

PSALM CXXX.

TITLE.—A Song of Degrees. *It would be hard to see any upward step from the preceding to the present Psalm, and therefore it is possible that the steps or ascents are in the song itself : certainly it does rise rapidly out of the depths of anguish to the heights of assurance. It follows well upon cxxix. : when we have overcome the trials which arise from man we are the better prepared to meet those sharper sorrows which arise out of our matters towards God. He who has borne the scourges of the wicked is trained in all patience to wait the dealings of the Holy Lord. We name this the DE PROFUNDIS* PSALM : “Out of the depths” is the leading word of it : out of those depths we cry, wait, watch, and hope. In this Psalm we hear of the pearl of redemption, verses 7 and 8 : perhaps the sweet singer would never have found that precious thing had he not been cast into the depths. “Pearls lie deep.”

DIVISION.—The first two verses reveal an intense desire ; and the next two are a humble confession of repentance and faith, verses 3 and 4. In verses 5 and 6 waiting watchfulness is declared and resolved upon ; and in the last two verses joyful expectation, both for himself and all Israel, finds expression.

EXPOSITION.

OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.

2 Lord, hear my voice : let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

3 If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?

4 But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

6 My soul *waiteth* for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning : I say, *more than* they that watch for the morning.

7 Let Israel hope in the LORD : for with the LORD *there is* mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

1. “*Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.*” This is the Psalmist’s statement and plea : he had never ceased to pray even when brought into the lowest state. The depths usually silence all they engulf, but they could not close the mouth of this servant of the Lord ; on the contrary, it was in the abyss itself that he cried unto Jehovah. Beneath the floods prayer lived and struggled ; yea, above the roar of the billows rose the cry of faith. It little matters where we are if we can pray ; but prayer is never more real and acceptable than when it rises out of the worst places. Deep places beget deep devotion. Depths of earnestness are stirred by depths of tribulation. Diamonds sparkle most amid the darkness. Prayer *de profundis* gives to God *gloria in excelsis*. The more distressed we are, the more excellent is the faith which trusts bravely in the Lord, and therefore appeals to him, and to him alone. Good men may be in the depths of temporal and spiritual trouble ; but good men in such cases look only to their God, and they stir themselves up to be more instant and earnest in prayer than at other times. The depth of their distress moves the depths of their being ; and from the bottom of their hearts an exceeding great and bitter cry rises unto the one living and true God. David had often been in the deep, and as often had he pleaded with Jehovah, his God, in whose hand are all deep places. He prayed, and remembered that he had prayed, and pleaded that he had prayed ; hoping ere long to receive an answer. It would be dreadful to look back on trouble and feel forced to own that we did not cry unto the Lord in it ; but it is most comforting to know that whatever we did not do, or could not do, yet we did pray, even in our worst times. He that prays in the depth will not sink out of his depth. He that cries out of the depths shall soon sing in the heights.

2. "Lord, hear my voice." It is all we ask ; but nothing less will content us. If the Lord will but hear us we will leave it to his superior wisdom to decide whether he will answer us or no. It is better for our prayer to be heard than answered. If the Lord were to make an absolute promise to answer all our requests it might be rather a curse than a blessing, for it would be casting the responsibility of our lives upon ourselves, and we should be placed in a very anxious position : but now the Lord hears our desires, and that is enough ; we only wish him to grant them if his infinite wisdom sees that it would be for our good and for his glory. Note that the Psalmist spoke audibly in prayer : this is not at all needful, but it is exceedingly helpful ; for the use of the voice assists the thoughts. Still, there is a voice in silent supplication, a voice in our weeping, a voice in that sorrow which cannot find a tongue : that voice the Lord will hear if his cry is meant for his ear. "*Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.*" The Psalmist's cry is a beggar's petition ; he begs the great King and Lord to lend an ear to it. He has supplicated many times, but always with one voice, or for one purpose ; and he begs to be noticed in the one matter which he has pressed with so much importunity. He would have the King hearken, consider, remember, and weigh his request. He is confused, and his prayer may therefore be broken, and difficult to understand ; he begs therefore that his Lord will give the more earnest and compassionate heed to the voice of his many and painful pleadings. When we have already prayed over our troubles it is well to pray over our prayers. If we can find no more words, let us entreat the Lord to hear those petitions which we have already presented. If we have faithfully obeyed the precept by praying without ceasing, we may be confident that the Lord will faithfully fulfil the promise by helping us without fail. Though the Psalmist was under a painful sense of sin, and so was in the depth, his faith pleaded in the teeth of conscious unworthiness ; for well he knew that the Lord's keeping his promise depends upon his own character and not upon that of his erring creatures.

3. "*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?*" If JAH, the all-seeing, should in strict justice call every man to account for every want of conformity to righteousness, where would any one of us be ? Truly, he does record all our transgressions ; but as yet he does not act upon the record, but lays it aside till another day. If men were to be judged upon no system but that of works, who among us could answer for himself at the Lord's bar, and hope to stand clear and accepted ? This verse shows that the Psalmist was under a sense of sin, and felt it imperative upon him not only to cry as a suppliant but to confess as a sinner. Here he owns that he cannot stand before the great King in his own righteousness, and he is so struck with a sense of the holiness of God, and the rectitude of the law, that he is convinced that no man of mortal race can answer for himself before a Judge so perfect, concerning a law so divine. Well does he cry, "O Lord, who shall stand ?" None can do so : there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Iniquities are matters which are not according to equity : what a multitude we have of these ! Jehovah, who sees all, and is also our *Adonai*, or Lord, will assuredly bring us into judgment concerning those thoughts, and words, and works which are not in exact conformity to his law. Were it not for the Lord Jesus, could we hope to stand ? Dare we meet him in the dread day of account on the footing of law and equity ? What a mercy it is that we need not do so, for the next verse sets forth another way of acceptance to which we flee.

4. "*But there is forgiveness with thee.*" Blessed *but*. Free, full, sovereign pardon is in the hand of the great King : it is his prerogative to forgive, and he delights to exercise it. Because his nature is mercy, and because he has provided a sacrifice for sin, therefore forgiveness is with him for all that come to him confessing their sins. The power of pardon is permanently resident with God : he has forgiveness ready to his hand at this instant. "*That thou mayest be feared.*" This is the fruitful root of piety. None fear the Lord like those who have experienced his forgiving love. Gratitude for pardon produces far more fear and reverence of God than all the dread which is inspired by punishment. If the Lord were to execute justice upon all, there would be none left to fear him ; if all were under apprehension of his deserved wrath, despair would harden them against fearing him : it is grace which leads the way to a holy regard of God, and a fear of grieving him.

5. "*I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait.*" Expecting him to come to me in love, I quietly wait for his appearing ; I wait *upon* him in service, and *for* him in faith. For God I wait and for him only : if he will manifest himself I shall have nothing more to wait for ; but until he shall appear for my help I must wait on,

hoping even in the depths. This waiting of mine is no mere formal act, my very soul is in it,—“my soul doth wait.” I wait and I wait—mark the repetition! “My soul waits,” and then again, “My soul waits”; to make sure work of the waiting. It is well to deal with the Lord intently. Such repetitions are the reverse of vain repetitions. If the Lord Jehovah makes us wait, let us do so with our whole hearts; for blessed are all they that wait for him. He is worth waiting for. The waiting itself is beneficial to us: it tries faith, exercises patience, trains submission, and endears the blessing when it comes. The Lord’s people have always been a waiting people: they waited for the First Advent, and now they wait for the Second. They waited for a sense of pardon, and now they wait for perfect sanctification. They waited in the depths, and they are not now wearied with waiting in a happier condition. They have cried and they do wait; probably their past prayer sustains their present patience.

“*And in his word do I hope.*” This is the source, strength, and sweetness of waiting. Those who do not hope cannot wait; but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. God’s word is a true word, but at times it carries; if ours is true faith it will wait the Lord’s time. A word from the Lord is as bread to the soul of the believer; and, refreshed thereby, it holds out through the night of sorrow expecting the dawn of deliverance and delight. Waiting, we study the word, believe the word, hope in the word, and live on the word; and all because it is “his word,”—the word of him who never speaks in vain. Jehovah’s word is a firm ground for a waiting soul to rest upon.

6. “*My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.*” Men who guard a city, and women who wait by the sick, long for daylight. Worshippers tarrying for the morning sacrifice, the kindling of the incense and the lighting of the lamps, mingle fervent prayers with their holy vigils, and pine for the hour when the lamb shall smoke upon the altar. David, however, waited more than these, waited longer, waited more longingly, waited more expectantly. He was not afraid of the great Adonai before whom none can stand in their own righteousness, for he had put on the righteousness of faith, and therefore longed for gracious audience with the Holy One. God was no more dreaded by him than light is dreaded by those engaged in a lawful calling. He pined and yearned after his God. “*I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*” The figure was not strong enough, though one can hardly think of anything more vigorous; he felt that his own eagerness was unique and unrivalled. Oh to be thus hungry and thirsty after God! Our version spoils the abruptness of the language; the original runs thus—“My soul for the Lord more than those watching for the morning—watching for the morning.” This is a fine poetical repeat. We long for the favour of the Lord more than wary sentinels long for the morning light which will release them from their tedious watch. Indeed this is true. He that has once rejoiced in communion with God is sore tried by the hidings of his face, and grows faint with strong desire for the Lord’s appearing,

“When wilt thou come unto me, Lord?
Until thou dost appear,
I count each moment for a day,
Each minute for a year.”

7. “*Let Israel hope in the LORD.*” Or, “Hope thou, Israel, in Jehovah.” Jehovah is Israel’s God; therefore, let Israel hope in him. What one Israelite does he wishes all Israel to do. That man has a just right to exhort others who is himself setting the example. Israel of old waited upon Jehovah and wrestled all the night long, and at last he went his way succoured by the Hope of Israel: the like shall happen to all his seed. God has great things in store for his people; they ought to have large expectations. “*For with the Lord there is mercy.*” This is in his very nature, and by the light of nature it may be seen. But we have also the light of grace, and therefore we see still more of his mercy. With us there is sin; but hope is ours, because “with the Lord there is mercy.” Our comfort lies not in that which is with us, but in that which is with our God. Let us look out of self and its poverty to Jehovah and his riches of mercy. “*And with him is plenteous redemption.*” He can and will redeem all his people out of their many and great troubles; nay, their redemption is already wrought out and laid up with him, so that he can at any time give his waiting ones the full benefit thereof. The attribute of mercy, and the fact of redemption, are two most sufficient reasons for hoping in Jehovah; and the fact that there is no mercy or deliverance elsewhere should effectually wean the

soul from all idolatry. Are not these deep things of God a grand comfort for those who are crying out of the depths? Is it not better to be in the deeps with David, hoping in God's mercy, than up on the mountain-tops, boasting in our own fancied righteousness?

8. "And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Our iniquities are our worst dangers: if saved from these, we are saved altogether; but there is no salvation from them except by redemption. What a blessing that this is here promised in terms which remove it out of the region of question: the Lord shall certainly redeem his believing people from all their sins. Well may the redemption be plenteous since it concerns all Israel and all iniquities! Truly, our Psalm has ascended to a great height in this verse: this is no cry out of the depths, but a chorale in the heights. Redemption is the top of covenant blessings. When it shall be experienced by all Israel, the latter-day glory shall have come, and the Lord's people shall say, "Now, Lord, what wait we for?" Is not this a clear prophecy of the coming of our Lord Jesus the first time? and may we not now regard it as the promise of his second and more glorious coming for the redemption of the body? For this our soul doth wait: yea, our heart and our flesh cry out for it with joyful expectation.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN'T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—The Psalm is the eleventh in the order of the gradual Psalms, and treats of the eleventh step in the spiritual ascent, viz., penitential prayer.—*H. T. Armfield.*

Whole Psalm.—Of the Psalms which are called Penitential this is the chiefest. But, as it is the most excellent, so it has been perverted to the most disgraceful abuse in the Popedom: *e.g.*, that it should be mumbled in the lowest voice by slow bellies, in the sepulchral vigils for their liberation of souls from purgatory: as if David were here treating of the dead, when he has not even spoken a word about them; but says that he himself, a living man, was calling upon God; and exhorts the Israelites, living men also, to do the same. But leaving the buffooneries of the Papists we will rather consider the true meaning and use of the Psalm. It contains the most ardent prayer of a man grievously distressed by a sense of the Divine anger against sin: by earnest turning to God and penitence, he is seeking the forgiveness of his iniquities.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Whole Psalm.—The Holy Ghost layeth out here two opposite passions most plainly—*fear*, in respect of evil-deserving sins, and *hope*, in regard of undeserved mercies.—*Alexander Roberts, 1610.*

Whole Psalm.—The passionate earnestness of the Psalm is enhanced by the repetition eight times in it of the Divine Name.—*The Speaker's Commentary, 1873.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm, perhaps more than any other, is marked by its mountings: depth; prayer; conviction; light; hope; waiting; watching; longing; confidence; assurance; universal happiness and joy. . . . Just as the barometer marks the rising of the weather, so does this Psalm, sentence by sentence, record the progress of the soul. And you may test yourself by it, as by a rule or measure, and ask yourself at each line, "Have I reached to this? Have I reached to this?" and so take your spiritual gauge.—*James Vaughan, in "Steps to Heaven," 1878.*

Whole Psalm.—Whosoever he was that wrote this Psalm, he maketh mention and rehearsal of that prayer that he made to his God in the time of his great danger, and this he doth to the fifth verse; then finding in experience a comfortable answer, and how good a thing it was to pray to God, and to wait on him, he professeth, that, as before, he had awaited on him, so still in time coming he would await on him, and this he doeth to the seventh verse. In the third and last part, he turneth him to Israel, to the church, and exhorteth them to await on God, as he had done, promising them mercy and redemption from all their iniquities if they would await on him.—*Robert Rollock, 1555—1599.*

Whole Psalm.—Luther being once asked which were the best Psalms, replied, *Psalmi Paulini*; and when his companions at table pressed him to say which these were, he answered: Psalms xxxii., li., cxxx., and cxliii.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Whole Psalm.—Luther, when he was buffeted by the devil at Coburg, and in

great affliction, said to those about him, *Venite, in contemptum Diaboli, Psalmum, De Profundis, quatuor vocibus cantemus*; "Come, let us sing that Psalm, 'Out of the depths,' etc., in derision of the devil."—*John Trapp*.

Whole Psalm.—The circumstances in which Dr. John Owen's Exposition of Psalm cxxx. originated are peculiarly interesting. Dr. Owen himself, in a statement made to Mr. Richard Davis, who ultimately became pastor of a church in Rowel, Northamptonshire, explains the occasion which led him to a very careful examination of the fourth verse in the Psalm. Mr. Davis, being under religious impressions, had sought a conference with Owen. In the course of the conversation, Dr. Owen put the question, "Young man, pray in what manner do you think to go to God?" "Through the Mediator, sir," answered Mr. Davis. "That is easily said," replied the doctor, "but I assure you it is another thing to go to God through the Mediator than many who make use of the expression are aware of. I myself preached Christ," he continued, "some years, when I had but very little, if any, experimental acquaintance with access to God through Christ; until the Lord was pleased to visit me with sore affliction, whereby I was brought to the mouth of the grave, and under which my soul was oppressed with horror and darkness; but God graciously relieved my spirit by a powerful application of Psalm cxxx. 4, '*But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*,' from whence I received special instruction, peace and comfort, in drawing near to God through the Mediator, and preached thereupon immediately after my recovery."—*William H. Gould, editor of Owen's Collected Works, 1851.*

Verse 1.—"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD." Is there not a depth of sin, and a depth of misery by reason of sin, and a depth of sorrow by reason of misery? In all which, both David was, and I, God help me, am deeply plunged; and are not these depths enough out of which to cry? And yet, perhaps, none of these depths is that which David means; but there are depths of danger—a danger of body and a danger of soul, and out of these it seems that David cried; for the danger of his body was so deep that it had brought him to death's door, and the danger of his soul so deep that it had almost brought him to the gates of despair; and had he not just cause then to say, "*Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O God*"? And yet there is a depth besides these that must help to lift us out of these—a depth of devotion, without which depth our crying out of other depths will never be heard. For devotion is a fire that puts a heat into our crying, and carries it up into *cælum empyreum*—the heaven of fire, where God himself is. And now join all these depths together—the depth of sin, of misery, of sorrow, the depth of danger, and the depth of devotion,—and then tell me if David had not, if I have not, as just cause as ever Jonah had to say, "Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O God." Indeed, to cry out of the depths hath many considerable circumstances to move God to hear: it acknowledgeth his infinite power when no distance can hinder his assistance; it presents our own faith when no extremity can weaken our hope; it magnifies God's goodness when he, the Most High, regards the most low; it expresseth our own earnestness, seeing crying out of depths must needs be a deep cry; and if each of these singly, and by itself, be motive sufficient to move God to hear, how strong must the motive needs be when they are all united? and united they are all in crying out of the depths; and therefore now that I cry to thee out of the depths, be moved, O God, in thy great mercy to "*hear my voice*."

It is cause enough for God not to hear some because they do not cry—cause enough not to hear some that cry because not out of the depths; but when crying and out of the depths are joined together, it was never known that ever God refused to hear; and therefore now that I cry to thee out of the depths, be pleased, O God, in thy great mercy to hear my voice.—*Sir Richard Baker, in "Meditations and Disquisitions upon the Three last Psalmes of David," 1639.*

Verse 1.—"Out of the depths." By the deep places (as all the ancients consent) is meant the deep places of afflictions, and the deep places of the heart troubled for sin. Afflictions are compared to deep waters. Ps. xviii. 16: "He drew me out of many waters." "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul." And surely God's children are often cast into very desperate cases, and plunged into deep miseries, to the end that they may send out of a contrite and feeling heart such prayers as may mount aloft and pierce the heavens. When we are in prosperity our prayers come from our lips; and therefore the Lord is forced to cast us down, that our prayers may come from our hearts, and that our senses may be awakened

from the security in which they are lying. Albeit the throne of God be most high, yet he delighteth to hear the petition of hearts that are most low, that are most cast down by the sight of sin. There is no affliction, neither any place so low (yea, if as low as the belly of the whale wherein Jonah lay) which can separate us from the love of the Lord, or stay our prayers from coming before him. Those that are farthest cast down, are not farthest from God, but are nearest unto him. God is near to a contrite heart, and it is the proper seat where his Spirit dwelleth : Isai. lxvi. 2. And thus God dealeth with us, as men do with such houses that they are minded to build sumptuously and on high ; for then they dig deep grounds for the foundation. Thus God purposing to make a fair show of Daniel, and the three children in Babel ; of Joseph in Egypt ; of David in Israel ; he first threw them into the deep waters of afflictions. Daniel is cast into the den of lions ; the three children are thrown into the fiery furnace ; Joseph is imprisoned ; David exiled. Yet all those he exalted and made glorious temples to himself. Mark hereby the dulness of our nature, that is such, that God is forced to use sharp remedies to awaken us. Jonah lay sleeping in the ship, when the tempest of God's wrath was pursuing him : God therefore threw him into the belly of the whale, and the bottom of the deep, that from those deep places he might cry to him.

When, therefore, we are troubled by heavy sickness, or poverty, or oppressed by the tyranny of men, let us make profit and use thereof, considering that God hath cast his best children into such dangers for their profit ; and that it is better to be in deep dangers praying, than on high mountains of vanity playing.—*Archibald Symson, in "A Sacred Septenarie."* 1638.

Verse 1.—“*Out of the depths.*” “*Depths!*” oh! into what “*depths*” men can sink ! How far from happiness, glory, and goodness men can fall.

There is the depth of *poverty*. A man can become utterly stripped of all earthly possessions and worldly friends ! Sometimes we come upon a man, still living, but in such abject circumstances, that it strikes us as a marvel that a human being can sink lower than the beasts of the field.

Then there is the depth of *sorrow*. Billow after billow breaks over the man, friend after friend departs, lover and friend are put into darkness. All the fountains of his nature are broken up. He is like a water-logged ship, from the top waves plunging down as if into the bottom of the sea. So often in such depths, sometimes like Jonah in the whale's belly, the monster carrying him down, down, down, into darkness.

There are depths after depths of *mental darkness*, when the soul becomes more and more sorrowful, down to that very depth which is just this side of *despair*. Earth hollow, heaven empty, the air heavy, every form a deformity, all sounds discord, the past a gloom, the present a puzzle, the future a horror. One more step down, and the man will stand in the chamber of despair, the floor of which is blisteringly hot, while the air is biting cold as the polar atmosphere. To what depths the spirit of a man may fall !

But the most horrible depth into which a man's soul can descend is *sin*. Sometimes we begin on gradual slopes, and slide so swiftly that we soon reach great depths ; depths in which there are horrors that are neither in poverty, nor sorrow, nor mental depression. It is sin, it is an outrage against God and ourselves. We feel that there is no bottom. Each opening depth reveals a greater deep. This is really the bottomless pit, with everlasting accumulations of speed, and perpetual lacerations as we descend. Oh, depths below depths ! Oh, falls from light to gloom, from gloom to darkness ! Oh, the hell of sin !

What can we do ? We can simply cry, CRY, CRY ! But, let us cry to God. Useless, injurious are other cries. They are mere expressions of impotency, or protests against imaginary fate. But the cry of the spirit to the Most High is a manful cry. Out of the depths of all poverty, all sorrow, all mental depression, all sin, cry unto God !—*From "The Study and the Pulpit,"* 1877.

Verse 1.—“*Out of the depths have I cried.*”

Up from the deeps, O God, I cry to thee !
Hear my soul's prayer, hear thou her litany,
O thou who sayest, “Come, wanderer, home to me.”

Up from the deeps of sorrow, wherein lie
Dark secrets veild from earth's unpitying eye,
My prayers, like star-crown'd angels, Godward fly.

From the calm bosom when in quiet hour
 God's Holy Spirit reigns with largest power,
 Then shall each thought in prayer's white blossom flower.

Not from life's shallows, where the waters sleep,
 A dull, low marsh where stagnant vapours creep,
 But ocean-voiced, deep calling unto deep.

As he of old, King David, call'd to thee,
 As cries the heart of poor humanity,
 "Clamavi, Domine, exaudi me!"

C. S. Fenner.

Verse 1.—But when he crieth from the deep, he riseth from the deep, and his very cry suffereth him not to be long at the bottom.—*Augustine.*

Verse 1.—It has been well said that the verse puts before us six conditions of true prayer: it is lowly, "out of the deep"; fervent, "have I called"; direct to God himself, "unto thee"; reverent, "O Lord"; awed, "Lord," a solemn title, is again used; one's very own, "hear my voice."—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 1.—"Have I cried." There are many kinds and degrees of prayer in the world; from the coldest form to the intensest agony. Every one prays; but very few "cry." But of those who do "cry to God," the majority would say,—*"I owe it to the depths. I learnt it there. I often prayed before; but never—till I was carried down very deep—did I cry."* "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." It is well worth while to go down into any "depth" to be taught to "cry."

It is not too much to say that we do not know what prayer may be till we have "cried." And we seldom rise till we have gone very deep. "I die! I perish! I am lost! Help, Lord! Help me! Save me now! Do it now, Lord, or I am lost. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God!"

In mid-day, if you are taken from the bright and sunny scenes of light, and go down into the bottom of a pit, you may see the stars, which were invisible to you in the upper air. And how many could say that things they knew not in life's noon, they have found in life's midnight, and that they owe their glimpses of glory, and their best avenues of thought, and the importunacy of prayer, and the victories of faith, to seasons when they walked in very dark places. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord."—*James Vaughan.*

Verse 1.—"Have I cried unto thee, Jehovah." God gave out that name Jehovah to his people to confirm their faith in the stability of his promises: Exod. iii. He who is Being himself will assuredly give being and subsistence to his promises. Being to deal with God about the promises of grace, he makes his application to him under this name: "I call upon thee, Jehovah."—*John Owen, in "A practical Exposition upon Psalm cxxx."*

Verse 2.—"Lord, hear my voice," etc. Every prayer should have its reverent invocation, as every temple its porch. The two greatest prayers in the Old Testament—Solomon's prayer and Daniel's prayer—both have it very emphatically. And it is a very distinct part of our own perfect model: "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." On our part it is deferential, and puts the mind into its proper form; while it places the great God, whom it addresses, where he ought to be,—in the awe of his glory; in the magnitude of his power; in the infinitude of his wisdom and love.

Never think little of that part of your prayer: never omit, never hurry over the opening address. Do not go into his presence without a pause, or some devout ascription. "Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications." True, he is always listening and waiting for his children's "cry,"—far more prepared to answer, than we are to ask. And the very fact that we are praying is a proof of his attention,—for who but he put it into our hearts to make that prayer? Nevertheless, it becomes us, and honours him, to establish, at the outset, the right relationship between a creature and his Creator; between a child and his father: "Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication."—*James Vaughan.*

Verse 2.—"Lord." Hebrew, *Adonai*. As *Jehovah* marks his unchangeable faithfulness to his promises of delivering his people, so *Adonai* his *Lordship* over

all hindrances in the way of his delivering them.—*Andrew Robert Fausset, in "A Commentary, Critical, Experimental and Practical," 1866.*

Verse 2.—“*Lord, hear my voice,*” etc. The expressions are metaphorical, and borrowed from the carriage of a parent to a child, and upon the matter his suit is this,—*Lord, notice me when I pray, as a parent will notice his distressed child’s cry when he is like to ruin. “Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications ;”* that goes a little further ; that as a parent knowing a child to be in hazard, he will listen and hearken attentively if he can here him cry, and notice and ponder that cry, and what he cries for ; so he pleaded with God, that he would be waiting on and attentive, to see and hear if a cry should come from him, and that he would affectionately ponder and notice it when he hears it.—*George Hutcheson,—1678.*

Verse 3.—“*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities,*” etc. But doth not the Lord mark iniquity ? Doth not he take notice of every sin acted by any of the children of men, especially by his own children ? Why, then, doth the Psalmist put it upon an *if* ? “*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquity.*” ’Tis true, the Lord marks all iniquity to know it, but he doth not mark any iniquity in his children to condemn them for it : so the meaning of the Psalm is, that if the Lord should mark sin with a strict and severe eye, as a judge, to charge it upon the person sinning, no man could bear it.

The word rendered *to mark* notes, first, to watch, or to observe with strictest diligence, and is therefore in the noun rendered a *watch-tower*, upon which a man is placed to take observation of all things that are done, and of all persons that pass by, or approach and come near. A watchman placed upon a high tower is bound industriously and critically to observe all passengers and passages, all that his eye can reach. So saith the text, —*If thou shouldst mark as a watchman, and eye with rigour everything that passeth from us, “who will stand ?”* that is, make good his cause in the day of his judgment and trial before thee ?

Secondly, the word signifieth to keep in mind, to lay up, to have, as it were, a store and stock, a memorial or record, of such and such things by us. In that sense it is said (Gen. xxxvii. 11), “*Joseph’s brethren envied him ; but his father observed the saying :*” he marked what Joseph spake about his dreams, he laid it up, and did not let it pass away as a dream, or as a vision of the night. Thus, by “*If the Lord should mark iniquity.*” we understand—if he should treasure up our sins in his memory, and keep them by him, “*who were able to stand when accounted with ?”* The Lord, in a way of grace, seeth as if he saw not, and winks at us oftentimes when we do amiss.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—*Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication, but let not thine eyes be intentive to the stains of my sin ; for “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?”* or who shall be able to abide it ? Did not the angels fall when thou markedst their follies ? Can flesh, which is but dust, be clean before thee, when the stars, which are of a far purer substance, are not ? Can anything be clean in thy sight which is not as clean as thy sight ? and can any cleanness be equal to thine ? Alas ! O Lord, we are neither angels nor stars, and how then can we stand when those fell ? how can we be clean when these be impure ? If thou shouldst mark what is done amiss, there would be marking-work enough for thee as long as the world lasts ; for what action of man is free from stain of sin, or from defect of righteousness ? Therefore, mark not anything in me, O God, that I have done, but mark that only in me which thou hast done thyself. Mark in me thine own image ; and then thou mayest look upon me, and yet say still, as once thou saidst, *Et erant omnia valde bona* [“*And all things were very good*”].—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 3 (*whole verse*).—We are introduced at once into all the solemnities of a criminal court. The judge is seated on the bench : the culprit is standing at the bar, charged with a capital offence : the witnesses are giving their evidence against him. The judge is listening attentively to everything which is said ; and in order to assist his memory, he takes notes of the more important parts. If the Lord were to try us after this fashion, what would be the result ? Suppose him seated on his throne of inflexible righteousness, taking notes, with a pen in his hand, of the transgressions which are proven against us. Nothing is omitted. Every sin is marked down with its peculiar aggravations. There is no possibility of escape from the deserved condemnation. The evidence against us is clear, and copious, and overwhelming. A thousandth part of it is sufficient to determine our doom.

The judge has no alternative but to pronounce the awful sentence. We must die a felon's death. "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"—*N. M'Michael.*

Verse 3.—"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark." If thou shouldst inquire and scrutinize, and then shouldst retain and impute: (for the Hebrew word imports both;) if thou shouldst inquire, thou wouldst find something of iniquity in the most righteous of mankind: and when thou hast found it, if thou shouldst retain it, and call him to an account for it, he could by no means free himself of the charge, or expiate the crime. Inquiring, thou wouldst easily find iniquity; but the sinner by the most diligent inquiry will not be able to discover a ransom, and therefore will be unable to stand, will have no place on which to rest his foot, but will fall by the irresistible judgments of thy law, and the sentence of thy justice.—*Robert Leighton.*

Verse 3.—"If thou, LORD." He here fixes on another name of God, which is Jah: a name, though from the same root as the former, yet seldom used but to intimate and express the terrible majesty of God: "He rideth on the heavens, and is extolled by his name JAH:" Ps. lxxviii. 4. He is to deal now with God about the guilt of sin: and God is represented to the soul as great and terrible, that he may know what to expect and look for, if the matter must be tried out according to the demerit of sin.—*John Owen.*

Verse 3.—"If thou, LORD . . . O Lord." Mark here that in this third verse he two times nameth God by the Lord (as he doth also in the ninth verse), showing to us hereby his earnest desire to take hold of God with both his hands. He nameth not only *Adonai*, but also *Jah* (which two signify his nature and power); all the qualities of God must be conjoined and concur together for us: although he be *Adonai*, yet if he be not also *Jah* we are undone.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verse 3.—"LORD . . . Lord." If God should show himself as JAH, no creature would be able to stand before him, who is *Adonai*, and can therefore carry out his judicial will or purpose.—*Franz Delitzsch.*

Verse 3.—"Iniquities." The literal meaning of the word "iniquity" is "a thing which is not equal," or "not fair." Whatever breaks a command of God is "not equal," It does not match with what man is, nor with what God is. It does not keep the high level of the law. It is altogether out of proportion to all that God has done. It destroys the harmony of creation. It does not rise even to the height of conscience. Still more, it mars and makes a flaw in the divine government. Therefore sin is an unequal thing, fitting nothing, disarranging everything. And it is *not fair*. It is not fair to that God upon whose empire it is a trespass. It is not fair to your fellow-creatures, to whom it may be a very great injury. It is not fair to yourself, for your happiness lies in obedience. Therefore we call sin "*iniquity*" Or, as the Prayer-Book Version expresses the same idea, "a thing amiss," missing its proper mark. "If thou shouldest be extreme to mark what is *done amiss*."—*James Vaughan.*

Verse 3.—"O Lord, who shall stand?" As soon as God manifests signs of anger, even those who appear to be the most holy adopt this language. If God should determine to deal with them according to justice, and call them to his tribunal, not one would be able to stand; but would be compelled to fly for refuge to the mercy of God. See the confessions of Moses, Job, David, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Daniel, Paul, and others of the apostles. Hear Christ teaching his disciples to cry to the Father who is in heaven, "*Forgive us our trespasses!*" If before God the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, although possessing unusual holiness, nevertheless fell down, and as suppliants prayed for forgiveness, what shall be done with those who add sin to sin?—*D. H. Mollerus.*

Verses 3, 4.—These two verses contain the sum of all the Scriptures. In the third is the form of repentance, and in the fourth the mercies of the Lord. These are the two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal, mentioned in Deut. xxvii. 12, 13. These are the pillars in Solomon's Temple (1 Kings vii. 21), called Jachin and Boaz. We must, with Paul, persuade ourselves that we are come from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion, where mercy is, although some sour grapes must be eaten by the way. Jeremy tasted in his vision first a bitter fig out of one basket, then a sweet fig out of the other. In the days of Moses the waters were first bitter, then sweetened by the sweet wood. And Elisha cast in salt into the pottage of the sons of the prophets, then it became wholesome.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verses 3, 4.—As I was thus in musing and in my studies, considering how to

love the Lord, and to express my love to him, that saying came in upon me: "*If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*" These were good words to me, especially the latter part thereof; to wit, that there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared; that is, as then I understood it, that he might be loved and had in reverence; for it was thus made out to me, that the great God did set so high an esteem upon the love of his poor creatures, that rather than he would go without their love he would pardon their transgressions.—*John Bunyan.*

Verse 4.—"But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." One would think that punishment should procure fear, and forgiveness love; but *nemo majus diligit, quam qui maxime veretur offendere*—no man more truly loves God than he that is most fearful to offend him. "Thy mercy reacheth to the heavens, and thy faithfulness to the clouds"—that is, above all sublimities. God is glorious in all his works, but most glorious in his works of mercy; and this may be one reason why St. Paul calls the gospel of Christ a "glorious gospel": 1 Tim. i. 11. Solomon tells us, "It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence." Herein is God most glorious, in that he passeth by all the offences of his children. Lord, who can know thee and not love thee, know thee and not fear thee? We fear thee for thy justice, and love thee for thy mercy; yea, fear thee for thy mercy, and love thee for thy justice; for thou art infinitely good in both.—*Thomas Adams.*

Verse 4.—"But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." But is this not a mistaking in David to say, There is mercy with God, that he may be feared; all as one to say, There is severity with him, that he may be loved? for if we cannot love one for being severe, how should we fear him for being merciful? Should it not, therefore, have been rather said, There is justice with thee, that thou mayest be feared? seeing it is justice that strikes a terror and keeps in awe; mercy breeds a boldness, and boldness cannot stand with fear, and therefore not fear with mercy. But is there not, I may say, an active fear, not to offend God, as well as a passive fear for having offended him? and with God's mercy may well stand the active fear, though not so well, perhaps, the passive fear which is incident properly to his justice.

There is a common error in the world, to think we may be the bolder to sin because God is merciful; but, O my soul, take heed of this error, for God's mercy is to no such purpose; it is not to make us bold, but to make us fear: the greater his mercy is, the greater ought our fear to be, for there is mercy with him that he may be feared. Unless we fear, he may choose whether he will be merciful or no; or rather, we may be sure he will not be merciful, seeing he hath mercy for none but for them that fear him; and there is great reason for this, for to whom should mercy show itself but to them that need it? and if we think we need it we will certainly fear. Oh, therefore, most gracious God, make me to fear thee; for as thou wilt not be merciful to me unless I fear thee, so I cannot fear thee unless thou first be merciful unto me.—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 4.—"But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Even Saul himself will lift up his voice and weep when he seeth a clear testimony of the love and undeserved kindness of David. Hast thou never beheld a condemned prisoner dissolved in tears upon the unexpected and unmerited receipt of a pardon, who all the time before was as hard as a flint? The hammer of the law may break the icy heart of man with terrors and horrors, and yet it may remain ice still, unchanged; but when the fire of love kindly thaweth its ice, it is changed and dissolved into water—it is no longer ice, but of another nature.—*George Swinnoek.*

Verse 4.—"But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." The Evangelical doctrine of the gratuitous forgiveness of sins does not of itself beget carelessness, as the Papists falsely allege; but rather a true and genuine fear of God; like as the Psalmist here shows that this is the final cause and effect of the doctrine.—*Solomon Gesner.*

Verse 4.—"But there is forgiveness with thee," etc. His judgments and his wrath may make us astonished and stupefied; but, if there be no more, they will never make us to come to God. Then if this be not sufficient, what more is requisite? Even a sight of the Lord's mercy, for that is most forcible to allure, as the prophet saith here, and as the church of God sayeth (Cant. i. 3), "Because of the savour of thy good ointments, therefore the virgins love thee." This only is forcible to allure the sinner: for all the judgments of God, and curses of the law, will never allure

him. What was the chief thing that moved the prodigal son to return home to his father? Was it chiefly the distress, the disgrace and poverty wherewith he was burdened, or the famine that almost caused him to starve? No, but the chief thing was this, he remembered that he had a loving father. That maketh him to resolve with an humble confession to go home. Luke xv. Even so it is with the sinner; it is not terrors and threatenings that chiefly will move him to come to God, but the consideration of his manifold and great mercies.—*Robert Rollock.*

Verse 4.—“*But.*” How significant is that word “*but!*” As if you heard justice clamouring, “*Let the sinner die,*” and the fiends in hell howling, “*Cast, him down into the fires,*” and conscience shrieking, “*Let him perish,*” and nature itself groaning beneath his weight, the earth weary with carrying him, and the sun tired with shining upon the traitor, the very air sick with finding breath for one who only spends it in disobedience to God. The man is about to be destroyed, to be swallowed up quick, when suddenly there comes this thrice-blessed “*but,*” which stops the reckless course of ruin, puts forth its strong arm bearing a golden shield between the sinner and destruction, and pronounces these words, “*But there is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared.*”—*C. H. S.*

Verse 4.—“*There is a propitiation with thee,*” so some read it: Jesus Christ is the great propitiation, the ransom which God has found; he is ever with him, as advocate for us, and through him we hope to obtain forgiveness.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 4.—“*Forgiveness,*” Hebrew, *selichah*, a word used only here and by Daniel once (ix. 9), and by Nehemiah (ix. 17).—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 4.—“*That thou mayest be feared.*” This forgiveness, this smile of God, binds the soul to God with a beautiful fear. Fear to lose one glance of love. Fear to lose one word of kindness. Fear to be carried away from the heaven of his presence by an insidious current of wordliness. Fear of slumber. Fear of error. Fear of not enough pleasing him. Our duty, then, is to drink deep of God’s forgiving love. To be filled with it is to be filled with purity, fervency, and faith. Our sins have to hide their diminished heads, and slink away through crevices, when forgiveness—when Christ—enters the soul.—*George Bowen, in “Daily Meditations,”* 1873.

Verses 4, 5, 7, 8.—David puts his soul out of all fear of God’s taking this course [reckoning strictly] with poor penitent souls, by laying down this comfortable conclusion, as an indubitable truth: “*But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” That is, there is forgiveness in thy nature, thou carriest a pardoning heart in thy bosom; yea, there is forgiveness in thy promise; thy merciful heart doth not only incline thee to thoughts of forgiving; but thy faithful promise binds thee to draw forth the same unto all that humbly and seasonably lay claim thereunto. Now, this foundation laid, see what superstructure this holy man raiseth (verse 5): “*I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*” As if he had said, Lord, I take thee at thy word, and am resolved by thy grace to wait at the door of thy promise, never to stir thence till I have my promised dole (forgiveness of my sins) sent out unto me. And this is so sweet a morsel, that he is loth to eat it alone, and therefore he sends down the dish, even to the lower end of the table, that every godly person may taste with him of it (verses 7, 8): “*Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*” As if he had said, That which is a ground of hope to me, notwithstanding the clamour of my sins, affords as solid and firm a bottom to any true Israelites or sincere soul in the world, did he but rightly understand himself, and the mind of God in his promise. Yea, I have as strong a faith for such as [for] my own soul, and I durst pawn the eternity of my happiness upon this principle,—that God should redeem every sincere Israelite from all his iniquities.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 5.—“*I wait for the LORD,*” etc. We pronounce this a most blessed posture of the believer. It runs counter to everything that is natural, and, therefore, it is all the more a supernatural grace of the gracious soul. In the first place it is the posture of faith. Here is the gracious soul hanging in faith upon God in Christ Jesus; upon the veracity of God to fulfil his promise, upon the power of God to help him in difficulty, upon the wisdom of God to counsel him in perplexity, upon the omniscience of God to guide him with his eye, and upon the omnipresence of God to cheer him with his presence, at all times and in all places, his sun and shield. Oh, have faith in God.

It is also a *prayerful posture*. The soul waiting for God, is the soul waiting upon God. The Lord often shuts us up to this waiting for his interposition on our behalf, that he may keep us waiting and watching at the foot of his cross, in earnest, believing, importunate prayer. Oh, it is the waiting for the Lord that keeps the soul waiting upon the Lord!

It is also the *posture of a patient waiting* for the Lord. There is not a more God-honouring grace of the Christian character than *patience*—a patient waiting on and for the Lord. It is that Christian grace, the fruit of the Spirit which will enable you to bear with dignity, calmness, and submission the afflictive dealings of your Heavenly Father, the rebuke of the world, and the wounding of the saints.

It is the *posture of rest*. A soul-waiting for the Lord is a soul-resting in the Lord. Waiting and resting! Wearing with traversing in vain the wide circle of human expedients; coming to the end of all your own wisdom, strength, and resources; your uneasy, jaded spirit is brought into this resting posture of waiting on, and waiting for, the Lord; and thus folds its drooping wings upon the very bosom of God. Oh, how real and instant is the rest found in Jesus! Reposing in him, however profound the depth of the soul, however dark the clouds that drape it, or surging the waters that overwhelm it, all is sunshine and serenity within.—*Condensed from "Soul-Depths and soul-heights," by Octavius Winslow, 1874.*

Verse 5.—"I wait for the LORD." *Waiting* is a great part of life's discipline, and therefore God often exercises the grace of waiting. *Waiting* has four purposes. It practises the patience of faith. It gives time for preparation for the coming gift. It makes the blessing the sweeter when it arrives. And it shows the sovereignty of God,—to give just *when* and just *as* he pleases. It may be difficult to define exactly what the Psalmist had in his mind when he said, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." It may have been the Messiah, whose coming was a thing close at hand to the mind of the ancient Jews, just as the Second Advent is to us.

It may have been some special interposition of divine Providence. But more probably, looking at the place which it occupies, and at the whole tenor of the Psalm, and its line of thought, "The Lord" he waited for so intently was that full sense of safety, peace, and love which God's felt presence gives, and which is, indeed, nothing else but the coming of the Lord most sensibly and palpably into an anxious and longing heart.

The picture of the *waiting man* is a striking one. It is as one on the ridge of a journey, looking onward on his way, standing on tiptoe, and therefore needing something to lean on, and to support him. "I wait for the Lord,"—spiritually, with my deepest thoughts—in the very centre of my being—"I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait." And I rest, I stay myself on what thou, O Lord, hast said, "My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope."

In all your *waitings* remember two things: Let it not be so much the event which you wait for, as the Lord of the event; the Lord in the event. And take care that you have a promise underneath you.—"In his word do I hope,"—else "waiting" will be too much for you, and after all it may be in vain.—*James Vaughan.*

Verse 5.—"I wait . . . I hope." *Waiting* and *hoping* ever attend the same thing. No man will wait at all for that which he hath no hope of, and he who hath hope will wait always. He gives not over waiting, till he gives over hoping. The object of hope is some future good, but the act of hoping is a present good, and that is present pay to bear our charges in waiting. The word implies both a patient waiting and a hopeful trusting. So Christ expounds it (Matt. xii. 21), rendering that of the prophet (Isa. xlii. 4), "The isles shall wait for his law," thus, "In his name shall the Gentiles trust."—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verses 5, 6.—In these two verses he doth four times make mention of his hope, and attendance upon God and his word, to let us see how sure a hold we should take on God, and with how many temptations our faith is assaulted, when we can see no reason thereof. Nothing will bear us up but hope. *Spero meliora.* What encourageth husbandmen and mariners against the surges and waves of the sea, and evil weather, but hope of better times? What comforteth a sick man in time of sickness, but hope of health? or a poor man in his distress, but hope of riches? or a prisoner, but hope of liberty? or a banished man, but hope to come home? All these hopes may fail, as oftentimes wanting a warrant. Albeit a physician may

encourage a sick man by his fair words, yet he cannot give him an assurance of his recovery, for his health dependeth on God: friends and courtiers may promise poor men relief, but all men are liars; only God is faithful who hath promised. Therefore let us fix our faith on God, and our hope in God; for he will stand by his promise. No man hath hoped in him in vain, neither was ever any disappointed of his hope.—*Archibald Symson.*

Verses 5, 7.—Faith doth ultimately centre in the Deity. God himself in his glorious nature, is the ultimate object whereunto our faith is resolved. The promise, simply considered, is not the object of trust, but God in the promise; and from the consideration of that we ascend to the Deity, and cast our anchor there. “Hope in the word” is the first act, but succeeded by hoping in the Lord: “*In his word do I hope*”: that is not all; but, “*Let Israel hope in the Lord.*” That is the ultimate object of faith, wherein the essence of our happiness consists, and that is God. God himself is the true and full portion of the soul.—*Stephen Charnock, 1628—1680.*

Verse 6.—“*My soul waiteth for the LORD.*” And now, my soul, what do I live for but only to wait upon God, and to wait for God? To wait upon him, to do him service, to wait for him, to be enabled to do him better service; to wait upon him, as being Lord of all; and to wait for him, as being the rewarder of all; to wait upon him whose service is better than any other command, and to wait for him whose expectation is better than any other possession. Let, others, therefore, wait upon the world, wait for the world; I, O God, will wait upon thee, for thee, seeing I find more true contentment in this waiting than all the world can give me in enjoying; for how can I doubt of receiving reward by my waiting for thee when my waiting for thee is itself the reward of my waiting upon thee? And therefore my soul waiteth; for if my soul did not wait, what were my waiting worth? no more than I were worth myself, if I had not a soul; but my soul puts a life into my waiting, and makes it become a living sacrifice. Alas, my frail body is very unfit to make a waiter: it rather needs to be waited upon itself: it must have so much resting, so often leave to be excused from waiting, that if God should have no other waiters than bodies, he would be left oftentimes to wait upon himself; but my soul is *Divinæ particula auræ* [a portion of the Divine breath], endued with all qualities fit for a waiter; and hath it not received its abilities, O God, from thee? And therefore my soul waiteth, and is so intentive in the service that it waits “*more than they that watch for the morning.*”—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 6.—*Hammond* thus renders the verse:—“My soul hasteneth to the Lord from the guards in the morning, the guards in the morning.”

Verse 6.—“*More than they that watch for the morning.*” Look, as the weary sentinel that is wet and stiff with cold and the dews of the night, or as the porters that watched in the Temple, the Levites, were waiting for the daylight, so “*more than they that watch for the morning*” was he waiting for some glimpse of God’s favour. Though he do not presently ease us of our smart or gratify our desires, yet we are to wait upon God. In time we shall have a good answer. God’s delays are not denials. Day will come at length, though the weary sentinel or watchman counts it long first; so God will come at length; he will not be at our beck. We have deserved nothing, but must wait for him in the diligent use of means; as Benhadad’s servants watched for the word “*brother,*” or anything of kindness to drop from the king of Israel.—*Thomas Manton.*

Verse 6.—“*More than they that watch for the morning.*” How many in the hallowed precincts of the Temple turned with anxious eye to the east, for the first red streak over Moab’s mountains that gave intimation of approaching day; yet it was not for deliverance they waited, but for the accustomed hour when the morning sacrifice could be offered, and the soul be relieved of its gratitude in the hymn of thanksgiving, and of the burden of its sorrows and sins by prayer, and could draw that strength from renewed intercourse with heaven, that would enable it in this world to breathe the spirit and engage in the beneficent and holy deeds of a better.—*Robert Nisbet.*

Verse 6.—“*I say, more than they that watch for the morning,*” for must there not be a proportion between the cause and effect? If my cause of watching be more than theirs, should not my watching be more than theirs? They that watch for the morning have good cause, no doubt, to watch for it, that it may bring them the light of day; but have not I more cause to watch, who wait for the light that lighteth every one that comes into the world? They that watch for the morning wait but for the rising of the sun to free them from darkness, that hinders their sight; but I

wait for the rising of the Sun of righteousness to dispel the horrors of darkness that affright my soul. They watch for the morning that they may have light to walk by; but I wait for the Dayspring from on High to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. But though there may be question made of the intentiveness of our watching, yet of the extensiveness there can be none, for they that watch for the morning watch at most but a piece of the night; but I have watched whole days and whole nights, and may I not then justly say, I wait *more* than they that watch for the morning?—*Sir Richard Baker.*

Verse 6.—Holy men like Simeon, and devout priests like Zacharias, there were, amidst this seething people, who, brooding, longing, waiting, chanted to themselves day by day the words of the Psalmist, "*My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.*" As lovers that watch for the appointed coming, and start at the quivering of a leaf, the flight of a bird, or the humming of a bee, and grow weary of the tense strain, so did the Jews watch for their Deliverer. It is one of the most piteous sights of history, especially when we reflect that he came,—and they knew him not.—*Henry Ward Beecher, in his "Life of Jesus the Christ."*

Verse 6.—"Watch." We do injustice to that good and happy word, "*watch,*" when we take it as watching against; against a danger; against a coming evil. It will bear that interpretation; but it is a far higher, and better, and more filial thing to watch for a coming good than to watch *against* an approaching evil.

So, "*watching for,*" we send up our arrows of prayer, and then look trustingly to see where they are coming down again. So, "*watching for,*" we listen, in silence, for the familiar voice we love. So, "*watching for,*" we expect the Bridegroom!

Take care, that as one always standing on the eve,—not of danger, but of happiness,—your "*watch*" be the "*watch*" of love, and confidence, and cheerful hope.—*James Vaughan.*

Verse 6.—In the year 1830, on the night preceding the 1st of August, the day the slaves in our West Indian Colonies were to come into possession of the freedom promised them, many of them, we are told, never went to bed at all. Thousands, and tens of thousands of them, assembled in their places of worship, engaging in devotional duties, and singing praises to God, waiting for the first streak of the light of the morning of that day on which they were to be made free. Some of their number were sent to the hills, from which they might obtain the first view of the coming day, and, by a signal, intimate to their brethren down in the valley the dawn of the day that was to make them men, and no longer, as they had hitherto been, mere goods and chattels,—men with souls that God had created to live for ever. How eagerly must these men have watched for the morning.—*T. W. Aveling, in "The Biblical Museum," 1872.*

Verse 7.—"Let Israel hope in the Lord." This title is applied to all the Lord's people; it sets forth *their dignity*—they are PRINCES; it refers to *their experience*—they wrestle with God in prayer, and they prevail. Despondency does not become a prince, much less a Christian. Our God is "THE GOD OF HOPE"; and we should hope in him. Israel should hope in his mercy, in his patience, in his provision, in his plenteous redemption. They should hope for light in darkness; for strength in weakness; for direction in perplexity; for deliverance in danger; for victory in conflict; and for triumph in death.

They should hope in God confidently, because he hath promised; prayerfully, for he loves to hear from us; obediently, for his precepts are to be observed by us; and constantly, for he is always the same.—*James Smith (1802—1862), in "The Believer's Daily Remembrancer."*

Verse 7.—"Let Israel hope in the Lord." Whereas, in all preceding verses of the Psalm, the thoughts, the sorrows, the prayer, the penitence, the awe, the waiting, the watching, were all personal and confined to himself; here a great change has taken place, and it is no longer "*I,*" but "*Israel*"; all Israel. "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." This is as it always ought to be. . . . It is the genius of our religion to go forth to multitudes.—*James Vaughan.*

Verse 7.—"For with the Lord there is mercy." Mercy has been shown to us, but it dwells in God. It is one of his perfections. The exercise of it is his delight. There is mercy with the Lord in all its *fulness*; he never was more merciful than now, neither will he ever be. There is mercy with the Lord in all its *tenderness*, he

is full of compassion, his bowels are troubled for us, his tender mercies are over us. There is mercy with him in all its *variety*, it suits every case.

Here is mercy that receives sinners, mercy that restores backsliders, mercy that keeps believers. Here is the mercy that pardons sin, that introduces to the enjoyment of all gospel privileges, and that blesses the praying soul far beyond its expectations. With the Lord there is mercy, and he loves to display it, he is ready to impart it, he has determined to exalt and glorify it.

There is mercy with the Lord; this should encourage the miserable to approach him; this informs the fearful that they need bring nothing to induce him to bless them; this calls upon backsliders to return to him; and this is calculated to cheer the tried Christian, under all his troubles and distresses. Remember, mercy is like God, it is infinite and eternal. Mercy is always on the throne. Mercy may be obtained by any sinner.—*James Smith*.

Verse 7.—"With him is plenteous redemption." This plenteous redemption leaves behind it no more relics of sin than Moses left hoofs of beasts behind him in Egypt. It redeems not only from the fault, but from the punishment; not only *a tanto*, but *a toto* [not only from such, but also from all sin and penalty]; not only from the sense but from the fear of pain; and in the fault, not only from the guilt, but from the stain; not only from being censured, but from being questioned. Or is it meant by a plenteous redemption that not only he leads captivity captive, but gives gifts unto men? For what good is it to a prisoner to have his pardon, if he be kept in prison still for not paying his fees? but if the prince, together with the pardon, sends also a largess that may maintain him when he is set at liberty, this, indeed, is a plenteous redemption; and such is the redemption that God's mercy procures unto us. It not only delivers us from a dungeon, but puts us in possession of a palace; it not only frees us from eating bread in the sweat of our brows, but it restores us to Paradise, where all fruits are growing of their own accord; it not only clears us from being captives, but endears us to be children; and not only children, but heirs; and not only heirs, but co-heirs with Christ; and who can deny this to be a plenteous redemption? Or is it said a plenteous redemption in regard of the price that was paid to redeem us? for we are redeemed with a price, not of gold or precious stones, but with the precious blood of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to be a ransom for us; and this I am sure is a plenteous redemption.—*Sir Richard Baker*.

Verse 7.—"Plenteous redemption," or more literally, "redemption plenteously." He calls it plenteous, as Luther says, because such is the straitness of our heart, the slenderness of our hopes, the weakness of our faith, that it far exceeds all our capacity, all our petitions and all our desires.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verses 7, 8.—This Psalm containeth an evident prophecy of the Messiah; in setting forth his plentiful redemption, and that he should redeem Israel, that is, the Church, from all their sins. Which words in their full sense were used by an angel to Joseph, in telling him that the child's name should be *JESUS*, "because he should save his people from their sins": *Matt. i. 21.*—*Sir John Hayward* (1560—1627), in "*David's Tears*." 1623.

Verse 8.—"He will redeem." *HE* emphatic, He alone, for none other can.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 8.—"From his iniquities." Not only from the punishment (as Ewald and Hupfeld). The redemption includes the forgiveness of sins, the breaking of the power and dominion of sin, and the setting free from all the consequences of sin.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne*.

Verse 8.—"Iniquities." Iniquities of *eye*—has conscience no voice there? Is no iniquity ever practised by your eye? Let conscience speak. Iniquity of *ear*—is there no iniquity that enters into your heart through the ear? You cannot listen to a conversation in the street without iniquity entering into your heart through what Bunyan calls "Ear-gate." Iniquity of *lip*—do you always keep your tongue as with a bridle? Do your lips never drop anything unbecoming the gospel? Is there no carnal conversation, no angry word at home, no expression that you would not like the saints of God to hear? What! your lips always kept so strictly that there is never a single expression dropped from them which you would be ashamed to utter before an assembly of God's people? Iniquity of *thought*—if your eyes, ears, and lips are clean, is there no iniquity of thought? What! in that workshop

within, no iniquitous suggestions, no evil workings? Oh, how ignorant must we be of ourselves, if we feel that we have no iniquity of thought! Iniquity of *imagination*—does not fancy sometimes bring before you scenes of sensuality in which your carnal nature is vile enough to revel? Iniquity of *memory*—does not memory sometimes bring back sins you formerly committed, and your evil nature is perhaps base enough to desire they had been greater? Iniquity of *feeling*—no enmity against God's people ever working? no pride of heart? no covetousness? no hypocrisy? no self-righteousness? no sensuality? no base thought that you cannot disclose even to your bosom friend? But here is the blessed promise—a promise only suited to Israel: for all but Israel lose sight of their iniquities, and justify themselves in self-righteousness. None but Israel feel and confess their iniquities, and therefore to Israel is the promise of redemption limited: "He shall redeem *Israel* from all his iniquities." What! *all*? Yes. Not *one* left? No, not a trace, not a shade, not the shadow of a shade; all buried, all gone, all swallowed up, all blotted out, all freely pardoned, all cast behind God's back.—*Joseph C. Philpot*, 1802—1869.

Verse 8.—What a graceful and appropriate conclusion of this comprehensive and instructive Psalm! Like the sun, it dawns veiled in cloud, it sets bathed in splendour; it opens with soul-depth, it closes with soul-height. Redemption from all iniquity! It baffles the most descriptive language, and distances the highest measurement. The most vivid imagination faints in conceiving it, the most glowing image fails in portraying it, and faith droops her wing in the bold attempt to scale its summit. "*He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*" The verse is a word-painting of man restored, and of Paradise regained.—*Octavius Winslow*.

HINTS TO PREACHERS

Verse 1.—The assertion of an experienced believer. I. I have cried—that is, I have earnestly, constantly, truthfully prayed. II. I have cried only unto thee. Nothing could draw me to other confidences, or make me despair of thee. III. I have cried in distress. At my worst, temporally or spiritually, I have cried out of the depths. IV. I therefore infer—that I am thy child, no hypocrite, no apostate; and that thou hast heard and wilt hear me evermore.

Verse 1.—I. What we are to understand by "the depths." Great misery and distress. II. How men get into "the depths." By sin and unbelief. III. What gracious souls do when in "the depths." Cry unto the Lord. IV. How the Lord lifts praying souls out of "the depths": "He shall redeem," etc., verse 8.—*W. H. J. P.*

Verse 1.—I. In the pit. II. The morning-star seen: "Thee, O Lord." III. Prayer flutters up "out of the depths."—*W. B. H.*

Verses 1, 2.—I. The depths from which prayer may rise. 1. Of affliction. 2. Of conviction. 3. Of desertion. II. The height to which it may ascend. 1. To the hearing of God. 2. To a patient hearing. "Hear my voice." 3. To an attentive hearing.

Or, I. We should pray at all times. II. We should pray that our prayers may be heard. III. We should pray until we know we are heard. IV. We should pray in faith that when heard we have the thing we have asked. "That which thou hast prayed to me against the King of Assyria I have heard." God had heard. That was enough. It was the death of Sennacherib and the overthrow of his host.—*G. R.*

Verses 1, 2.—Consider, I. The Psalmist's condition in the light of a warning. Evidently, through sin, he came into the depths; see verses 3 and 4. Learn, 1. The need of watchfulness on the part of all. 2. That backsliding will, sooner or later, bring great trouble of soul. II. His sometime continuance in that condition, in the light of a Divine judgment: "I have cried." Certainly his first cry had not brought deliverance. 1. The realization of pardon is a Divine work, dependent upon God's pleasure. Ps. lxxxv. 8. 2. But he will not always nor often speak pardon at the first asking; for He will make His people reverence his holiness, feel

the bitterness of sinning, learn caution, etc. III. His conduct while in that condition in the light of a direction. He, 1. Seeks deliverance only of God. 2. Is intensely earnest in his application: "I cried." 3. Is importunate in his pleading: "Hear my voice," etc.—*J. F.*

Verse 2.—Attention from God to us—how to gain it. I. Let us plead the name which commands attention. II. Let us ourselves pay attention to God's word. III. Let us give earnest attention to what we ask, and how we ask. IV. Let us attentively watch for a reply.

Verse 2.—"Lord, hear my voice." I. Though it be faint by reason of distance—hear it. II. Though it be broken because of my distress—hear it. III. Though it be unworthy on account of my iniquities—hear it.—*W. H. J. P.*

Verse 3.—I. The supposition: "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities." 1. It is scriptural. 2. It is reasonable. If God is not indifferent towards men, he must observe their sins. If he is holy, he must manifest indignation against sin. If he is the Creator of conscience, he must certainly uphold its verdict against sin. If he is not wholly on the side of sin, how can he fail to avenge the mischiefs and miseries sin has caused? II. The question it suggests: "Who shall stand?" A question, 1. Not difficult to answer. 2. Of solemn import to all. 3. Which ought to be seriously pondered without delay. III. The possibility it hints at. "If thou, Lord." The "if" hints at the possibility that God may not mark sin. The possibility, 1. Is reasonable, providing it can be without damage to God's righteousness; for the Creator and Preserver of men cannot delight in condemning and punishing. 2. Is a God-honouring reality, through the blood of Christ, Rom. iii. 21—26. 3. Becomes a glorious certainty in the experience of penitent and believing souls.—*J. F.*

Verses 3, 4.—I. The Confession. He could not stand. II. The Confidence. "There is forgiveness." III. The Consequence. "That thou mayest be feared."

Verses 3, 4.—I. The fearful supposition. II. The solemn interrogation. III. The Divine consolation.—*W. J.*

Verse 4.—*Forgiveness with God.* I. The proofs of it. 1. Divine declarations. 2. Invitations and promises, Isa. i. 18. 3. The bestowment of pardon so effectually as to give assurance and joy. 2 Sam. xii. 13. Ps. xxxii. 5. Luke vii. 47-8. 1 John ii. 12. II. The reason of it. 1. In God's nature there is the desire to forgive; the gift of Christ is sufficient evidence for it. 2. But, the text speaks not so much of a desire as it asserts the existence of a forgiveness being "with" God, therefore ready to be dispensed. The blood of Christ is the reason (Col. i. 14); by it the disposition to forgive righteously manifests itself in the forgiving act: Rom. iii. 25, 26. 3. Hence, forgiveness for all who believe is sure: Rom. iii. 25; 1 John ii. 1, 2. III. The result of its realization: "That thou mayest be feared": with a reverential fear, and spiritual worship. 1. The possibility of forgiveness begets in an anxious soul true penitence, as opposed to terror and despair. 2. The hope of receiving it begets earnest seeking and prayerfulness. 3. A believing reception of it gives peace and rest, and, exciting grateful love, leads to spiritual worship and filial service.—*J. F.*

Verse 4.—"There is forgiveness." I. It is needed. II. God alone can give it. III. It may be had. IV. We may know that we have it.

Verse 4.—I. A most cheering announcement: "There is forgiveness with thee." 1. A fact certain. 2. A fact in the present tense. 3. A fact which arises out of God himself. 4. A fact stated in general terms. 5. A fact to be meditated upon with delight. II. A most admirable design: "That thou mayest be feared." 1. Very contrary to the abuse made of it by rebels, triflers, and procrastinators. 2. Very different from the pretended fears of legalists. 3. No pardon, no fear of God—devils, reprobates. 4. No pardon, none survive to fear him. 5. But the means of pardon encourage faith, repentance, prayer; and the receipt of pardon creates love, suggests obedience, inflames zeal.

Verse 4.—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 351: "Plenteous Redemption."

Verse 4.—Tender Light. I. The Angel by the Throne: "Forgiveness with Thee." II. The shadow that enhances his sweet majesty: "If," "But." III. The homage resultant from his ministry; universal from highest to least.—*W. B. H.*

Verses 5, 6.—Three postures: Waiting, Hoping, Watching.

Verses 5, 6.—1. The seeking sinner. 2. The Christian mourner. 3. The loving intercessor. 4. The spiritual labourer. 5. The dying believer.—*W. J.*

Verses 5, 6.—I. We are to wait on God. 1. By faith: "In his word do I hope."

2. By prayer. Prayer can wait when it has a promise to rest upon. II. We are to wait for God: "I wait for the Lord." "My soul waiteth for the Lord more," etc. 1. Because he has his own time for giving. 2. Because what he gives is worth waiting for.—*G. R.*

Verse 6.—"More than they." I. For the darker sorrow his absence causes. II. For the richer splendour his coming must bring. III. For the greater might of our indwelling love.—*W. B. H.*

Verse 6.—I. A long, dark night: The Lord absent. II. An eager, hopeful watcher: Waiting the Lord's return. III. A bright, blessed morning: The time of the Lord's appearing.—*W. H. J. P.*

Verse 7.—Redeeming grace the sole hope of the holiest.—*W. B. H.*

Verse 7.—I. A divine exhortation: "Let Israel hope in the LORD." II. A spiritual reason: "For with the LORD there is mercy," etc. III. A gracious promise: "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."—*J. C. Philpot.*

Verses 7, 8.—It is our wisdom to have personal dealings with God. I. The first exercise of faith must be upon the Lord himself. This is the natural order, the necessary order, easiest, wisest, and most profitable order. Begin where all begins. II. Exercises of faith about other things must still be in connection with the Lord. Mercy—"with the Lord." Plenteous redemption "with him." III. Exercises of faith, whatever their object, must *all* settle on him. "HE shall redeem," etc.

Verse 8.—I. The Redemption: "From all iniquities." II. The Redeemer: "The Lord." See Titus ii. 14. III. The Redeemed: "Israel."—*W. H. J. P.*
