

PSALM CXL.

This Psalm is in its proper place, and so fitly follows cxxxix. that you might almost read right on, and make no break between the two. Serious injury would follow to the whole Book of Psalms if the order should be interferred with as certain wiseacres propose. It is THE CRY OF A HUNTED SOUL, the supplication of a believer incessantly persecuted and beset by cunning enemies, who hungered for his destruction. David was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, and seldom obtained a moment's rest. This is his pathetic appeal to Jehovah for protection, an appeal which gradually intensifies into a denunciation of his bitter foes. With this sacrifice of prayer he offers the salt of faith; for in a very marked and emphatic manner he expresses his personal confidence in the Lord as the protector of the oppressed, and as his own God and Defender. Few short Psalms are so rich in the jewelry of precious faith.

"To the Chief Musician."—The writer wished this experimental hymn to be under the care of the chief master of song, that it might neither be left unsung, nor chanted in a slovenly manner. Such trials and such rescues deserved to be had in remembrance, and to be set up among the choicest memorials of the Lord's goodness. We too, have our songs which are of no ordinary kind, and these must be sung with our best powers of heart and tongue. We will offer them to the Lord by no other hand than that of "the Chief Musician."

"A Psalm of David."—The life of David wherein he comes in contact with Saul and Doeg is the best explanation of this Psalm; and surely there can be no reasonable doubt that David wrote it, and wrote it in the time of his exile and peril. The tremendous outburst at the end has in it the warmth which was so natural to David, who was never lukewarm in anything; yet it is to be noticed that concerning his enemies he was often hot in language through indignation, and yet he was cool in action, for he was not revengeful. His was no petty malice, but a righteous anger: he foresaw, foretold, and even desired the just vengeance of God upon the proud and wicked, and yet he would not avail himself of opportunities to revenge himself upon those who had done him wrong. It may be that his appeals to the great King cooled his anger, and enabled him to leave his wrongs unredressed by any personal act of violence. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"; and David when most wounded by undeserved persecution and wicked falsehood was glad to leave his matters at the foot of the throne, where they would be safe with the King of kings.

EXPOSITION.

DELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;

2 Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together *for* war.

3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.

1. "*Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man.*" It reads like a clause of the Lord's prayer, "Deliver us from evil." David does not so much plead against an individual as against the species represented by him, namely, the being whose best description is—"the evil man." There are many such abroad; indeed we we shall not find an unregenerate man who is not in some sense an evil man, and yet all are not alike evil. It is well for us that our enemies are evil: it would be a horrible thing to have the good against us. When "the evil man" bestirs himself against the godly he is as terrible a being as a wolf, or a serpent, or even a devil. Fierce, implacable, unpitiful, unrelenting, unscrupulous, he cares for nothing but the indulgence of his malice. The persecuted man turns to God in prayer; he could not do a wiser thing. Who can meet the evil man and defeat him save Jehovah himself, whose infinite goodness is more than a match for all the evil in

the universe? We cannot of ourselves baffle the craft of the enemy, but the Lord knoweth how to deliver his saints. He can keep us out of the enemy's reach, he can sustain us when under his power, he can rescue us when our doom seems fixed, he can give us the victory when defeat seems certain; and in any and every case, if he do not save us from the man he can keep us from the evil. Should we be at this moment oppressed in any measure by ungodly men, it will be better to leave our defence with God than to attempt it ourselves.

"*Preserve me from the violent man.*" Evil in the heart simmers in malice, and at last boils in passion. Evil is a raging thing when it getteth liberty to manifest itself; and so "the evil man" soon develops into "the violent man." What watchfulness, strength, or valour can preserve the child of God from deceit and violence? There is but one sure Preserver, and it is our wisdom to hide under the shadow of his wings. It is a common thing for good men to be assailed by enemies: David was attacked by Saul, Doeg, Ahithophel, Shimei, and others; even Mordecai sitting humbly in the gate had his Haman; and our Lord, the Perfect One, was surrounded by those who thirsted for his blood. We may not, therefore, hope to pass through the world without enemies, but we may hope to be delivered out of their hands, and preserved from their rage, so that no real harm shall come of their malignity. This blessing is to be sought by prayer, and expected by faith.

2. "*Which imagine mischiefs in their heart.*" They cannot be happy unless they are plotting and planning, conspiring and contriving. They seem to have but one heart, for they are completely agreed in their malice; and with all their heart and soul they pursue their victim. One piece of mischief is not enough for them; they work in the plural, and prepare many arrows for their bow. What they cannot actually do they nevertheless like to think over, and to rehearse on the stage of their cruel fancy. It is an awful thing to have such a heart-disease as this. When the imagination gloats over doing harm to others, it is a sure sign that the entire nature is far gone in wickedness. "*Continually are they gathered together for war.*" They are a committee of opposition in permanent session: they never adjourn, but perpetually consider the all-absorbing question of how to do the most harm to the man of God. They are a standing army always ready for the fray: they not only go to the wars, but dwell in them. Though they are the worst of company, yet they put up with one another, and are continually in each other's society, confederate for fight. David's enemies were as violent as they were evil, as crafty as they were violent, and as persistent as they were crafty. It is hard dealing with persons who are only in their element when they are at daggers-drawn with you. Such a case calls for prayer, and prayer calls on God.

3. "*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent.*" The rapid motion of a viper's tongue gives you the idea of its sharpening it; even thus do the malicious move their tongues at such a rate that one might suppose them to be in the very act of wearing them to a point, or rubbing them to a keen edge. It was a common notion that serpents inserted their poison by their tongues, and the poets used the idea as a poetical expression, although it is certain that the serpent wounds by his fangs and not by his tongue. We are not to suppose that all authors who used such language were mistaken in their natural history any more than a writer can be charged with ignorance of astronomy because he speaks of the sun's travelling from east to west. How else can poets speak but according to the appearance of things to an imaginative eye. The world's great poet puts it in "King Lear":

"She struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart."

In the case of slanderers, they so literally sting with their tongues, which are so nimble in malice, and withal so piercing and cutting, that it is by no means unjust to speak of them as sharpened. "*Adders' poison is under their lips.*" The deadliest of all venom is the slander of the unscrupulous. Some men care not what they say so long as they can vex and injure. Our text, however, must not be confined in its reference to some few individuals, for in the inspired epistle to the Romans it is quoted by the apostle as being true of us all. So depraved are we by nature that the most venomous creatures are our fit types. The old serpent has not only inoculated us with his venom, but he has caused us to be ourselves producers of the like poison: it lies under our lips, ready for use, and, alas, it is all too freely used when we grow angry, and desire to take vengeance upon any who have caused us vexation. It is sadly wonderful what hard things even good men will say when

provoked ; yea, even such as call themselves " perfect " in cool blood are not quite as gentle as doves when their claims to sinlessness are bluntly questioned. This poison of evil-speaking would never fall from our lips, however much we might be provoked, if it were not there at other times ; but by nature we have as great a store of venomous words as a cobra has of poison. O Lord, take the poison-bags away, and cause our lips to drop nothing but honey. "*Selah.*" This is heavy work. Go up, go up, my heart ! Sink not too low. Fall not into the lowest key. Lift up thyself to God.

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked ; preserve me from the violent man ; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords ; they have spread a net by the wayside ; they have set gins for me. *Selah.*

4. "*Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked.*" To fall into their hands would be a calamity indeed. David in his most pitiable plight chose to fall into the hand of a chastising God rather than to be left in the power of men. No creature among the wild beasts of the wood is so terrible an enemy to man as man himself when guided by evil, and impelled by violence. The Lord by providence and grace can keep us out of the power of the wicked. He alone can do this, for neither our own watchfulness nor the faithfulness of friends can secure us against the serpentine assaults of the foe. We have need to be preserved from the smooth as well as the rough hands of the ungodly, for their flatteries may harm us as much as their calumnies. The hands of their example may pollute us, and so do us more harm than the hands of their oppression. Jehovah must be our keeper, or evil hands will do what evil hearts have imagined and evil lips have threatened. "*Preserve me from the violent man.*" His intense passion makes him terribly dangerous. He will strike anyhow, use any weapon, smite from any quarter : he is so furious that he is reckless of his own life if he may accomplish his detestable design. Lord, preserve us by thine omnipotence when men attack us with their violence. This prayer is a wise and suitable one. "*Who have purposed to overthrow my goings.*" They resolve to turn the good man from his resolve, they would defeat his designs, injure his integrity, and blast his character. Their own goings are wicked, and therefore they hate those of the righteous, seeing they are a standing rebuke to them. This is a forcible argument to use in prayer with God : he is the patron of holiness, and when the pure lives of his people are in danger of overthrow, he may be expected to interpose. Never let the pious forget to pray, for this is a weapon against which the most determined enemy cannot stand.

5. "*The proud have hid a snare for me.*" Proud as they are, they stoop to this mean action : they use a snare, and they hide it away, that their victim may be taken like a poor hare who is killed without warning—killed in its usual run, by a snare which it could not see. David's enemies wished to snare him in his path of service, the usual way of his life. Saul laid many snares for David, but the Lord preserved him. All around us there are snares of one sort or another, and he will be well kept, ay, divinely kept, who never falls into one of them. "*And cords.*" With these they pull the net together and with these they bind their captive. Thus fowlers do, and trappers of certain large animals. The cords of love are pleasant, but the cords of hate are cruel as death itself. "*They have spread a net by the wayside.*" Where it will be near their prey ; where the slightest divergence from the path will bring the victim into it. Surely the common wayside ought to be safe : men who go out of the way may well be taken in a net, but the path of duty is proverbially the path of safety ; yet it is safe nowhere when malicious persons are abroad. Birds are taken in nets, and men are taken by deceit. Satan instructs his children in the art of fowling, and they right speedily learn how to spread nets : perhaps they have been doing that for us already ; let us make our appeal to God concerning it. "*They have set gins for me.*" One instrument of destruction is not enough ; they are so afraid of missing their prey that they multiply their traps, using differing devices, so that one way or another they may take their victim. Those who avoid the snare and the net may yet be caught in a gin, and accordingly gins are placed in all likely places. If a godly man can be cajoled, or bribed, or cowed, or made angry, the wicked will make the attempt. Ready are they to twist his words, misread his intentions, and misdirect his efforts ; ready to fawn, and lie, and make themselves mean to the last degree so that they

may accomplish their abominable purpose. "*Selah.*" The harp needs tuning after such a strain, and the heart needs lifting up towards God.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God : hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.

7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked : further not his wicked device ; *lest* they exalt themselves. *Selah.*

6. "*I said unto the LORD, thou art my God.*" Here was David's stay and hope. He was assured that Jehovah was his God, he expressed that assurance, and he expressed it before Jehovah himself. That had need be a good and full assurance which a man dares to lay before the face of the heart-searching Lord. The Psalmist when hunted by man, addressed himself to God. Often the less we say to our foes, and the more we say to our best Friend the better it will fare with us : if we say anything, let it be said unto the Lord. David rejoiced in the fact that he had already said that Jehovah was his God : he was content to have committed himself, he had no wish to draw back. The Lord was David's own by deliberate choice, to which he again sets his seal with delight. The wicked reject God, but the righteous receive him as their own, their treasure, their pleasure, their light and delight. "*Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.*" Since thou art mine, I pray thee hear my cries. We cannot ask this favour of another man's god, but we may seek it from our own God. The prayers of saints have a voice in them ; they are expressive pleadings even when they sound like inarticulate moanings. The Lord can discern a voice in our wailings, and he can and will hearken thereto. Because he is God he can hear us ; because he is *our* God he will hear us. So long as the Lord doth but hear us we are content : the answer may be according to his own will, but we do entreat to be heard : a soul in distress is grateful to any one who will be kind and patient enough to hearken to its tale, but specially is it thankful for an audience with Jehovah. The more we consider his greatness and our insignificance, his wisdom and our folly, the more shall we be filled with praise when the Lord attends unto our cry.

7. "*O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.*" When he looked back upon past dangers and deliverances, the good man felt that he should have perished had not the Lord held a shield over his head. In the day of the clash of arms, or of putting on of armour (as some read it), the glorious Lord had been his constant protector. Goliath had his armour-bearer, and so had Saul, and these each one guarded his master ; yet the giant and the king both perished, while David, without armour or shield, slew the giant and baffled the tyrant. The shield of the Eternal is better protection than a helmet of brass. When arrows fly thick and the battle-axe crashes right and left, there is no covering for the head like the power of the Almighty. See how the child of providence glorifies his Preserver ! He calls him not only his salvation, but the strength of it, by whose unrivalled force he had been enabled to outlive the cunning and cruelty of his adversaries. He had obtained a deliverance in which the strength of the Omnipotent was clearly to be seen. This is a grand utterance of praise, a gracious ground of comfort, a prevalent argument in prayer. He that has covered our head aforetime will not now desert us. Wherefore let us fight a good fight, and fear no deadly wound : the Lord God is our shield, and our exceeding great reward.

8. "*Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked.*" Even they are dependent upon thee ; they can do no more than thou dost permit. Thou dost restrain them ; not a dog of them can move his tongue without thy leave and license. Therefore I entreat thee not to let them have their way. Even though they dare to pray to thee, do not hear their prayers against innocent men. Assuredly the Lord Jehovah will be no accomplice with the malevolent ; their desires shall never be his desires ; if they thirst for blood he will not gratify their cruelty. "*Further not his wicked device.*" They are so united as to be like one man in their wishes ; but do not hear their prayers. Though hand join in hand, and they desire and design as one man, yet do not thou lend them the aid of thy providence. Do not permit their malicious schemes to succeed. The Lord may allow success to attend the policy of the wicked

for a time for wise reasons unknown to us, but we are permitted to pray that it be not so. The petition "Deliver us from evil" includes and allows such supplication. "*Lest they exalt themselves.*" If successful, the wicked are sure to grow proud, and insult the righteous over whom they have triumphed, and this is so great an evil, and so dishonouring to God, that the Psalmist uses it in his pleading as an argument against their being allowed to prosper. The glory of the wicked is opposed to the glory of God. If God seems to favour them they grow too high for this world, and their heads strike against the heavens. Let us hope that the Lord will not suffer this to be. "*Selah.*" Here let us exalt our thoughts and praises high over the heads of self-exalting sinners. The more they rise in conceit the higher let us rise in confidence.

9 *As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*

10 *Let burning coals fall upon them; let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.*

11 *Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*

9. "*As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*" To the Lord who had covered his head amid the din of arms the Psalmist appeals against his foes, that their heads may be covered in quite another sense—covered with the reward of their own malice. David's foes were so many that they hemmed him in, encircling him as hunters do their prey. It is little wonder that he turns to the Lord in his dire need. The poet represents his adversaries as so united as to have but one head; for there is often a unanimity among evil spirits which makes them the more strong and terrible for their vile purposes. The *lex talionis*, or law of retaliation, often brings down upon violent men the evil which they planned and spoke of for others: their arrows fall upon themselves. When a man's lips vent curses they will probably, like chickens, come home to roost. A stone hurled upward into the air is apt to fall upon the thrower's head.

David's words may be read in the future as a prophecy; but in this verse, at any rate, there is no need to do so in order to soften their tone. It is so just that the mischief which men plot and the slander which they speak should recoil upon themselves that every righteous man must desire it: he who does not desire it may wish to be considered humane and Christlike, but the chances are that he has a sneaking agreement with the wicked, or is deficient in a manly sense of right and wrong. When evil men fall into pits which they have digged for the innocent we believe that even the angels are glad; certainly the most gentle and tender of philanthropists, however much they pity the sufferers, must also approve the justice which makes them suffer. We suspect that some of our excessively soft-spoken critics only need to be put into David's place, and they would become a vast deal more bitter than he ever was.

10. "*Let burning coals fall upon them.*" Then will they know that the scattering of the firebrands is not the sport they thought it to be. When hailstones and coals of fire descend upon them, how will they escape? Even the skies above the wicked are able to deal out vengeance upon them. "*Let them be cast into the fire.*" They have kindled the flames of strife, and it is fair that they should be cast therein. They have heated the furnace of slander seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, and they shall be devoured therein. Who would have pitied Nebuchadnezzar if he had been thrown into his own burning fiery furnace? "*Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.*" They made those ditches or fosses for the godly, and it is meet that they should themselves fall into them and never escape. When a righteous man falls he rises again; but when the wicked man goes down "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." The Psalmist in this passage graphically depicts the Sodom of the wicked persecutor: fire falls upon him from heaven; the city blazes, and he is cast into the conflagration; the vale of Siddim is full of slime-pits, and into these he is buried. Extraordinary judgment overtakes the extraordinary offender: above, around, beneath, all is destruction. He would have consumed the righteous, and now he is consumed himself. So shall it be: so let it be.

11. "*Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth.*" For that would be an established plague, a perpetual curse. Men of false and cruel tongues are of most use when they go to fatten the soil in which they rot as carcasses: while they are alive they are the terror of the good, and the torment of the poor. God will not allow the specious orators of falsehood to retain the power they temporarily obtain by their deceitful speaking. They may become prominent, but they cannot become permanent. They shall be disendowed and disestablished in spite of all that they can say to the contrary. All evil bears the element of decay within itself; for what is it but corruption? Hence the utmost powers of oratory are insufficient to settle upon a sure foundation the cause which bears a lie within it. "*Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*" He hunted the good, and now his own evil shall hunt him. He tried to overthrow the goings of the righteous, and now his own unrighteousness shall prove his overthrow. As he was violent, so shall he be violently assaulted and hunted down. Sin is its own punishment; a violent man will need no direr doom than to reap what he has sown. It is horrible for a huntsman to be devoured by his own hounds; yet this is the sure fate of the persecutor.

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

12. "*I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.*" All through the Psalm the writer is bravely confident, and speaks of things about which he had no doubt: in fact, no Psalm can be more grandly positive than this protest against slander. The slandered saint knew Jehovah's care for the afflicted, for he had received actual proofs of it himself. "I will maintain it" is the motto of the great Defender of the rights of the needy. What confidence this should create within the bosoms of the persecuted and poverty-stricken! The prosperous and wealthy can maintain their own cause, but those who are otherwise shall find that God helps those who cannot help themselves. Many talk as if the poor had no rights worth noticing, but they will sooner or later find out their mistake when the judge of all the earth begins to plead with them.

13. "*Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name.*" The former Psalm had its "surely," but this is a more pleasing one. As surely as God will slay the wicked he will save the oppressed, and fill their hearts and mouths with praises. Whoever else may be silent, the righteous will give thanks; and whatever they may suffer, the matter will end in their living through the trial, and magnifying the Lord for his delivering grace. On earth ere long, and in heaven for ever, the pure heart shall sing unto the Lord. How loud and sweet will be the songs of the redeemed in the millennial age, when the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace!

"*The upright shall dwell in thy presence.*" Thus shall they give thanks in the truest and fullest manner. This abiding before the Lord shall render to him "songs without words," and therefore all the more spiritual and true. Their living and walking with their God shall be their practical form of gratitude. Sitting down in holy peace, like children at their father's table, their joyful looks and language shall speak their high esteem and fervent love to him who has become their dwelling-place. How high have we climbed in this Psalm—from being hunted by the evil man to dwelling in the divine presence; so doth faith upraise the saint from the lowest depths to heights of peaceful repose. Well might the song be studded with Selahs, or uplifters.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Whole Psalm.—Another Psalm “of David,” to be sung by all saints, even as it was used by their Head, David’s Son. In it we have (verses 1—3) the *picture of the wicked*, with a “*Selah*,” that bids us pause over its dark colours. Then we have (verses 4, 5) a *view of the snares spread by the wicked*, with another “*Selah*”-pause. Thereafter, we see a soul in the *attitude of faith* (verses 6—8). They are laying the snares, but calm as Elisha beholding the Syrian host assembling (2 Kings v. 15), the stayed soul sings—

“*I have said to the Lord, My God art thou ;*”

and then he prays, putting a “*Selah*” at the close, that we may again pause and survey the scene.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Whole Psalm.—There is no doubt that this Psalm expresses the feelings of David on the first intelligence of Saul’s setting out *anew* in pursuit of him (comp. verse 2). And then, in Psalm cxli. we have his supplication at the time when this danger was ever approaching nearer. Various things are said in this Psalm (according to the Hebrew) primarily of a single person, (Saul:) thus *e.g.*, verses 1, 4; and the numerous tongues of which David complains (verse 3) are just the tongues of traitors who again informed Saul of this new place of residence in the wilderness of Engedi, where he might have imagined himself so secure. The laying of snares (verse 5) agrees perfectly in part with this treachery, and in part with the search after David by Saul and his numerous army, mentioned in 1 Sam. xxiv. 2. In the same way might the burning coals, spoken of in verse 10, and likewise the deep pits (German, floods) mentioned there, have suggested themselves most naturally to David upon the rocks of Engedi, where he had the Dead Sea just before him. Verse 10 seems also to allude to the events which happened on the night before the destruction of Sodom.—*T. C. Barth, in “The Bible Manual.”*

Whole Psalm.—As in Psalm cxxxviii. David set before his seed God’s promise as the anchor of hope (2 Sam. vii.); and in Psalm cxxxix., God’s omniscience as our consolation in danger and motive for shunning evil; so in this Psalm he sets forth the danger from calumnious enemies, and our only safety in Jehovah, our strength.—*Andrew Robert Fausset.*

Verses 1, 4, 6, 8.—Good men live by prayer. He who gets to the throne of grace is covered by the cloud of glory, through which no sun can smite by day, nor moon by night.—*William Swan Plumer.*

Verses 1, 7—11.—On the first reading of this Psalm one is inclined to think that there is somewhat of fierceness and bitterness in it, which is hardly consistent with the character of a child of God, and therefore unbecoming in David And yet I really think that a little more examination of the language of this Psalm will lead us to believe that we are doing David wrong in affixing anything like a meaning or desire of vindictiveness to his words.

Assuredly we can find no fault with one who takes his wrongs in prayer to God; who, like Hezekiah, takes the roll of his cares, and sorrows, and trials, and spreads it before the Lord. And this is what David does in the very first verse: “*Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man; preserve me from the violent man.*” I do not think a person who does this, who, when smarting under a sense of injury and wrong, goes at once to God and lays open his heart to him, is likely to go very far wrong; for even though he may have begun in somewhat of an unkindly spirit, yet prayer opens before us such a sight and sense of our own guiltiness and wrongs towards God, and thereby exercises such an abasing, as well as healing and soothing, influence over our feelings towards others, that we might almost be assured that he whose prayer might begin even with a vehement enumeration of his own wrongs, would end with something very like a determination to bless them that cursed, and to do good to them that hated him.

You will observe, too, how, from first to last, David leaves his cause in God’s hands; it is not “my sword and my bow that shall help me;” he counted them vain things to help a man; and therefore, as he had so often said in other Psalms; “The Lord was his shield and his defence,” and as God had already shielded his head in the day of battle, so he prays for the same protection against his enemies now.—*Barton Bouchier.*

Verses 1, 11.—Three special forms of Satanic energy are individualized. The *evil* or wicked man, the *violent* man, and the *man of tongue* are severally appealed from by the suppliant speaker of the prayer of faith.—*Arthur Pridham*.

Verse 2.—“*Continually are they gathered together for war.*” Literally, this clause reads, “*who gather wars,*” and so some understand it. But it is well known that the prepositions are often omitted in the Hebrew, and no doubt he means that they stirred up general enmity by their false information which acted as a trumpet sounding to battle.—*John Calvin*.

Verses 2, 3.—The wicked assault the righteous with three weapons—with the heart, by conspiracy; with the tongue, by lying; and with the hand, by violence.—*John Lorinus*, 1569—1634.

Verse 3.—“*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent.*” To sharpen or whet the tongue imports the keenest and extremest kind of talkativeness, much more to sharpen the tongue “*like a serpent.*” Naturalists tell us that no living creature stirs his tongue so swiftly as a serpent, and serpents are therefore said to have a treble tongue, because, moving their tongues so fast, they seem to have three tongues. The Psalmist means—the wicked speak thick and threefold, they sting and poison me with their tongues.—*Joseph Caryl*.

Verse 3.—“*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent.*” This is an exact description of the way in which a serpent darts out his tongue before he inflicts the wound. See him: his head is erect, and his piercing eye is wildly and fiercely fixed on the object; the tongue rapidly appears and disappears, as if by that process it would be sharpened for the contest. Thus were the enemies of David making sharp their tongues for his destruction.—*Joseph Roberts*, in “*Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures,*” 1835.

Verse 3.—“*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent,*” etc. Is it not a fact, that there are many men, the very existence of whom is a baneful poison, as it were? They dart their livid tongue like the tongue of a serpent; and the venom of their disposition corrodes every object upon which it concentrates itself; ever vilifying and maligning, like the ill-omened bird of night.—*Pliny*.

Verse 3.—“*They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent.*” As the adder skilfully prepares herself for her work of death, so do the unhappy children of slander and falsehood prepare themselves, by every possible effort, for injuring their unoffending victims.—*John Morison*.

Verse 3.—In St. James’s day, as now, it would appear that there were idle men and idle women, who went about from house to house, dropping slander as they went, and yet you could not take up that slander and detect the falsehood there. You could not evaporate the truth in the slow process of the crucible, and then show the residuum of falsehood glittering and visible. You could not fasten upon any word or sentence, and say that it was calumny; for in order to constitute slander, it is not necessary that the word spoken should be false—half-truths are often more calumnious than whole falsehoods. It is not even necessary that a word should be distinctly uttered; a dropped lip, an arched eyebrow, a shrugged shoulder, a significant look, an incredulous expression of countenance, nay, even an emphatic silence, may do the work; and when the light and trifling thing which has done the mischief has fluttered off, the venom is left behind, to work and rangle, to inflame hearts, to fever human existence, and to poison human society at the fountain springs of life. Very emphatically was it said by one whose whole being had smarted under such affliction, “*Adders’ poison is under their lips.*” —*Frederick William Robertson*.

Verse 3.—Slander and calumny must always precede and accompany persecution, because malice itself cannot excite people against a good man, as such; to do this, he must first be represented as a bad man. What can be said of those who are busied in this manner, but that they are a “*generation of vipers,*” the brood of the old “*Serpent,*” that grand accuser and calumniator of the brethren, having under their tongues a bag of “*poison.*” conveying instant death to the reputation on which they fasten. Thus David was hunted as a rebel, Christ was crucified as a blasphemer, and the primitive Christians were tortured as guilty of incest and murder.—*George Horne*.

Verse 3.—Man consists of soul and body; the body is but the shadow, or at best but the bearer of the soul: it’s the soul that bears God’s image; it’s the soul

especially for which Christ died. Now, by how much the soul is more precious than the body, by so much are the helps more excellent, and the enemies more dangerous than the body's. The body is fed with meat; but it is perishing meat (1 Cor. vi. 13); but the food of the soul is the heavenly manna (John vi. 27). Answerably, the enemies are more hurtful, for that that hurts or kills the body toucheth not the soul; but what hurts or kills the soul kills the body with it, and destroys the whole man. The conclusion is, that therefore the bane or poison of the soul is much more hideous, horrible and hateful than that of the body; and of that poison speaks the present Scripture: "*adders' poison is under their lips.*"

A strange text some may say, and 'tis true; but it is the fitter for these strange times, wherein the poison both of soul and body so far prevails. The words do describe in part the malignant and malicious nature of the unregenerate and sinful man; and to that purpose are they cited by the apostle to the Romans (ch. iii. 13). The *asp* is but a little creature; but not a little poisonous. So little a creature hath been the bane and death of many a great person; let one suffice for all. That royal and renowned Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, chose rather to die by the biting of two asps than to be carried in triumph at Rome by Augustus. The manner of their poisoning is this,—he that is bitten by the asp falls forthwith into a gentle sweat and a sweet sleep, and his strength and vital spirits decay and weaken by little till he die; thus the present pain is little, but the stroke is deadly. And even such stings are the tongues, and such swords the words of wicked men. And no marvel; for what can come but poisonous words and actions from them whose very inward nature is all poison within!

The poison of the soul is only *sin*, and this is like to poison in many respects. Poison, wherever it enters, stays not there, but diffuseth itself all over the body, and never ceaseth till it has infected all. Such is the nature of sin; enter where it will it creeps from one member of the body to another, and from the body to the soul, till it has infected the whole man; and then from man to man, till the whole family; and stays not there, but runs like a wildfire, from family to family, till it has poisoned a whole town, and so a whole country, and a whole kingdom. Woeful experience proves this true, both for Popish opinions, idle fashions, vain customs, and ill-examples of all sorts, which once set on foot, spread themselves over the politic body of church and commonwealth, like a gangrene or a leprosy over the natural body or like a poison through all the blood. Poison, having entered anywhere, as it seeks to creep presently over all, so desires it especially to seize upon the heart; such a malice and pride lies in the malignant nature of it, that it aspires to the heart; and such a craft and cunning lurks in it, that having once entered, it creeps closely and unfelt till it gets to the heart; but having possessed itself of that sovereign part of man, then like a tyrant it reigns and rages, and infecting first the vital blood and noble parts, it diffuseth itself over all and every part. And such is the nature of sin, the spiritual poison of the soul; enter where it will, it is the heart it aims at, and it will never stay till it come there. The truth of this is so clear that proofs are needless; for who knows not that the senses are but the doors or windows, but the heart is the throne, and the soul itself the seat of sin: and hence it is that Solomon adviseth,—“My son, keep thy heart with all diligence”: Prov. iv. 23.—*William Crashaw*, in “*The Parable of Poyson*,” 1618.

Verse 3.—“*Adders' poison is under their lips.*” The word rendered “*adder*,” אֲשָׁפִי, *achsub*, occurs here only; and it is perhaps impossible to determine what species is intended. As the word, in its proper signification, seems to express coiling, or bending back—an act common to most serpents—the name has perhaps no determinate reference; or it may be another name for the *pethen*, mentioned under Job xx.; which seems also to have been the opinion of the Seventy, as they render both words by ἀσπίς, and are followed by the Vulgate (*aspis*).

As to the *poison*, it will be observed, that in the venomous serpents there is a gland under the eye secreting the poisonous matter, which is conveyed, in a small tube or canal, to the end of a fang which lies concealed at the roof of the mouth. This fang is moveable at the pleasure of the serpent, and is protruded when it is about to strike at an antagonist. The situation of this poison, which is, in a manner, behind the upper lip, gives great propriety to the expression, “*adders' poison is under their lips.*” The usage of the Hebrew language renders it by no means improbable that the fang itself is called לָשׁוֹן *lashon*, a tongue, in the present text; and a serpent might then be said to sharpen its tongue, when, in preparing to strike, it protruded its fangs. We do not see any explanation by which a more consistent

meaning may be extracted from the expression here employed.—*John Kitto, in the "Pictorial Bible."*

Verse 3.—Often the tongue of the serpent is spoken of as the seat of its venom. This is popular, not scientific language.—*William Swan Plumer.*

Verse 3.—“*Adder.*” The word *acshub* (pronounced äk-shoob), only occurs in this one passage. The precise species represented by this word, is unknown. Buxtorf, however, explains the word as the Spitter, “*illud genus quod venenum procul exspuit.*” Now, if we accept this derivation, we must take the word *acshub* as a synonym for *pethen*. We have already identified the *Pethen* with the *Naja haje*, a snake which has the power of expelling the poison to some distance, when it is out of reach of its enemy. Whether the snake really intends to eject the poison, or whether it is merely flung from the hollow fangs by the force of the sudden-checked stroke, is uncertain. That the *Haje cobra* can expel its poison is an acknowledged fact, and the Dutch colonists of the Cape have been so familiarly acquainted with this habit, that they have called this reptile by the name of *Spuugh-Slange*, or *Spitting-Snake*, a name which, if we accept Buxtorf’s etymology, is precisely equivalent to the word *acshub*.—*J. G. Wood, in "Bible Animals."*

Verses 3, 5, 8.—“*Selah.*” We meet with *Selah* here for the first time since Psalm lxxxix. From Psalm xc. to Psalm cxl. no *Selah* occurs. Why omitted in these fifty we cannot tell any more than why so often recurring in others. However, there are only about forty Psalms in all in which it is used.—*Andrew A. Bonar.*

Verse 4.—“*Keep me,*” etc. From doing as they do, or as they would have me do, or as they promise themselves I will do.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 4.—“*Preserve me from the violent man.*” The second clause of the first versicle of this verse is the same as the second versicle of verse 1, which seems the burden of the song.—“*Speaker’s Commentary.*”

Verse 4.—“*To overthrow my goings.*” To take my feet from under me, to destroy the basis of belief, the power of advance in good works, that we may turn back from the way of salvation, or fall upon it, or, at any rate, may go very slowly along it.—*Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 5.—“*The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords.*” The following story illustrates how *cords* have been used by thieves so lately as the year 1822:—“Two skilful leaders of Dacoits, having collected some forty followers, and distributed among them ten matchlocks, ten swords, and twenty-five spears, waylaid a treasure going from the native Collector’s treasury at Budrauna to Goruckpore. The prize consisted of £1,200, and was guarded by a Naik, or corporal, with four sepoy and five troopers. It had to pass through a dense jungle, and it was settled—said one of them in after years—‘that the attack should take place there; that we should have strong ropes tied across the road in front and festooned to trees on both sides, and, at a certain distance behind, similar ropes festooned to trees on one side, and ready to be fastened on the other, as soon as the escort of horse and foot should get well in between them.’ Having completed these preparations the gang laid down on either side of the road patiently awaiting their prey. ‘About five in the morning,’ continued the narrator, ‘we heard a voice as if calling upon the name of God (Allah), and one of the gang started up at the sound and said, “Here comes the treasure!” We put five men in front with their matchlocks loaded—not with ball but shot, that we might, if possible, avoid killing anybody. When we got the troopers, infantry, and treasure all within the space, the hind ropes were run across the road, and made fast to the trees on the opposite side, and we opened a fire in upon the party from all sides. The foot soldiers got into the jungle at the sides of the road, and the troopers tried to get over the ropes at both ends, but in vain.’ The corporal and a horse were killed; two troopers wounded, and the treasure carried off in spite of a hot pursuit.”—*From James Hutton’s “Popular Account of the Thugs and Dacoits of India,” 1857.*

Verse 5.—“*The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords.*” There was “a trap hidden for him with cords;” a trap being sunk into some frequented path, and always covered over with grass or brushwood, and having long cords attached to each side, by which the hunter, lurking at a little distance, might close it whenever he saw the game stepping on the spot. But the net spread for him by his enemies extended to the very “side of the encampment,” which indicates, that even among the soldiers lying around him, there were some who had been bribed and

persuaded to watch and betray him.—*Benjamin Weiss*, in "A New Translation of the Psalms, with Notes," 1858.

Verse 5.—"Snare." "Net." "Gins." The several uses to which the contrivances denoted by the Hebrew words thus rendered were respectively applied, do not appear to be well ascertained. In general the Psalmist alludes to the artifices employed for capturing birds or beasts. It is, however, a curious circumstance, as noticed by Thevenot, that artifices of this kind are literally employed against men as well as other animals by some of the Orientals. "The cunningest robbers in the world," says he, "are in this country. They use a certain slip with a running noose, which they cast with so much sleight about a man's neck when they are within reach of him, that they never fail, so that they strangle him in a trice."—*Richard Mant*.

Verse 6.—"The voice of my supplications." The one safety for simple and unlearned people when assailed by the crafty arguments of heretics and infidels is not controversy, but prayer, a weapon their adversaries seldom use, and cannot understand—*Bruno of Aste*, 1123.

Verse 7.—"Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle." Hebrew, *of armour*. For David had never indeed any battle with Saul, but declined it; but Saul often armed against him; but then God's providence covered him as a shield: but the head is only spoken of to set forth his whole body, because that is chiefly aimed at by the enemy, as where the life principally lieth.—*John Meyer*.

Verse 7.—"Thou hast covered my head," etc. That is, I had no other helmet or armour but thy Almighty power in the day when I fought with Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii. 39, 40. 50.—*Thomas Fenton*.

Verse 7.—"Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle." A captain or prince had always beside him in battle an armour-bearer, whose duty it was "to cover his master's head," that is, to ward off with the shield the blows aimed at his head, and which, in the heat of the fight, had escaped his own notice.—*Benjamin Weiss*.

Verse 8.—"His wicked device"; which is to destroy me. "Exalt themselves"; not only against me, but against thee also, as if by their power and policy they had frustrated thy design and promise made to me.—*M. Pool*.

Verse 9.—"As for the head of those that compass me about," etc. God, he saith, had covered his head in the day of battle: now contrariwise he showeth what should cover the head of his enemies, viz., it should come to them as with their lips they had maliciously spoken against him; for it may be thus rendered—"The head of my besieger, let the trouble of his lips cover it": for cursing, let him be covered with cursing as with a cloak.—*John Mayer*.

Verse 9.—"Those that compass me about." For an explanation of this expression we would refer the reader to "The Treasury of David," vol. i., p. 343—344, where he will find two very pertinent extracts from J. Stevenson and Dr. Shaw.

Verse 9.—"The mischief of their own lips." The pride and hauteur of the Jews in our Lord's day brought the Roman arms upon them, and caused them to fall into irremediable ruin. They evoked their own fate by exposing themselves to an invasion from Rome at all; but they did it still more in that terrific cry—"His blood be upon us and on our children."—*William Hill Tucker*, in "The Psalms, with Notes, shewing their Prophetic and Christian Character," 1840.

Verses 9, 10.—Such passages admit of translation in the future, and are rather predictions than imprecations.—*Ingram Cobbin*, 1839.

Verses 9—11.—The prophet, in these three verses, predicted those just judgments which heaven will inflict on the slanderers and persecutors of the righteous. Their lips, which uttered mischief against others, shall be the means of covering themselves with confusion, when out of their own mouths they shall be judged. Those tongues which have contributed to set the world on fire, shall be tormented with the hot burning coals of eternal vengeance: and they, who, with so much eagerness and diligence have prepared pits for the destruction of their brethren, shall be cast into a deep and bottomless pit, out of which they will not rise up again any more for ever. Evil speakers and false accusers shall gain no lasting establishment, but punishment shall hunt sin through all its doubles, and seize it at last as its legal prey. Let these great truths be firmly rooted in our hearts, and they will keep us steady in the worst of times.—*George Horne*.

Verse 10.—“*Let burning coals fall upon them,*” etc. The Psalmist seems here to allude to the destruction of the Sodomites. In these imprecations he considered his enemies as the enemies of God, rather than as his own; and he thus cursed them, as knowing, in the quality of a prophet, that God himself had cursed them: and therefore these sorts of imprecations do not authorize other persons to curse their enemies.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 10.—“*Let burning coals fall upon them,*” etc. An imprecation which (with the similar previous one, Psalm ix. 6, etc.), is a prophecy; and one which, while it has had no fulfilment in the case of David’s enemies, or any persecutors of the church in times past, brings again vividly before the mind the fiery judgment of the Lord’s coming, and the awful sentence already pronounced against “the beast and false prophet,” the leaders of the confederation of the kings of the earth and their armies, then “gathered together to make war against him”—“these were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone”; Rev. xix. 19, 20. So before, Psalm lv. 15; lxiii. 9.—*William De Burgh.*

Verse 11.—“*Let not an evil speaker [a man full of tongue] be established,*” etc. The man given to talk, the liar, the flatterer, the detractor, the scold, the brawler, “shall not be established in the earth,” for such people are abhorred by the wicked as well as by the good.—*Robert Bellarmine.*

Verse 11.—“*Let not an evil speaker be established,*” etc. The positions laid down in this verse will find abundant illustration in every age of the church. “*An evil speaker,*” who takes delight in wounding the reputation of others, is seldom established or prospered in the earth. Providence fights against such an unhappy wretch. “*The violent man,*” the Ishmaelite whose hand is against every man, is in general overthrown by the very same weapons which he wields against others.—*John Morison.*

Verse 11.—“*An evil speaker.*” By “a man of the tongue,” as the original has it, the Hebrews express a detractor or sycophant; one who gives his tongue the liberty to vent what mischief he pleases. The Chaldee here expresses it by a delator or vile informer with a threefold or three-forked tongue; because such a man wounds three at once; the receiver, the sufferer, and himself.—*Thomas Fenton.*

Verse 11.—“*Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*” ’Tis an allusion to hounds that are of a quick scent, and pursue the game with pleasure; they do not see the deer or the hare, yet they follow upon the scent; and though they have sometimes a very cold and dead scent, yet they will follow and work it out. Thus “*evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him*”; and though sometimes he hath, as it were, got out of the view or sight of evil, and thinks himself under covert, yet these evils, like a company of greedy hounds, will pursue till they have overtaken and overthrown him.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 12.—“*I know.*” For I have a promise of it, and that’s infallible.—*John Trapp.*

Verses 12, 13.—“*I know that the LORD will maintain the cause,*” etc. Why, how comes the Psalmist so confident? “*Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name*”: as if he had said, Thou hast a name for a gracious and faithful God in thy promise, and this thou wilt never suffer to be blotted by failing in thy word. Christian, thou mayest venture all thou art worth on the public faith of Heaven: “His words are pure, as silver tried seven times in a furnace.” He that will not suffer a liar or covenant-breaker to set foot on his holy hill, will much less suffer any one thought of falseness or unfaithfulness to enter into his own most holy heart.—*William Gurnall.*

Verse 13.—“*Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name,*” etc. Teacheth us two things, first, that it becometh the godly to show themselves continually thankful, because God is continually merciful to them; secondly, what is the excellent estate and condition of God’s children, which, though it do not yet appear, yet shall it in the end break forth with fulness of glory.—*Thomas Wilcocks.*

Verse 13.—“*The upright shall dwell in thy presence.*” “*Sit in thy presence,*” as thy friends or guests or favoured servants. Perhaps it may mean sit (enthroned) before thee. Compare Matt. xix. 28. Some understand the sense to be shall dwell (in the land) before thee, i.e., under thy protection and inspection.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verses 1—5.—I. The particular source of David's affliction : it was from men. In this he was a type of Christ. 1. Their wickedness : "the evil man." 2. Their violence : "the violent man." 3. Their malicious designs : "which imagine mischiefs in their heart." 4. Their confederacy : "continually are they gathered together for war." 5. Their false accusations : "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent," etc. (verse 3). 6. Their avowed design : "they have purposed to overthrow my goings" (verse 4). 7. Their intrigues (verse 5). II. His universal remedy : "Deliver me, O LORD"; "preserve" and help me. His defence is, 1. In God. 2. In prayer to God.—*G. R.*

Verses 1—5.—In our position, age, and country, we are not in danger of violence from men, as was David; still, no man is absolutely safe from the danger. I. Mention some cases not yet impossible. 1. A Christian workman, because he cannot comply with unrighteous customs, excites the animosity of his fellow workers. They will do him mischief, spoil his work, steal his tools, speak evil of him, until his employer discharges him to restore peace in the factory. 2. A Christian clerk or shop assistant, because his presence is a check upon his sinful companions, may have snares laid for him, etc. II. Suggest advice, useful, should such a case arise. 1. Resort to God with a "Deliver me," and a "Preserve me." 2. Maintain integrity and uprightness. 3. Should the mischievous ones succeed, still trust in God, who can make their mischief lead to your profit, and make his goodness outwit their devices.—*J. F.*

Verse 3.—The depraved state of the natural man as to his speech.

Verse 4 (first clause).—A wise prayer. The wicked will slander, and oppress, or mislead, flatter and defile. No one can keep us but the Lord.

Verse 5.—The Dangers of Society. I. The secrecy of the attacks of the ungodly : "hid a snare." II. The variety of their weapons : "and cords." III. The cunning choice of position : "by the wayside." IV. The object of their designs : "for me" : they desire to destroy the man himself.

Verse 5.—"The Net by the Wayside," or, covert temptations; temptations brought near, and made applicable to daily life.

Verse 6.—I. The language of assurance. II. The plea for acceptance in prayer.

Verses 6, 7.—David comforted himself, 1. In his interest in God : "I said . . . thou art my God." 2. In his access to God : he had leave to speak to him, and might expect an answer of peace : "Hear," etc. 3. In the assurance he had of help from God, and happiness in him (verse 7). 4. In the experience he had formerly of God's care of him : "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."—*Matthew Henry.*

Verses 6—8.—Three arguments to be pleaded in a prayer for protection. I. The believer's covenanted property in God. "I said . . . thou art my God." II. The past mercies of God. "Thou hast covered," etc. III. The impropriety of the wicked being encouraged in their wickedness, ver. 8.—*J. F.*

Verses 6, 7—12.—The Consolations of the Believer in Time of Trouble. I. What he can say. II. What he can remember. III. What he is assured of.

Verses 6, 7, 12, 13.—Times of Assault, Slander, and Temptation should be special times of Prayer and Faith. David here makes prominent five things. I. *Possession asserted.* 1. The Possession : "My God." Opposed to idols. Beloved by self. 2. The Claim published. 3. The Witness selected. Secret. Sacred. Searching. 4. The Occasion chosen. II. *Petition presented.* 1. His prayers were frequent. 2. His prayers were full of meaning. 3. His prayers were meant for God. 4. His prayers needed divine attention. III. *Preservation experienced.* 1. God had been his Armour-bearer. 2. God had guarded his most vital part. 3. God had saved him. 4. God's strength had been displayed. IV. *Protection expected.* 1. God is a righteous Judge. 2. God is a compassionate Friend. 3. God is a well-known Guardian. V. *Praise predicted.* 1. Praise assured by gratitude. 2. Praise expressed by words. 3. Praise implied in confidence. 4. Praise practised by communion.

Verse 9.—How the sin of evil-speakers comes home to them.—*W. B. H.*

Verse 11 (first clause).—I. Notice a few varieties of evil speakers, 1. Liars the common liar, the trade liar, the stock-exchange liar, the political liar, etc. 2. Scandal-mongers. 3. Blasphemers and swearers. 4. Libertines and seducers.

5. Sceptics and new theology inventors. II. The propriety of the prayer. 1. Because evil speaking is intrinsically an evil thing. 2. It is an extensively injurious thing. 3. He who would have God's truth established must needs desire that evil speaking must fail. III. The limitation of the prayer: "In the earth." 1. It is certain an evil speaker cannot be established in heaven, nor in hell. 2. The earth is the only sphere of his influence; but, alas! men on the earth are too prone to be influenced by him. 3. Then, become righteous and true, by faith in the Righteous One and the "Truth."—*J. F.*

Verse 11 (second clause).—The Cruel Hunter pursued by his own Dogs.

*Verse 11 (second clause).—Theme—Sins committed, and not repented of, pursue men to their ruin. I. Illustrate. 1. They may raise a force of opposition from men. Tarquin, Napoleon, etc. 2. They may precipitate ruin, as Haman was hunted by his own sin to the gallows. 3. They may arouse destructive remorse, as in Judas. 4. Certainly they will pursue to the judgment-seat, and hunt the soul into hell. II. Apply. 1. How fearful a thing must sin be. 2. The more terrible because self-created. 3. Flee from the avenging pursuers to Christ, the only and safe refuge.—*J. F.**

*Verse 11 (second clause).—The hunt and pursuit of the violent sinner. I. The progress of the chase. 1. At first the victim is ignorant of it. 2. But ere long he finds Scripture, conscience, God, Death, at his heels. 3. His own sins cry loudest after him. II. The issue of the hunt. Hemmed in, overthrown, lost for ever, unless he repent. III. Another Huntsman. "The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost."—*W. B. H.**

Verse 12.—I. The known fact. II. The reasons for being so assured of it. III. The conduct arising out of the knowledge.

*Verse 12.—Something worth knowing. I. By the afflicted and the poor who trust in the Lord. II. By the oppressors who afflict and do the wrong. III. By all men, that they may trust in the Lord, and praise him for his compassion towards the needy, and for his even-handed justice.—*J. F.**

*Verses 12, 13.—I. Trust under all circumstances (verse 12). II. Gratitude for all things: "The righteous shall give thanks unto thy name." III. Safety at all times: "The upright shall dwell in thy presence."—*G. R.**

Verse 13.—One of the noblest forms of praise,—dwelling in the presence of God. Or, reverent regard to God's presence, holy communion with the Lord, confiding rest in God's dealings, obedient doing of the heavenly will—the best way of giving thanks to God.

*Verse 13.—Two assertions beyond contradiction. I. The righteous are sure to give thanks to God, let others be as thankless as they will. For, 1. They recognise all their good as coming from God. 2. They realise themselves as unworthy of the good they receive. 3. They are anxious to do right, because they are righteous; and that involves thanksgiving. 4. Thankfulness is a part of the joy derived from what they enjoy. II. The upright are sure to dwell in God's presence. 1. In the sense of setting the Lord before them. 2. In the sense of an abiding, present fellowship with God. 3. In the sense of enjoying God's approval. 4. In the sense of dwelling in heaven for ever—*J. F.**
