

PSALM CXLVI.

DIVISION, ETC.—*We are now among the Hallelujahs. The rest of our journey lies through the Delectable Mountains. All is praise to the close of the book. The key is high-pitched : the music is upon the high-sounding cymbals. O for a heart full of joyful gratitude, that we may run, and leap, and glorify God, even as these Psalms do.*

Alexander thinks that this song may be regarded as composed of two equal parts ; in the first we see the happiness of those who trust in God, and not in man (1—5), while the second gives the reason drawn from the Divine perfections (5—10). This might suffice for our purpose ; but as there is really no break at all, we will keep it entire. It is "one pearl," a sacred censer of holy incense, pouring forth one sweet perfume.

EXPOSITION.

PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

2 While I live will I praise the LORD : I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

3 Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; in that very day his thoughts perish.

5 Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God :

6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein *is* : which keepeth truth for ever :

7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed : which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners :

8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind : the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down : the LORD loveth the righteous :

9 The LORD preserveth the strangers ; he relieveth the fatherless and widow : but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

10 The LORD shall reign for ever, *even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

1. "Praise ye the LORD," or, Hallelujah. It is saddening to remember how this majestic word has been trailed in the mire of late. Its irreverent use is an aggravated instance of taking the name of Jehovah our God in vain. Let us hope that it has been done in ignorance by the ruder sort ; but great responsibility lies with leaders who countenance and even copy this blasphemy. With holy awe let us pronounce the word HALLELUJAH, and by it summon ourselves and all others to adore the God of the whole earth. Men need to be called to praise ; it is important that they should praise ; and there are many reasons why they should do it at once. Let all who hear the word *Hallelujah* unite immediately in holy praise.

"Praise the LORD, O my soul." He would practise what he had preached. He would be the leader of the choir which he had summoned. It is a poor business if we solely exhort others, and do not stir up our own soul. It is an evil thing to say, "Praise ye," and never to add, "Praise, O my soul." When we praise God let us arouse our innermost self, our central life : we have but one soul, and if it be saved from eternal wrath, it is bound to praise its Saviour. Come heart, mind, thought ! Come my whole being, my soul, my all, be all on flame with joyful adoration ! Up, my brethren ! Lift up the song ! "Praise ye the Lord." But what am I at ? How dare I call upon others, and be negligent myself ? If ever man was under bonds to bless the Lord I am that man, wherefore let me put my

soul into the centre of the choir, and then let my better nature excite my whole manhood to the utmost height of loving praise. "O for a well-tuned harp!" Nay, rather, O for a sanctified heart. Then if my voice should be of the poorer sort, and somewhat lacking in melody, yet my soul without my voice shall accomplish my resolve to magnify the Lord.

2. "*While I live I will praise the Lord.*" I shall not live here for ever. This mortal life will find a finis in death; but while it lasts I will laud the Lord my God. I cannot tell how long or short my life may be; but every hour of it shall be given to the praises of my God. While I live I'll love; and while I breathe I'll bless. It is but for a while, and I will not wile that time away in idleness, but consecrate it to that same service which shall occupy eternity. As our life is the gift of God's mercy, it should be used for his glory. "*I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*" When I am no longer in being on earth, I hope to have a higher being in heaven, and there I will not only praise, but *sing* praises. Here I have to sigh and praise, but there I shall only sing and praise. This "while I have any being" will be a great while, but the whole of it shall be filled up with adoration; for the glorious Jehovah is my God, my own God by covenant, and by blood relationship in Christ Jesus. I have no being apart from my God, therefore, I will not attempt to enjoy my being otherwise than by singing to his honour. Twice the Psalmist says "I will"; here first thoughts and second thoughts are alike good. We cannot be too firm in the holy resolve to praise God, for it is the chief end of our living and being that we should glorify God and enjoy him for ever.

3. "*Put not your trust in princes.*" If David be the author this warning comes from a prince. In any case it comes from the Spirit of the living God. Men are always far too apt to depend upon the great ones of earth, and forget the Great One above; and this habit is the fruitful source of disappointment. Princes are only men, and men with greater needs than others; why, then, should we look to them for aid? They are in greater danger, are burdened with greater cares, and are more likely to be misled than other men; therefore, it is folly to select them for our confidence. Probably no order of men have been so false to their promises and treaties as men of royal blood. So live as to deserve their trust, but not burden them with your trust. "*Nor the son of man, in whom there is no help.*" Though you should select one son of man out of the many, and should imagine that he differs from the rest and may be safely depended on, you will be mistaken. There is none to be trusted, no, not one. Adam fell; therefore lean not on his sons. Man is a helpless creature without God; therefore, look not for help in that direction. All men are like the few men who are made into princes, they are more in appearance than in reality, more in promising than in performing, more apt to help themselves than to help others. How many have turned away heart-sick from men on whom they once relied! Never was this the case with a believer in the Lord. He is a very present help in time of trouble. In man there is no help in times of mental depression, in the day of sore bereavement, in the night of conviction of sin, or in the hour of death. What a horror when most in need of help to read those black words, NO HELP!

4. "*His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth.*" His breath goes from his body, and his body goes to the grave. His spirit goes one way, and his body another. High as he stood, the want of a little air brings him down to the ground, and lays him under it. Man who comes from the earth returns to the earth: it is the mother and sister of his body, and he must needs lie among his kindred as soon as the spirit which was his life has made its exit. There is a spirit in man, and when that goes the man goes. The spirit returns to God who gave it, and the flesh to the dust out of which it was fashioned. This is a poor creature to trust in: a dying creature, a corrupting creature. Those hopes will surely fall to the ground which are built upon men who so soon lie under ground.

"*In that very day his thoughts perish.*" Whatever he may have proposed to do, the proposal ends in smoke. He cannot think, and what he had thought of cannot effect itself, and therefore it dies. Now that he has gone, men are ready enough to let his thoughts go with him into oblivion; another thinker comes, and turns the thoughts of his predecessor to ridicule. It is a pitiful thing to be waiting upon princes or upon any other men, in the hope that they will think of us. In an hour they are gone, and where are their schemes for our promotion? A day has ended their thoughts by ending *them*; and our trusts have perished, for

their thoughts have perished. Men's ambitions, expectations, declarations, and boastings all vanish into thin air when the breath of life vanishes from their bodies. This is the narrow estate of man: his breath, his earth, and his thoughts; and this is his threefold climax therein,—his breath goeth forth, to his earth he returns, and his thoughts perish. Is this a being to be relied upon? Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. To trust it would be a still greater vanity.

5. "*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help.*" Heaped up is his happiness. He has happiness indeed: the true and the real delight is with him. The God of Jacob is the God of the covenant, the God of wrestling prayer, the God of the tried believer; he is the only living and true God. The God of Jacob is Jehovah, who appeared unto Moses, and led the tribes of Jacob out of Egypt, and through the wilderness. Those are happy who trust him, for they shall never be ashamed or confounded. The Lord never dies, neither do his thoughts perish: his purpose of mercy, like himself, endures throughout all generations. Hallelujah! "*Whose hope is in the Lord his God.*" He is happy in help for the present and in hope for the future, who has placed all his confidence in Jehovah, who is his God by a covenant of salt. Happy is he when others are despairing! Happiest shall he be in that very hour when others are discovering the depths of agony. We have here a statement which we have personally tried and proved: resting in the Lord, we know a happiness which is beyond description, beyond comparison, beyond conception. O how blessed a thing it is to know that God is our present help, and our eternal hope. Full assurance is more than heaven in the bud, the flower has begun to open. We would not exchange with Cæsar; his sceptre is a bauble, but our bliss is true treasure.

In each of the two titles here given, namely, "the God of Jacob," and "Jehovah his God," there is a peculiar sweetness. Either one of them has a fountain of joy in it; but the first will not cheer us without the second. Unless Jehovah be his God no man can find confidence in the fact that he was Jacob's God. But when by faith we know the Lord to be ours, then we are "rich to all the intents of bliss."

6. "*Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is.*" Wisely may we trust our Creator: justly may we expect to be happy in so doing. He who made heaven can make a heaven for us, and make us fit for heaven. He who made the earth can preserve us while we are on earth, and help us to make good use of it while we sojourn upon it. He who made the sea and all its mysteries can steer us across the pathless deeps of a troubled life, and make it a way for his redeemed to pass over. This God who still makes the world by keeping it in existence is assuredly able to keep us to his eternal kingdom and glory. The making of the worlds is the standing proof of the power and wisdom of that great God in whom we trust. It is our joy that he not only made heaven but the sea; not only things which are bright and blessed, but things which are deep and dark. Concerning all our circumstances, we may say the Lord is there. In storms and hurricanes the Lord reigneth as truly as in that great calm which rules the firmament above. "*Which keepeth truth for ever.*" This is a second and most forcible justification of our trust: the Lord will never permit his promise to fail. He is true to his own nature, true to the relationships which he has assumed, true to his covenant, true to his Word, true to his Son. He keeps true, and is the keeper of all that is true. Immutable fidelity is the character of Jehovah's procedure. None can charge him with falsehood or vacillation.

7. "*Which executeth judgment for the oppressed.*" He is a swift and impartial administrator of justice. Our king surpasses all earthly princes because he pays no deference to rank or wealth, and is never the respecter of persons. He is the friend of the down-trodden, the avenger of the persecuted, the champion of the helpless. Safely may we trust our cause with such a Judge if it be a just one: happy are we to be under such a Ruler. Are we "evil entreated"? Are our rights denied us? Are we slandered? Let this console us, that he who occupies the throne will not only think upon our case, but bestir himself to execute judgment on our behalf. "*Which giveth food to the hungry.*" Glorious King art thou, O Jehovah! Thou dost not only mete out justice but thou dost dispense bounty! All food comes from God; but when we are reduced to hunger, and providence supplies our necessity, we are peculiarly struck with the fact. Let every hungry man lay hold on this statement, and plead it before the mercy-seat, whether he suffer bodily-hunger or heart-hunger. See how our God finds his special clients

among the lowest of mankind : the oppressed and the starving find help in the God of Jacob "*The LORD looseth the prisoners.*" Thus he completes the triple blessing : justice, bread, and liberty. Jehovah loves not to see man pining in dungeons, or fretting in fetters ; he brought up Joseph from the round-house, and Israel from the house of bondage. Jesus is the Emancipator, spiritually, providentially, and nationally. Thy chains, O Africa ! were broken by his hand. As faith in Jehovah shall become common among men freedom will advance in every form, especially will mental, moral, and spiritual bonds be loosed, and the slaves of error, sin, and death shall be set free. Well might the Psalmist praise Jehovah, who is so kind to men in bonds ! Well may the loosened ones be loudest in the song !

8. "*The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind.*" Jesus did this very frequently, and hereby proved himself to be Jehovah. He who made the eye can open it, and when he does so it is to his glory. How often is the mental eye closed in moral night ! And who can remove this dreary effect of the fall but the Almighty God ? This miracle of grace he has performed in myriads of cases, and it is in each case a theme for loftiest praise. "*The LORD raiseth them that are bowed down.*" This also Jesus did literally, thus doing the work peculiar to God. Jehovah consoles the bereaved, cheers the defeated, solaces the despondent, comforts the despairing. Let those who are bowed to the ground appeal to him, and he will speedily upraise them. "*The LORD loveth the righteous.*" He gives to them the love of complacency, communion, and reward. Bad kings affect the licentious, but Jehovah makes the upright to be his favoured ones. This is greatly to his glory. Let those who enjoy the inestimable privilege of his love magnify his name with enthusiastic delight. Loved ones, you must never be absent from the choir ! You must never pause from his praise whose infinite love has made you what you are.

9. "*The LORD preserveth the strangers.*" Many monarchs hunted aliens down, or transported them from place to place, or left them as outlaws unworthy of the rights of man ; but Jehovah made special laws for their shelter within his domain. In this country the stranger was, a little while ago, looked upon as a vagabond, — a kind of wild beast to be avoided if not to be assaulted ; and even to this day there are prejudices against foreigners which are contrary to our holy religion. Our God and King is never strange to any of his creatures, and if any are left in a solitary and forlorn condition he has a special eye to their preservation. "*He relieveth the fatherless and widow.*" These excite his compassion, and he shows it in a practical way by upraising them from their forlorn condition. The Mosaic law made provision for these destitute persons. When the secondary fatherhood is gone the child falls back upon the primary fatherhood of the Creator ; when the husband of earth is removed the godly widow casts herself upon the care of her Maker. "*But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*" He fills it with crooked places ; he reverses it, sets it down, or upsets it. That which the man aimed at he misses, and he secures that for himself which he would gladly have avoided. The wicked man's way is in itself a turning of things upside down morally, and the Lord makes it so to him providentially : everything goes wrong with him who goes wrong.

10. "*The LORD shall reign for ever.*" Jehovah is King, and his kingdom can never come to an end. Neither does he die, nor abdicate, nor lose his crown by force. Glory be to his name, his throne is never in jeopardy. As the Lord ever liveth, so he ever reigneth. "*Even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.*" Zion's God, the God of his worshipping people, is he who in every age shall reign. There will always be a Zion ; Zion will always have Jehovah for her King ; for her he will always prove himself to be reigning in great power. What should we do in the presence of so great a King, but enter into his courts with praise, and pay to him our joyful homage ? "*Praise ye the LORD.*" Again they said Hallelujah. Again the sweet perfume arose from the golden vials full of sweet odours. Are we not prepared for an outburst of holy song ? Do not we also say—Hallelujah ? Here endeth this gladsome Psalm. Here endeth *not* the praise of the Lord, which shall ascend for ever and ever. Amen.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS.

Psalms cxlvi.—cxlviii.—At the dedication of the second Temple, in the beginning of the seventh year of Darius, Psalms cxlvii., cxlvi. and cxlviii., seem to have been sung; for in the Septuagint Version they are styled the Psalms of Haggai and Zechariah, as if they had been composed by them for this occasion. This, no doubt, was from some ancient tradition; but in the original Hebrew these Psalms have no such title prefixed to them, neither have they any other to contradict it.—*Humphrey Prideaux.*

Psalms cxlvi.—cl.—We do not know who put together these different sacred compositions, or whether they were arranged on any particular principle. This, however, is obvious,—that the last series, those that close the whole, are full of praise. Though we meet frequently with grief and shame and tears in the former part, a great deal that presses upon the spirit,—and in the centre a great many references to the various vicissitudes and fortunes through which the church or the individual has passed,—yet, as we get towards the end, and as the book closes, it is *Hallelujah—praise*. As the ancient church ceases to speak to us, as she lays down her lyre, and ceases to touch it, the last tones are tones of heaven; as if the warfare were done, the conflict accomplished, and she were anticipating either the revelations which are to make her glorious here, the “new thing” which God is about to “create” when he places her under another dispensation, or as you and I (I trust) shall do when we come to die, anticipating the praise and occupation of that eternity and rest for which we hope in the bosom of God.—*Thomas Binney, 1798—1874.*

Whole Psalm.—This Psalm gives in brief the Gospel of Confidence. It inculcates the elements of Faith, Hope, and Thanksgiving.—*Marlin Geier.*

Verse 1.—“*Praise ye the LORD.*” The word here used is *Alleluia*, and this is very proper to be constantly used by us who are dependent creatures, and under such great obligations to the Father of mercies. We have often heard of prayer doing great wonders; but instances also are not wanting of praise being accompanied with signal events. The ancient Britons, in the year 420, obtained a victory over the army of the Picts and Saxons, near Mold, in Flintshire, The Britons, unarmed, having Germanicus and Lupus at their head, when the Picts and Saxons came to the attack, the two commanders, Gideon-like, ordered their little army to shout *Alleluia* three times over, at the sound of which the enemy, being suddenly struck with terror, ran away in the greatest confusion, and left the Britons masters of the field. A stone monument to perpetuate the remembrance of this *Alleluia* victory, I believe, remains to this day, in a field near Mold.—*Charles Buck, 1771—1815.*

Verse 1.—“*Praise the LORD, O my soul.*” The Psalmist calls upon the noblest element of his being to exercise its noblest function.—*Hermann Venema.*

Verse 2.—“*While I live will I praise the LORD.*” Mr. John Janeway on his death-bed cried out thus,—“Come, help me with praises, yet all is too little. Come, help me, all ye mighty and glorious angels, who are so well skilled in the heavenly work of praise! Praise him, all ye creatures upon earth; let every thing that hath being help me to praise God. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise is now my work, and I shall be engaged in this sweet work now and for ever. Bring the Bible; turn to David’s Psalms, and let us sing a Psalm of praise. Come, let us lift up our voices in the praises of the Most High. I will sing with you as long as my breath doth last, and when I have none, I shall do it better.”

Verse 2.—“*While I live will I praise the LORD.*”—George Carpenter, the Bavarian martyr, being desired by some godly brethren, that when he was burning in the fire he would give them some sign of his constancy, answered, “Let this be a sure sign unto you of my faith and perseverance in the truth, that so long as I am able to hold open my mouth, or to whisper, I will never cease to praise God, and to profess his truth”; the which also he did, saith mine author; and so did many other martyrs besides.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 2.—“*I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being.*” He had

consecrated his entire earthly existence to the exercise of praise. And not only so, but he adds, "*I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*" In which expression we may fairly conclude that the Psalmist stretches his thoughts beyond the limits of time, and contemplates that scene of eternal praise which shall succeed the less perfect songs of the church below.—*John Morison.*

Verse 2.—"*Unto my God.*" Then praise is most pleasant, when in praising God we have an eye to him as ours, whom we have an interest in, and stand in relation to.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 2.—"*While I have any being.*" Praise God for deliverance constantly. Some will be thankful while the memory of a deliverance is fresh, and then leave off. The Carthaginians used, at first, to send the tenth of their yearly revenues to Hercules; and then by degrees they grew weary, and left off sending; but we must be constant in our eucharistic sacrifice, or thankoffering. The motion of our praise must be like the motion of our pulse, which beats as long as life lasts.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 3.—"*Put not your trust in princes,*" etc. Through some kind of weakness, the soul of man, whensoever it is in tribulation here, despaireth of God, and chooseth to rely on man. Let it be said to one when set in some affliction, "There is a great man by whom thou mayest be set free;" he smileth, he rejoiceth, he is lifted up. But if it is said to him, "God freeth thee," he is chilled, so to speak, by despair. The aid of the mortal is promised, and thou rejoicest; the aid of the Immortal is promised, and art thou sad? It is promised thee that thou shalt be freed by one who needeth to be freed with thee, and thou exultest as at some great aid: thou art promised that great Liberator, who needeth none to free him, and thou despairest, as though it were but a fable. Woe to such thoughts: they wander far; truly there is sad and great death in them.—*Augustine.*

Verse 3.—"*Put not your trust in princes.*" The word rendered "princes" signifieth liberal, bountiful ones, *εὐεργέται*, so princes would be accounted; but there's no trusting to them without God, or against him.—*John Trapp.*

Verse 3.—"*Put not your trust in princes.*" King Charles had given the Earl of Strafford a solemn pledge, on the word of a king, that he should not suffer in "life, honour, or fortune," yet with singular baseness and ingratitude, as well as short-sighted policy, gave his assent to the bill of attainder. On learning that this had been done, Strafford, laying his hand on his heart, and raising his eyes to heaven, uttered the memorable words, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, for in them there is no salvation."—*James Taylor, in the "Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography,"* 1868.

Verse 3.—"*Put not your trust in princes.*" Shakespeare puts this sentiment into Wolsey's mouth:—

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

Verse 3.—"*Put not your trust in princes,*" etc. True, may some say, it were a folly to trust in weak princes, to trust in them for help who have no power to help; but we will apply to mighty princes; we hope there is help in them. No; those words, "*in whom there is no help,*" are not a distinction of weak princes from strong, but a conclusion that there is no help in the strongest. That's strange. What? No help in strong princes! If he had said, no help in mean men, carnal reason would have consented; but when he saith, "*Trust not in princes, nor in any son of man,*" one or other, who can believe this? Yet this is divine truth; we may write *insufficiency, insufficiency*, and a third time, *insufficiency*, upon them all; the close of this verse may be their motto, "*There is no help in them.*"—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 3.—"*Princes.*" Earthly princes offer baubles to allure the soul from the pursuit of an eternal prize. Princes themselves have pronounced their principality to be their own greatest peril. Pope Pius V. said, "When I was a monk I had hope of my salvation; when I became Cardinal I began to fear; when I was made Pope I all but despaired of eternity."—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 3.—"Nor in the son of man." All sons of man are like the man they are sprung of, who, being in honour, did not abide.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 3.—For one man to put confidence in another, is as if one beggar should ask an alms of another, or one cripple should carry another, or the blind lead the blind.—*Anthony Farindon.*

Verses 3, 4.—You see the first and the last, highest and lowest, of all the sons of Adam, they may be made honourable "*princes,*" but they are born sinful, "*the sons of men*"; born weak, "*there is no help in them*"; born mortal, "*their breath departeth*"; born corruptible, "*they return to their earth*"; and lastly, the mortality and corruption is not only in their flesh, but in some part or remnant of their spirits, for "*their thoughts perish.*" The prophet (if you mark it) climbeth up by degrees to the disabling of the best men amongst us, and in them of all the rest. For if princes deserve not confidence, the argument must needs hold by comparison, much less do meaner men deserve it. The order of the words is so set that the members following are evermore either the reason or some confirmation to that which went before. "*Trust not in princes.*" Why? Because they are "*the sons of men.*" Why not in "*the sons of men*"? Because there is *no help in them.* Why is there no help in them? Because when "*their breath goeth forth, they turn again to their earth.*" What if their flesh be corrupted? Nay, "*their thoughts*" also "*come to nothing.*"

For, first, this first order and rank which the prophet hath here placed, the princes and gods of the earth, are by birth *men*; secondly, *weak* men, and such in whom *no help is*; thirdly, not only weak, but *dying*, their breath goeth out; fourthly, not only dying, but subject to dissolution, *they turn to the earth*; fifthly, if their bodies only were dissolved, and their intentions and actions might stand, there were less cause to distrust them; but their *thoughts* are as transitory as their bodies.—*John King* (1559?—1621), in a *Funeral Sermon.*

Verses 3, 4.—The Psalmist inscribes an antithesis. Princes, though masters of armies, possessors of riches, loaded with honours, revelling in pleasures, are at the mercy of a ruthless Black Prince. Death is tyrant over prince and peasant alike. The very pleasures which are envied are often ministers of death to voluptuous princes.—*Thomas Le Blanc.*

Verse 4.—"He returneth to his earth." The earth—the dust—is "*his.*" 1. It is "*his*" as that from which he was made: he turns back to what he was, Genesis iii. 19. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." 2. The earth—the dust—the grave is "*his,*" and it is his home—the place where he will abide. 3. It is "*his*" as it is the only property which he has in reversion. All that a man—a prince, a nobleman, a monarch, a millionaire—will soon have will be his grave, his few feet of earth. *That* will be his by right of possession, by the fact that for the time being he will occupy it, and not another man! But that, too, may soon become another man's grave, so that even there he is a tenant only for a time; he has no permanent possession *even of a grave.*—*Albert Barnes.*

Verse 4.—"His breath goeth forth." There is the death's-head, the mortality of man indeed, that a breath is as much as his being is worth. Our soul, that *spiraculum vitarum* (breath of lives), the Lord inspired it, not into Adam's eye, or ear, or mouth, but into his nostrils, which may show to man his imbecility, *cujus anima in naribus*, whose soul is in his nostrils, and dependeth upon a breath, as it were; for the very soul must away if but breath expires; soul and breath go forth together.

Now hear this, all ye people, ponder it high and low; your castle is built upon the very air, the subsistence is in your nostrils, in a breath that is gone in the twinkling of an eye. Wherefore David maketh a question, saying, "Lord, what is man?" He answereth himself also: "Man is a vanishing shadow" (Ps. cxliv. 3, 4), a shadow of smoke, or the dream of a shadow rather, as the poet speaketh. Blessed therefore are the poor in spirit; this advantage have all afflicted ones, that they have checks enough to call them home, and make them see they be but men. The curtain of honour, profit, or pleasure, hard it is and rare to draw aside when it is spread over us: "man in honour understandeth not" (Ps. xlix. 20). To great ones therefore be it spoken; the Psalm intendeth it of very princes: "*His breath goeth forth.*"

See we now the continuedness, *exit, "it goeth"*; as if it were now presently in its passage: showing this, that *Homo vivens continuè moritur*, that life is a

continued death ; our candle lightens, consumes, and dies : as in the passing of an hour-glass, every minute some sand falleth, and the glass once turned, no creature can intreat the sands to stay, but they continue to fall till all are gone : so is our life, it shortens and dies every minute, and we cannot beg a minute of time back, and that which we call death is but the termination, or consummation of it.—*Thomas Williamson ; in a Sermon, entitled, "A Comfortable Meditation of Humane Frailtie and Divine Mercie,"* 1630.

Verse 4.—The primary idea of *breath* and the secondary one of *spirit* run into each other in the usage of the Hebrew word רוּחַ , so that either may be expressed in the translation without entirely excluding the other.—*Joseph Addison Alexander.*

Verse 4.—“*His breath (or spirit) goeth forth.*” Now I come to the liberty of the spirit, that it recedes inviolate ; 1. In Act ; “*it goeth :*” 2. In Essence ; “*it goeth forth.*”

1. Our spirit is *free in the act* ; it is not snatched out, as it were ; “*it goeth.*” A soul in life sealed to eternity by the first fruits of the Spirit hath its good issue, its free passing, its hopes even in death ; for let this breath fade, *fidelis Deus*, God who cannot lie, will stand nigh us in that exigency, and begin to help where man leaveth. The Holy Spirit, whose name is the Comforter, will not omit and leave off his own act or office in the great needs of death. Hence good Hilarion, having served the Lord Christ seventy years, checks his soul that it was so loth at the last to go forth, saying, *Egrederere, O anima mea, egredere*, “Go forth, my soul, go forth.” Devout Simeon sueth for a manumission : “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.” The spirit goeth forth ; it passes freely ; because it taketh up or embraceth the cross of Christ, as he commandeth us to do. But is the act at our will and liberty ? Not simply. We may not *projicere animam*, thrust or cast forth our breath or spirit ; *spiritus exit*, it goeth forth. Strive, we must, to cast the world out of us ; we may not cast ourselves out of the world. Saint Paul dareth not dissolve himself, though he could wish to be dissolved : God must part that which he joins ; God giveth, and God taketh away ; and if God say, as he doth to Lazarus, *Exi foras*, Come forth ; with faithful Stephen we must resign our spirit and all into his hands. When God biddeth us yoke, he is the wisest man that yieldeth his neck most willingly. When our great Captain recalls us, we must take the retreat in good part. But it is heathenish to force out the soul ; for when the misdeeming flesh, amidst our disasters, will not listen with patience for God’s call, but rather shake off the thought of divine providence quite, then are we ready to curse God, and die, and that is probably to leap *e fumo in flammam*, out of the sin of self-murder into hell. No, but God will have our spirits to pass forth upon good terms. *Spiritus exit*, “*the spirit goeth forth.*”

2. Secondly, the spirit goeth *free or inviolate in essence* ; death is not the end, but the outgoing of the soul, a transmigration or journey from one place to another. “*It goeth forth ;*” so the character of our weakness we see in the issue ; it is an argument of our eternity ; for man indeed is perishing, but so is not his spirit. The phoenix goes forth or out of his ashes, “the spirit returneth to God who gave it” (Eccl. xii. 7) ; that is, it abides still ; and as in the body it pleased God to inclose the soul for a season, so it may as well exist elsewhere without it, if God will ; for it hath no rise at all from the clay, yea, it bears in it immortality, an image of that breast whence it is breathed. The separate and very abstract acts of the spirit, even while it is in the body, the wondrous visions of the Lord to his prophets, usually when their bodies were bound up in sleep ; Saint Paul’s rapture when he knew not whether he was in the body or out of it ; the admirable inventions and arts of men, manifest the soul’s self-consisting. Not Socrates, and Cato, and the civilised heathen only, but the very savages believe this, and so entertain death, *ut exitum, non ut exitium*, as a dissolution, not as a destruction : *spiritus exit*, “*his spirit goeth forth.*” —*Thomas Williamson.*

Verse 4.—“*His breath goeth forth,*” etc. The Hebrew gives the idea not that the *spirit*, but the mortal part of man will return to the dust. “His soul (fem. נַפְשׁוֹ) goeth forth,” i.e., returneth to God : “returneth he (masc. יָשׁוּב) to his earth.” As in Eccl. xii. 7 : “He” is the mortal man of clay, but “his breath” (soul) is the real immortal man.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verse 4.—“*He returneth to his earth.*” Returning, in its proper notion, is a-going back to that place from whence we came, so that in this clause here is a threefold truth, implied, expressed, inferred.

1. That which is *implied* in this phrase of returning is, that man in respect of his body came from the earth; and as it is here implied, so it is expressed concerning the first man by Moses (Gen. ii. 7). "The Lord God formed man" (that is, the *body* of man) "of the dust"; or according to the Hebrew, "dust of the ground"; and by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 47), where he saith, "The first man is of the earth, earthy." True it is, we are formed in our mother's womb; but yet inasmuch as we all came from the first man, we are truly said to come from *the earth*; only with this difference, that he immediately, we mediately are framed out of the earth. This truth was engraven in full characters upon the name of the first man, who is called *Adam*, from a word that signifieth *red earth*, and that very word is here used, perhaps to mind us of that earth whereof man was first made; yea, according to the usual etymology, the name *homo*, which in the Latin is a common name to both sexes, is derived *ab humo*, from *the ground*. For this reason it is that the earth is called by the poet *magna parens*, the great parent of all mankind, and in the answer of the Oracle, *our mother*; and in this respect we are said by Eliphaz "to dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust," Job iv. 19.

2. That which is *expressed* is, that man (when he dieth) returneth to the earth, πάντες λυθόμενοι κόνις ἐσμέν, saith the poet, "We are all dust when dissolved." As the white snow when melted is black water; so flesh and blood when bereaved of the soul become dust and ashes: in which respect St. Paul giveth this epithet of "vile" to our bodies. Phil. iii. 21. Indeed, man's original being from the earth, he had a natural propensity to earth; according to the maxim, *Omne principium sequitur naturam principiorum*, "Everything hath an aptitude of returning to the principle whence it cometh"; but yet had he not *turned away* from God he had never actually *returned* thither. It is sin which hath brought upon man a necessity of dying, and that dying brings a necessity of returning to the earth: in which respect it is observable, that the threat, "thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii. 17), which was denounced against man before his fall, being afterwards renewed (iii. 19), is explained (as to temporal death) by these words, "to dust thou shalt return"; so that now the motion of the little world man is like that of the great, *Circularè ab eodem puncto ad idem*, from the same to the same; and that as in his *soul* from God to God, so in his *body* from the earth to the earth. The rivers come from the sea, and they return thither. The sun ariseth out of the east, and thither it returneth. Man is formed of the earth, and into earth he is again transformed: with which agreeth that of the poet Lucretius:

Cedit item retro de terra quod fuit ante.

3. That which is *inferred* in the emphatical pronoun "*his*," which is annexed to the noun "*earth*," is that the earth to which man returneth is *his*; this being that which ariseth out of both the former conclusions; since it is therefore *his earth* because he cometh from and returneth to it. Earth is man's Genesis and Analysis, his composition and resolution, his Alpha and Omega, his first and last; *Ortus pulvis, finis cinis*; earth is his both originally and finally. So that our bodies can challenge no alliance with, or property in any thing so much as earth. For if we call those things *ours* which had only an external relation to us, as our friends, our horses, our goods, our lands; much more may we call that *our earth* whereof we are made and into which we shall moulder; no wonder it is here said to be "*his*"; so elsewhere he is said to be *earth*, as being called by that name.—*Nathanael Hardy, in a Funeral Sermon entitled, "Man's Last Journey to His Long Home," 1659.*

Verse 4.—"In that very day his thoughts perish." The thoughts which the Psalmist here, no doubt, especially intends are those *purposes* which are in the minds of great men of doing good to those who are under, and depend upon them. The Hebrew word here used is derived from a verb that signifieth to be bright: *cogitationes serenæ*, those candid, serene, benign, benevolent thoughts which they have of advancing their allies, friends and followers. These thoughts are said to "*perish*" in "*that day*" wherein they are conceived; so Tremellius glosseth. In which sense the instability of great men's favour is asserted, whose smiles are quickly changed into frowns, love into hatred, and so in a moment their mind being changed, their well-wishing thoughts vanish. But more rationally, "their thoughts perish in that day" wherein their *persons die*, because there is no opportunity of putting their purposes into execution. They perish like the child which comes to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth; or like the fruit which is plucked off before it be ripe. Whilst they live we may be deceived in our expectations by the alteration of their

minds ; but, however, their condition is mortal, and when that great change by death comes, their designs (how well soever meant) must want success.

From hence it followeth, which is by some looked upon as a part of the meaning of the words, that the "thoughts" or hopes of them who trust in them perish. It is a true apothegm, *Major pars hominum expectando moritur* ; the greatest part of men perish by expectation. And good reason, inasmuch as their expectation, being misplaced, perisheth. How strongly this argument serveth to press the Psalmist's caution against confidence in man, though never so great, is obvious. It is true, princes and nobles being invested with honour, wealth and authority, have power in their hands, and perhaps they may have thoughts in their hearts to do thee good ; but, alas, how uncertain is the execution of those intentions, and therefore how foolish is it to depend upon them. "Trust in the Lord Jehovah" (saith the prophet), "for with him is everlasting strength." Ay, and with him is unchangeable goodness. It is safe building upon the rock, trusting upon God, whose thoughts of mercy are (like himself) from everlasting to everlasting ; but nothing is more foolish than to build on the sand, trust to men, whose persons, together with their thoughts, perish in a moment. Therefore let our resolution be that of David : "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man ; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes," Psalm cxviii. 8, 9.—*Nathanael Hardy.*

Verse 4.—"In that very day his thoughts perish." At death a man sees all those thoughts which were not spent upon God to be fruitless. All worldly, vain thoughts, in the day of death perish and come to nothing. What good will the whole globe of the world do at such a time ? Those who have revelled out their thoughts in impertinences will but be the more disquieted ; it will cut them to the heart to think how they have spun a fool's thread. A Scythian captain having, for a draught of water, yielded up a city, cried out : "What have I lost ? What have I betrayed ?" So will it be with that man when he comes to die, who hath spent all his meditations upon the world ; he will say, What have I lost ? What have I betrayed ? I have lost heaven, I have betrayed my soul. Should not the consideration of this fix our minds upon the thoughts of God and glory ? All other meditations are fruitless ; like a piece of ground which hath much cost laid out upon it, but it yields no crop.—*Thomas Watson.*

Verse 4.—I would have you take this passage and illustrate it as applying to purposes, projects, and intentions. That, I think now, is precisely the idea intended to be conveyed. "In that very day his thoughts perish" ; his purposes, his projects—what he intended to do. These cherished thoughts are gone. My dear brethren, there is something here for us. You find many beautiful passages and instances in Scripture in which this idea is embodied and realised, sometimes with great beauty and poetic effect, in relation to the enemies of the church. "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my hand shall destroy them ; thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the mighty waters." In that very day their thoughts perished. "Have they not sped ? have they not divided the prey ? to every man a damsel or two ? to Sisera a prey of divers colours of needlework ? So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord." The sacred poet does not even suggest that they had perished ; but feeling that it was a fact, only lifts up her heart to God. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord." And so you will find in many parts of Scripture beautiful ideas like this concerning the purposes and intentions that were in men's hearts utterly "perishing" by God's just laying his hand upon them—the purposes that were in their hearts against the church.—*Thomas Binney.*

Verse 4.—"In that very day his thoughts perish." In the case of the rich fool (Luke xii. 16, 20), his "thoughts" of building larger barns, and of many years of ease and prosperity,—all his selfish and worldly schemes,—"perished" in that self-same night.—*John W. Haley, in "An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible," 1875.*

Verse 4.—"His thoughts perish." The science, the philosophy, the statesmanship of one age is exploded in the next. The men who are the masters of the world's intellect to-day are discredited to-morrow. In this age of restless and rapid change they may survive their own thoughts ; their thoughts do not survive them.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 4.—"His thoughts perish." As the purposes of all about worldly things perish in the approaches of death, so do the purposes of some about spiritual and heavenly things. How many have had purposes to repent, to amend their lives

and turn to God, which have been prevented and totally broken off by the extremity of pain and sickness, but chiefly by the stroke of death when they have (as they thought) "been about to repent," and (as we say) "turn over a new leaf" in their lives; they have been turned into the grave by death, and into hell by the just wrath of God.—*Joseph Caryl.*

Verse 4.—"His thoughts." Rather, "his false, deceitful show"; literally, "his glitterings."—*Samuel Horsley, 1733—1806.*

Verse 4.—To trust man is to lean not on a pillar but on a little heap of dust. The proudest element in man is his thought. In the thoughts of his heart he is lifted up if nowhere else; but, behold, even his proudest thoughts, says the Psalmist, will be degraded and perish in that dust to which he will return. Poor, perishing pride! Who should trust it?—*Johannes Paulus Palanterius.*

Verse 5.—"Happy is he." This is the last of the twenty-five places (or twenty-six, if Psalm cxxviii. 2 be included) in which the word *ashre*, with which the Psalter begins, is found.—*Speaker's Commentary.*

Verse 5.—Alas, how often do we trust when we should be afraid, and become afraid when we should trust!—*Lange's Commentary.*

Verse 5.—"The God of Jacob." A famous and significant description of God; and that, First, in respect of his nature, or the verity and reality of his being and excellence. He is styled here by way of elegance or emphasis, "The God of Jacob," saith Mollerus, to discern and distinguish the true God of Israel from all Heathenish deities, and to explode all fictitious gods and all worships thereof. As the true God is the God of Jacob, so the God of Jacob is the true God. He is God alone, and there is no other besides him. . . . Secondly. This title or appellation serves also to describe him in his special relation to his people. We find him called by our Psalmist, "The mighty God of Jacob": Ps. cxxiii. 5. He is indeed the God of the whole earth, but in a peculiar manner "the God of Israel": Matt. xv. 31. . . . It is observable in Scripture that he styles not himself so frequently, in his revelations of himself to them, "the God of heaven and earth" (though that also is a title full of encouragement), but "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"; as if he had borne such choice goodwill, and had such a peculiar care for these three men, as to overlook all the world besides them. So near and intimate relation have God's people to him, that their interests are mutually involved, and twisted in a reciprocal and covenant bond. They are his, he is their portion; their Beloved is theirs and they are his: they are called by his name, the saints are styled his "holy ones," and the Church is termed expressly "Christ." Yea, he condescends to be called by their name; he assumes the name of *Jacob*, Ps. xxiv. 6; "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob."—From "*The Saints' Ebenezer*," by F. E., 1667.

Verse 5.—"The God of Jacob." This verse aptly warrants us to apply to all believers all the illustrations of *help* and *hope* furnished by Jacob in his exile when none but God could help him.—*Simon de Muis.*

Verses 5, 6.—"The God of Jacob . . . which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is." It is a characteristic of these Psalms, to proclaim to all nations which worshipped idols that "the God of Jacob," "the God of Zion," is the Creator and Governor of all things; and to make an appeal to all nations to turn to him. All these Psalms have a *missionary character* and an *evangelical function*. We may compare here the apostolic prayer at Jerusalem, after the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; "They lifted up their voices to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is" (where the words are the same as in the Septuagint in this place): "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why do the heathen rage?" Acts iv. 24, 25. The office of these Psalms is to declare to the universe, that Jehovah, and he alone, is *Elohim*; and to invite all to worship him as such, by their oft repeated *Hallelujah*.—*Christopher Wordsworth.*

Verse 6.—"Which keepeth truth for ever." Stored in his inexhaustible treasury as the most costly jewel ever there. And that because the *truth* which he so keeps, and which is the sustaining power which preserves the fabric of creation, is the Eternal Word, his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.—*Dionysius the Carthusian, and Ayguan, in Neale and Littledale.*

Verse 6.—"Which keepeth truth for ever." God does indeed keep the truth from age to age—how else would the Book of God have lived?—*John Lorinus.*

Verses 6—9.—The LORD, is an *Almighty* God, as the Creator of the universe; next, he is a *faithful* God “who keepeth truth for ever”; further, he is a *righteous* God (verse 7), a *bountiful* God (*ib.*) a *gracious* God (verses 7—9).—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 7.—“*Giveth food to the hungry.*” We learn from this that he is not always so indulgent to his own as to load them with abundance, but occasionally withdraws his blessing, that he may succour them when reduced to hunger. Had the Psalmist said that God fed his people with abundance, and pampered them, would not any of those under want or in famine have immediately desponded? The goodness of God is therefore properly extended farther to the feeding of the hungry.—*John Calvin.*

Verse 7.—“*Giveth food to the hungry.*” Now, that Jesus was that Lord of whom the Psalmist in this place, and in Ps. cxlv. 16, speaketh, was fully testified by the miracles which he wrought, in feeding many thousands with some few loaves and two small fishes, and in filling so many baskets with the fragments or relics of that provision wherewith he had filled thousands. From these miracles, the people which had seen him do them, and tasted of his bounty, did rightly infer that he was the prophet which was to come into the world, as you may read, John vi. 14; and being supposed to be the prophet, they consequently presumed that he was likewise to be the King of Israel; and out of this concert or presumption they would have enforced him to be their king, verse 15.—*Thomas Jackson, 1579—1640.*

Verse 7.—“*The LORD looseth the prisoners.*” As in that place of Isaiah (lxi. 1) the phrase of “opening the prison to them that are bound,” is by the learned thought to be a prophetic elegance, to signify the cure of those that are deaf and dumb, whose souls consequently were shut up from being able to express themselves, as language enables others to do; so here also it may be used poetically, and then it will be directly parallel to that part of Christ’s answer, “the deaf hear” (Matt. xi. 5). At the curing of such, Christ’s form of speech was, Ephphatha, “be opened,” as to the door of a prison, when those which were under restraint therein were to be let loose out of it, their fetters being shaken off from them. But then, ’tis further manifest, that those that were under any sore disease or lameness, etc., are said to be “bound by Satan” (Luke xiii. 16), and be “loosed” by Christ, when they were cured by him. So saith Christ (verse 12), “Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity: and immediately she was made straight.” Her being “made straight” was her being loosed out of her restraint, or bonds, or prison. And in this latitude of the poetic or prophetic expression, the Lord’s *loosing the prisoners* here will comprehend the walking of the lame, the lepers being cleansed, the hearing of the deaf, yea, and the raising up of the dead; for those of all others are fastest bound, and so when they were raised, the style is as proper as to Lazarus in respect of the graveclothes, “loose them, and let him go.”—*Henry Hammond.*

Verses 7, 8.—It ought not to pass without remark that the name Jehovah is repeated here five times in five lines, to intimate that it is an almighty power, that of Jehovah, that is engaged and exerted for the relief of the oppressed; and that it is as much to the glory of God to succour them that are in misery, as it is to ride on the heavens by his name JAH, Ps. lxxviii. 4.—*Matthew Henry.*

Verse 8.—“*Openeth the eyes of the blind.*” Literally, “*openeth the blind*”—*i.e.*, maketh them to see. The expression may be used figuratively, as a remedy applied either to physical helplessness, as Deut. xxviii. 29; Isa. lix. 9, 10; Job xii. 25; or to spiritual want of discernment, as Isa. xxix. 18; xlii. 7, 18; xliii. 8. Here the context favours the former.—*J. J. Stewart Perowne.*

Verse 8.—“*The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind.*” The Hebrew does not mention *the eyes* of the blind. Hilary renders it *sapientificat*. The Arabic version follows the same. Jehovah by his *wisdom illumines dark minds*. It is *mental blindness* which is the common affliction of men.—*John Lorinus.*

Verse 8.—“*The blind.*” The large number of blind persons to be seen feeling their way along the streets in Cairo and Alexandria has been noticed by Volney. “Walking in the streets of Cairo,” he says, “out of a hundred persons whom I met, there were often twenty blind, eighteen one eyed, and twenty others with eyes red, purulent, or spotted. Almost every one wears bandages, indicating that they either have or are recovering from ophthalmia.” Ophthalmia is, in fact, one of the scourges of Egypt, as all physicians know. Its prevalence must be attributed in a great degree to the sand which the wind blows into the eyes; but one can

understand how in Oriental countries in general the excessive heat of the sun must make blindness much commoner than it is with us.

It is not therefore surprising to any one who knows the East to find the blind so often mentioned in the gospel history, and to meet in Scripture with so many allusions to this infirmity. Of the twelve maledictions of the Levites there is one against him "who maketh the blind to go out of the way": Deut. xxvii. 18. "The spirit of God hath anointed me," said Jesus, quoting from Isaiah, "to preach the gospel to the poor, and recovery of sight to the blind": Luke iv. 19. "The Lord," says David, "setteth at liberty them that are bound; the Lord giveth sight to the blind."—*Felix Bovet* (1824—), in "*Egypt, Palestine, and Phœnicia*," 1882.

Verse 9.—"The Lord preserveth the strangers." God has peculiar love for wanderers and pilgrims (Deut. x. 18), and Jacob was a stranger in a strange land when God showed himself to be the God of Jacob as his elect servant.—*Thomas Le Blanc*.

Verse 9.—"The Lord preserveth the strangers." They who do not belong to Babylon, nor to this world, but the true pilgrims in a strange land.—*Robert Bellarmine*.

Verse 9.—"He relieveth the fatherless and widow." The olive tree is not to be twice shaken, the vineyard is not to be twice gathered, nor are the sheaves of corn left in the fields to be gleaned; all that belongs to the poor, to the widow and the orphan. It was allowable to pluck with the hand the ears of corn while passing through a neighbour's field (Deut. xxiii. 25), though a sickle might not be used. The law cares most anxiously for widows and orphans, for "God is a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows" (Ps. lxxviii. 5). A widow's raiment might not be taken in pledge, and both widows and orphans were to be invited to their feasts. An institution specially designed for the protection and relief of the poor was the second tithe, the so-called poor's-tithe. The first tithe belonged to the Levites. What remained over was again tithed, and the produce of this second tithe, devoted in the first two years to a feast in the sanctuary at the offering of first-fruits, was devoted in the third year to a feast in the dwelling-house, to which the Levites and the strangers, the widows and the orphans, were invited (Deut. xiv. 28, 29; xxvi. 12, 13.)—*G. Uhlhorn*, in "*Christian Charity in the Ancient Church*," 1883.

Verse 9.—"The way of the wicked he turneth upside down." He overturns their plans, defeats their schemes; makes their purposes accomplish what they did not intend they should accomplish. The Hebrew word here means to bend, to curve, to make crooked, to distort; then, to overturn, to turn upside down. The same word is applied to the conduct of the wicked, in Ps. cxix. 78: "They dealt perversely with me." The idea here is that the path is not a straight path; that God makes it a crooked way; that they are diverted from their design; that through them he accomplishes purposes which they did not intend; that he prevents their accomplishing their own designs; and that he will make their plans subservient to a higher and better purpose than their own. This is the eleventh reason why those who put their trust in God are happy. It is that God is worthy of confidence and love, because he has all the plans of wicked men entirely under his control.—*Albert Barnes*.

Verse 9.—"The way of the wicked he turneth upside down." As the potter's clay, when the potter hath spent some time and pains in tempering and forming it upon the wheel, and now the vessel is even almost brought to its shape, a man that stands by may, with the least push, put it clean out of shape, and mar all on a sudden that he hath been so long a-making: so is it that all the plots and contrivances of wicked men, all their turning of things upside down shall be but as the potter's clay; for when they think they have brought all to maturity, ripeness, and perfection, when they look upon their business as good as done, all on a sudden all their labour is lost; for God, who stands by all the while and looks on, will, with one small touch, with the least breath of his wrath, blast and break all in pieces.—*Edlin*, 1656.

Verse 9.—"The way of the wicked he turneth upside down." All the ten clauses preceding lift up the poor saint step by step, higher and higher. At one word suddenly, like Satan falling as lightning from heaven, the wicked are shown dashed down the whole way from the summit of pride to the depths of hell.—*Johannes Paulus Palanterius*.

Verse 9.—"The way of the wicked he turneth upside down." A striking illustration of the folly of counting God out of one's plans for life, is given in the course of William M. Tweed, whose death is recently announced. Here was a man who sought wealth and power, and who for a time seemed successful in their pursuit. Apparently

he did not propose to obey God or to live for a life to come. What he wanted was worldly prosperity. He thought he had it. He went to congress. He gathered his millions. He controlled the material interests of the metropolis of his country. He openly defied public sentiment and courts of justice in the prosecution of his plans. He was a brilliant and therefore a dangerous example of successful villainy. But the promise of prosperity for the life which now is, is only to the godly. As William M. Tweed lay dying in a prison-house in the city he once ruled, his confession of bitter disappointment was, "My life has been a failure in everything. There is nothing I am proud of." If any young man wants to come to an end like this, the way to it is simple and plain. "The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors." "*The way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*"—*American Sunday School Times*, 1878.

HINTS TO PREACHERS.

Verse 1.—I. An exhortation: it is addressed to ourselves: "Praise ye the Lord." II. An example: the Psalmist cries to himself, "Praise the Lord." III. An echo: "Praise the Lord, O my soul." Let us say this to our own souls.

Verse 1.—Whom should I praise? And why? And when? And how?

Verse 1.—Public worship. I. Should be with a sense of fellowship: "Praise ye"; pleasures of communion in praise. II. Should never lose its individuality: "O my soul." God is only praised by individual hearts. Temptations to wandering in public services. III. Should be full of Jehovah's felt presence: each and all should worship *him* alone.—*W. B. H.*

Verse 2.—Work for here and hereafter. I. "While I live"; or a period of uncertainty and mystery. II. "I will praise the Lord"; or a service definite, determined, due, and delightful. Certainty amid uncertainty. III. "While I have any being"; or an enthusiastic pre-engagement of eternity.—*W. B. H.*

Verse 3.—I. It dishonours God. II. It degrades you. III. It disappoints in every case.

Verse 4.—Decease, Decay, Defeat.

Verse 4 (second clause). The failure of man's projects, the disappearance of his philosphies, the disproving of his boastings.

Verse 5.—The secret of true happiness. I. *What it is not.* The man here mentioned has his work and warfare, for he needs help; and he has not all he desires, for he is a man of hope. II. *What it is.* It lies in the *hath*, the *help*, and the *hope*, and these are all in God.

Verses 6, 7.—The God of our hope is, I. Creator. II. Truth-keeper. III. Vindicator. IV. Provider. V. Deliverer.

Verse 7 (last clause).—See "Spurgeon's Sermons," No. 484: "The Lord—the Liberator."

Verse 7.—The People's Rights. I. Three rights of humanity. Justice, Bread, Freedom. II. God's interventions in their behalf. Revolutions, Reforms, Regenerations. Christ's war with Satan. III. The magnificent supply of the three blessings in Christ's kingdom. IV. The men who are fashioned and trained under this *régime*.—*W. B. H.*

Verse 8 (first clause).—Spiritual blindness, its curse, cause, and cure.

Verse 8 (second clause).—Who are the people? Who raises them? How he does it. And what then?

Verse 8 (third clause).—God's love to the righteous. I. He made them righteous. II. They are like him. III. They love him. IV. Their purposes are one with his own.

Verse 9.—Observe the provision made in the Jewish law for the stranger. The way in which strangers were received by God. The truth that his chosen are strangers in the world. His design to gather in strangers in the latter days.

Verse 9 (centre clause).—The claims of orphans and widows upon the people of God.

Verse 9 (last clause).—Illustrated by Joseph's brethren, Haman, and others.

Verse 10.—I. A cause for praise—"The Lord shall reign for ever." II. A centre of praise: "O Zion." III. A cycle of praise: "all generations." IV. A call to praise: "Praise ye the Lord."