verse 3.—Sermon by Thomas Manton. Works: vol. xviii. pp. 84—95. [Nichol’s Edition.]

Verses 3—5.—Children. Consider: I. The effects of receiving them as a heritage from the Lord. 1. Parents will trust in the Lord for their provision and safety. 2. Will regard them as a sacred trust from the Lord of whose care they must render an account. 3. Will train them up in the fear of the Lord. 4. Will often consult God concerning them. 5. Will render them up uncomplainingly when the Lord calls them to himself by death. II. The effects of their right training. 1. They become the parents’ joy. 2. The permanent record of the parents’ wisdom. 3. The support and solace of the parents’ old age. 4. The transmitters of their parents’ virtues to another generation; for well-trained children become, in their turn, wise parents.—*J. F.*

Verse 4.—The spiritual uses of children. I. When they die in infancy, awakening parents. II. When they go home from Sunday-school carrying holy influences. III. When they become converted. IV. When they grow up and become useful men and women.

Verses 4, 5.—I. The dependence of children upon parents. 1. For safety. They are in their quiver. 2. For direction. They are sent forth by them. 3. For support. They are in the hands of the mighty. II. The dependence of parents upon children. 1. For defence. Who will hear a parent spoken against? 2. For happiness. “A wise son maketh,” etc. Children elicit some of the noblest and tenderest emotions of human nature. Happy is the Christian minister who with a full quiver can say, “Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me.”—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—“The Reward of Well-doing Sure.” Sermon by Henry Melvill, in “The Pulpit,” 1856.
