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A

COMMENTARY

UPON THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

WITH THE

APOCRYPHA.

FROM

GENESIS TO CANTICLES
By SYMON PATRICK, D. D. Bishop of Ely;

THE PROPHETS
By WILLIAM LOWTH, B. D. Prebendary of Winchester;

THE APOCRYPHA
By RICHARD ARNALD, B. D. Rector of Thurcaston, Leicestershire;

THE NEW TESTAMENT
By DANIEL WHITBY, D. D. Chanter of Salisbury Cathedral.

In Seven Volumes.

VOL. III.


LONDON:
PRINTED FOR SAMUEL BAGSTER, IN THE STRAND,
BY JAMES MOYES, SHOE LANE.

1809.
A PARAPHRASE
UPON
THE BOOKS
OF
JOB,
PSALMS,
PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, CANTICLES.
WITH
ARGUMENTS TO EACH CHAPTER,
AND
ANNOTATIONS.

BY
SYMON PATRICK, D. D. BISHOP OF ELY.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

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PRINTED FOR. SAMUEL BAGSTER, IN THE STRAND.
1809.
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

W I L L I A M,

EARL OF BEDFORD,

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, &c.

MY VERY GOOD LORD AND PATRON.

My Lord,

Though I have not pursued the design, which I have long had in my thoughts, of making some public acknowledgement of my obligations to your Lordship, for placing me, when I thought not of it, in this station which I hold in Covent-Garden; yet I have only deferred it, till the most proper opportunity, as it seems to me, for this small expression of my gratitude. For I could not have prefixed your Lordship's name to any work of mine, which I believe would have been so acceptable, as this wherewith I now present you; desiring it may remain as a lasting testimony of the sense I have of the favours I have received from your Lordship. In whom, as I have always observed a particular veneration and affection for the holy Scriptures; so I know to be a constant reader of them: and therefore humbly offer this assistance to your Lordship, for the understanding of the oldest book (as I have shown) of that sacred volume, which, I am confident, you esteem above all earthly treasures.

There have been many large volumes written for its explication, which will cost abundance of time and pains to peruse; and after all, the design and scope of the whole may not be understood, while the reader's mind stays so long in the several parts. I have therefore taken quite another course, and only given the sense of it in a compendious, but perspicuous Paraphrase,' (or Metaphrase rather, as the ancients would have it), which is not much larger than the text, put into other words. It would have been more easy to have enlarged it, than it was to make it thus short; which I the rather chose to do, not merely because it will be more useful for those who have little leisure, or less money; but because thereby I have preserved, I persuade myself, the majesty of the book; and made it still look, not like the word of a man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God.

Which I could never have presented to your Lordship and the world more seasonably than now; when the state of our affairs is so dangerously perplexed, that we cannot stand upright, nor preserve our souls from sinking into the saddest fears or discontent, or some such troublesome passion, without a strong confidence in the
most wise, just, and merciful providence of the Almighty; which orders things in unsearchable ways, to the good of those that stedfastly adhere unto him, in faithful obedience. Which is so admirably represented in this holy book, that one cannot read it seriously, and not be moved to resign the conduct of ourselves, and all that concerns us, unto God's most blessed will and pleasure; to wait patiently for him, as the psalmist speaks, and keep his way; not to be disheartened by any trouble that befalls us, much less forsake our integrity; but still expect the end of the Lord, as St James speaks, i.e. the issue to which he will bring our troubles; persuading ourselves that he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy; and therefore, as he does not love to grieve us by laying afflictions on us, so is wont many times to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil; and to produce it by such unexpected means, as shall surprise us with the greater admiration of his wisdom and goodness.

For a great reader of ancient writers tells us, "He hath observed, in the histories of all ages, that the great events which determine the fate of great affairs, do happen less frequently according to design, than by accident and occasion. Our enterprises here below are derived from above; and we but engines and actors of pieces that are composed in heaven. "Homo histrio, Deus vero poeta est." God is the sovereign poet, and we cannot refuse the part which he appoints us to bear in the scene. All our business is to act it well; cheerfully complying with his orders concerning us, and submitting ourselves to the direction of his providence.

To which, and all other religious courses, did we more heartily apply ourselves, there is no doubt but that in this book we might read God's gracious intentions towards this church and kingdom; which his most merciful providence would bring, as he did his servant Job, through all these clouds which now encompass us, into a splendour incomparably beyond all that wherein hitherto we have appeared. Why should we despair of it, when he shews, by the unexpected discovery which he hath made of the designs of our enemies against us, that he hath no mind to cast us off, if we will not carelessly cast away ourselves, by the continual neglect of our duty to him?

God of his infinite goodness awaken all our hearts, to make such a good use both of that deliverance, and of our present distress, (which is so great that we see no way out of it, but by his power alone to whom Job owed his resurrection), that we may in the issue be the more happy, and the better established, for having been so miserably unsettled. In which prayer, I am sure your Lordship will cordially join with,

My Lord,

April 19.
1679.

Your Lordship's most humble,

and affectionate servant,

SY. PATRICK...
THE

P R E F A C E.

THE study of the holy scriptures is so much recommended to us by the scriptures themselves, and hath been judged so necessary by the holy Doctors of the Church, that St Chrysostom (who was wont to press this duty with great earnestness, not only in his sermons, but in his private discourses with his people) adventurestosay:* That "a man cannot, he cannot be saved, unless he be conversant in this spiritual reading." But as the neglect of them is very dangerous, when men are able to read them; so the reading them without understanding, must needs be unprofitable. Though a Christian (as the fore-named great person speaks) can no more be without the scriptures, than an artificer without his tools; yet we must acknowledge, that he will make but ill work with them in many places, unless he be instructed how to use and apply them to the purpose for which they were designed. Whosoever, therefore, shall assist the minds of Christians, by giving a clear meaning of them, (in which that holy Father employed much of his time), it is certain, doth great service to God, and to their souls. For this contributes much to the honour of the holy scriptures, (which want nothing to make them reverenced by considering men, but to be understood), and it invites men to the reading them, and it conveys the heavenly truth easily and delightfully to their minds.

Which hath moved me to attempt the explaining of the most ancient book in the whole Bible, by way of a short Paraphrase. In which, if I have not always tied myself to our English translation, (which ever gives an excellent sense of the original words), it was because I thought another meaning sometimes more agreeable to the whole discourse; which I have endeavoured to carry on coherently from first to last. But if the matter would bear it, I have, when I met with a word of two senses, expressed them both. And where I found any difficulty, I consulted with such interpreters as are of best note in the church; being unwilling to do any thing without the warrant of some or other of them. I was forced indeed here and there to follow only my own judgement; but not without the appearance of very urgent reasons; of which I if should give an account, by adding notes to those places, it would make this, which I intend for common use, swell into too big a volume. I have only, therefore, (in the Argument prefixed to each chapter), pointed to such histories in the Bible as may help to illustrate some passages; and shewn how the dispute is managed, till God himself determine it.

But there are two things of which I think myself bound to give a larger account, to avoid the imputation of such novelty as may be justly censured. The one is, That I have interpreted those three known verses in the 19th chapter, 25.—27. not of Job's resurrection from the dead at the last day, but of his restoration to an happy estate in this world, after he had been so sorely afflicted. There are many, of no mean esteem, (Mr Calvin amongst the rest), who have done so before me; in following whom I do not forsake the sense of the ancient doctors. For though I take that to be the literal sense of the words, yet I doubt not there is another more secret and hidden, which lies covered under them; and that we ought to look upon Job's restoration (and so I have always explained it) as a notable type of the future resurrection of our bodies out of the grave. And accordingly our Church hath very fitly applied the words (as many of the Fathers do) to this purpose, in the office for the burial of the dead.

St Hierom (or the author of the Commentaries upon Job under his name) is my guide in this business; who saith no more than this, that Job in these words, "resurrectionem futuram prophetat in Spiritu," prophesieth in the Spirit the future resurrection. Now, the words of the prophets had commonly an immediate respect to something which was then doing, or shortly to be done, besides that sense which the Holy Ghost directed them to signify in the latter days. And so had these words of Job, of which that Father indeed gives us only the mystical sense; but he doth so in many other places of that book, where it is certain and acknowledged the holy man had another meaning, in which he was more nearly concerned. I shall refer the reader only to one place in the first chapter, where he saith, that Job did "ferre typum Christi," and therefore expound those words, ver. 20. 21. in this manner, "He fell on the ground when he emptied him-

* Hom. 3. in Lazar. tom. V. 243.
† And so he saith in his preface, "Figuram Christi portavit."
And in his conclusion, xiii. 14. "Figuram manifeste habuit Salvatoris."
self of the form of God, to take on him the form of a servant; and came naked out of his mother's womb, being not aspersed with the least spot of original sin." He that will may read what follows, and see how he only sets down a mystical sense, when it is certain another (upon which that is built) is first intended. And so we are to take his exposition upon these words, which, "secundum mysticos intellectus," (as he speaks, xxxviii. 16.), according to the hidden interpretations, are to be understood of the resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Christ; but relate in the first place to Job's resurrection out of that miserable condition wherein he lay, which was a figure of the other. "They, therefore, who interpret these words otherwise, (to speak with that Father in his commentaries upon Ezekiel xxxvii. 1. &c.), ought not to make me ill thought of, as if by expounding them in the literal sense only, I took away proof of the resurrection from the dead. For I know there are far stronger testimonies (of which there can be no doubt nor dispute) to be found for the confirmation of that truth. On those let us rely, on the plain words of him who is the truth, (and of whom Job was but a figure), which are abundantly sufficient to support our faith; and let none imagine, that we "give occasion to heretics," (as he speaks presently after), "if we deny these words to be meant of the general resurrection."

The second thing of which I am to give an account is, that I have not expounded Behemoth to signify the Elephant, nor Leviathan to signify the Whale; because many of their characters do not agree to them; but every one of them to the description which the writers of natural history have given of two other creatures. And therefore I have herein followed the guidance of that excellent critic Bochartus, who takes the former for the river-horse, and the latter for the crocodile; as I have expressed it in the margin, but put neither of them in the text. For I leave every one, as our translators have done, to apply the words to any other creatures, if they can find any besides those now mentioned which have all the qualities that are ascribed to them.

I have adventured also in the beginning to add a few words, as the manner of paraphraste is, to give an account of the time when Job lived, which seems to have been before the children of Israel came out of Egypt. For though there be plain mention of the drowning of the old world, and the burning of Sodom, in this book; yet there is no allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh, and other miraculous works which attended their deliverance. Nor is there any notice taken of that revelation of God's will to Moses, when Eliphaz reckons upon those ways whereby God was wont to discover himself to men. Such like reasons moved* Orig...
THE PREFACE.

v
cut off from any animal alive. The authors that treat of these are innumerable, among whom I shall only mention Maimonides, who thus delivers his opinion of them in his Treatise of Kings, chap. ix.

"Adam the first man received commands about six things, (which are those first above mentioned), from whence it is, that the mind of man inclines more proney to them, than to the rest of the commands which we have received from our master Moses. Besides these, it is manifest Noah received another, according to what we read, Gen. ix. 4. "Flesh with the life thereof you shall not eat." And thus things stood throughout the whole world until the days of Abraham, to whom there was superadded the precept of circumcision."

But as there is not the least sign that circumcision was part of Job's religion, so there is no footprint at all remaining of his observance of the last of those seven precepts, which they say all the sons of Noah, who were pious, carefully obeyed. A great man of our own nation* hath sifted this business with as much diligence as is possible; but after all his search, he is fair to stop at those first six precepts delivered to Adam. For though this general character be given of Job in the beginning of the book, that he was a perfect, or simple and upright man, fearing God, and eschewing evil; and in the 31st chapter, and other places, there are particular instances given of his abhorring strange worship, (ver. 26.;) blasphemy, (chap. i. 5.;) murder, (xxxix. 39. 31.;) adultery, and other filthiness, (ib. ver. 1. 9.;) theft, rapine, and deceit, (ver. 5. 7.;) for the punishment of which he mentions judges in his days, (ver. 11. 28.;) and was himself one of the chief, (xxxix. 11.;) yet here is not so much as one word to be found, that I can discern, concerning the seventh precept, whether we understand thereby eating flesh with the blood in it, or, which is more likely, (because other nations which were not Jews might lawfully eat that which died of itself, Deut. xiv. 21.;) eating that which was cut alive from any living creature.

Which makes me think that it was not so generally known, as the Jews now pretend, till the memory of it was revived by Moses, among whose ancestors the tradition was more carefully preserved than in other nations. For Job, and such like pious persons, seem to have been governed by those precepts only which the first man received; that is, the dictates of nature reason. According to those words of Tertullian, in his Book against the Jews, where he contends†, that "before the law of Moses written in tables of stone, there was a law not written, which was naturally understood, and observed by the Fathers;" which he elsewhere calls the "common law, which we meet withal in publico mundi, in the streets and highways of the world, in the natural tables;" which mankind having broken, our Saviour came to repair and renew; abrogating the law of Moses, in which the Jews had placed too much confidence, while they neglected these natural precepts. Or rather, He hath not only engaged us by his holy sacraments to observe those more strictly, but raised them also to a greater height of purity; according to that of St Chrysostom, in his Book of Virginity, "We are to shew greater virtue, because now there is an abundant grace poured out; and grace is the gift of the coming of Christ."

But the principal benefit (to omit the naming of many other whereby I might recommend this work) which I hope pious souls, especially the afflicted, will reap by this book, is to be persuaded thereby that all things are ordered and disposed by Almighty God, without whose command or permission, neither good angels nor the devil nor men, nor any other creature, can do any thing. And that as his power is infinite, so is his wisdom and goodness, which is able to bring good out of evil. And therefore we ought not to complain of him in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us; but rather cheerfully submit ourselves to his blessed will, which never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it. To that issue God himself at last brings all the dispute between Job and his friends, representing his works throughout the world to be so wonderful and unaccountable, that it is fit for us to acknowledge our ignorance, but never accuse his providence; if we cannot see the cause why he sends any affliction, or continues it long upon us, instead of murmuring and complaining in such a case, this book effectually teaches us to resign ourselves absolutely to him; silently to adore and reverence the unsearchable depths of his wise counsels; contentedly to bear what he inflicts upon us; still to assert his righteousness, in the midst of the calamities that befal the good, and in the most prosperous successes of the wicked; and steadfastly to believe that all at last shall turn to our advantage, if, like his servant Job, we persevere in faith, and hope, and patience.

To which this book gives so high an encouragement, and contains such powerful comforts for the afflicted, that the old tradition is, Moses could not find any thing like it for the support and satisfaction of the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage, and therefore took the pains to translate it into their language, out of the Syriac, wherein it was first written. Thus he who writes the Commentaries upon this book under the name of Origen, tells us, "That he found, in antiquorum dictis, in the sayings of the ancients, that when the great Moses was sent by God into Egypt, and beheld the affliction of the children of Israel to be so grievous, that nothing he could say was able to comfort them in that lamentable condition, he declared to them the terrible sufferings of Job, with his happy deliverance; and setting them down in writing also, gave this book to that distressed people; that reading these things in their several tribes and families, and hearing how sorely this blessed man suffered, they might comfort and exhort one another to endure, with patience and thanks-

* Mr Selden, L. ult. de Jure Naturali, &c. cap. 2. † Chap. 2.
giving, the evils which encompassed them; and hearing withal how bountifully God rewarded Job for his patience, they might hope for deliverance, and expect the benefit of a blessed reward of their labours.

"Be ye constant, O children of Israel, (said Moses with a pleasing countenance, when he delivered this book into their hands), do not faint in your minds, O ye posterity of Abraham, but suffer grief, and bear these evils patiently, as that man in the land of Uz did, whose name was Job; who, though he was a righteous and faithful person, in whom was no fault, yet suffered the sorest torments by the malice of the devil; as you do now most unjustly from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They treat you indeed very basely, and have enslaved you, without any fault of yours, &c. But do not despair of a better condition; you shall be delivered, as Job was, and have a reward of your tribulations, like that which God gave to him—"

There follows a great deal more to the same purpose in that writer, which I shall not transcribe, but only add, that the church of Christ, as he observes, was wont, after this example, to read this passion of Job publicly in all their assemblies, upon holidays, (when they commemorated the martyrs), and upon fasting days, and days of abstinence, and upon the days of our Saviour's passion, of which they thought they saw a figure in the sufferings of Job; and of our Saviour's resurrection and exaltation, in Job's wonderful recovery, and advancement to a greater height of prosperity. And as they read this history in the church publicly, so when they went to visit any one privately that was in grief, mourning, or sorrow, they read a lesson of the patience of Job for their comfort or support under their troubles, and to take away the distress and anguish of their heart.

I pray God it may have that effect upon all afflicted persons who shall read it; and that others also, considering the instability of all worldly things, (which is here also lively represented), may use their prosperity with such moderation, that they may bear a change of their condition, if it come, with an equal mind. I am sure there is no man, of whatsoever rank, or in whatsoever condition he be, but may learn very much, if he please, from this admirable pattern. Which is the very first that is left us upon record, of a virtuous life, both in prosperity and in adversity, and that not only as a private man, but as a prince; in whom it is the greater commendation to obey the will of God, because he hath more means and temptations to fulfill his own."

That therefore shall conclude the character of Job, who, when he had no superior to controul him, (as you may read, chap. xxix. and xxxi.), gave such an example of piety and devotion, humility and moderation, chastity and purity, justice and equity, charity and compassion, as few have done in a private condition. This is as admirable, and will be praised as much to all generations, as his generous patience; which was so much famed in ancient times, that (from a passage which some editions of the LXX. have added to the conclusion of this book) it went as a common tradition, ὁ θεόν ὕπαρκτος ὑπερήφανος, (as Theophrastus speaks), having nothing incredible in it, that Job was one of those who had the honour to rise out of his grave at our Saviour's resurrection, when, as St Matthew assures us, chap. xxvii. 51. "Many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

James, v. 7. 11.—"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."
A

PARAPHRASE
ON THE
BOOK OF JOB.

CHAP. I.

The Argument.—This Chapter is a plain narration of the flourishing condition wherein Job lived, before the envy and malice of the devil brought upon him the sorest calamities; which are particularly described, with the occasion of them, and his admirable constancy under them, whereby he became as eminent an example of patience in adversity, as he had been of piety and all manner of virtue in his prosperity.

Ver. 1. THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. In the time of the ancient patriarchs, before the giving of the law of Moses, there lived in Arabia a person of great eminence, whose name was Job; a man not more illustrious for his birth or place, than for the height of his virtue, which appeared in a most unblameable life, void of all hypocrisy, both in his piety toward God, and in his dealings with men, and all other ways.

Ver. 2. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.] Whom God therefore had so wonderfully blessed, that his outward prosperity was equal to the perfections of his mind. For first, he had given him the sweet fruits of marriage, in a numerous issue of seven sons and three daughters:

Ver. 3. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.] And then enriched him abundantly with the wealth of that country, which consisted in seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, as many she-asses; with such a very great tillage, and so many servants, that in those eastern parts he had neither superior nor equal.

Ver. 4. And his sons went and feasted in their houses every one his day, and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and drink with them.] And together with all this happiness, he had the pleasure to see his children live in love and unity. For it was the custom of his sons to meet at each other's houses, and to make a feast every one upon his birth-day: (iii. 1.) And he whose turn it was to treat the rest, always invited their three sisters to come and be merry with them.

Ver. 5. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.] This feast was wont to last seven days, at the end of which their good father never failed to send a messenger to them, to call upon them to prepare themselves by fasting and prayer for the sacrifice he meant to offer for them: And when they were assembled, he rose up early in the morning, (the fittest time for devotion), and prayed to God, by offering burnt-offerings for every one of them, because he was afraid they might have done or spoken something that was profane, and misbecoming their religion, when their minds, loosened by mirth, were less upon their guard. And thus he did constantly after every feast.

Ver. 6. ¶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.] But this great piety was not sufficient to preserve him from false accusations. For as Job set a time for his children to examine themselves, so there are certain seasons when the angels come and stand in the divine presence, to give an account of their ministry, and to receive commands from God, the Judge and Governor of the world; and Satan, that subtle adversary of mankind, came one day, and thrust in himself among them.

Ver. 7. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.] And the Lord (to make him sensible he was not an absolute prince, but his subject) called to him, and demanded an account of him, where he had been, and from whence he came? To
which he gave an answer, which expressed, as the great restlessness of his mind, and his unwearied diligence, so the limitation of his power, which extends only to this lower world; for he told him, he came from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Ver. 8. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then the Lord said to him again, After all thy inquisitiveness and busy search, thou hast nothing to object against the integrity of my servant Job; a man that excels in piety and justice, and all other virtues, which he practises exactly and sincerely.

Ver. 9. Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Yes, said Satan; he serves himself rather than thee; it is not thy pleasure which he regards, but his own profit.

Ver. 10. Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that be bathe on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. Hast thou not paid him well for his pains? and so environed him and his family, and all belonging to him in every place, that no harm can come to them? Whereby all his business prospers, and all his flocks and his herds are so increased, that the country can scarce hold them.

Ver. 11. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that be bath, and he will curse thee to thy face. But I am confident, if thou wilt but employ that power to plague him, which hath so long preserved him, he will not only in his heart, but openly, deny thy providence.

Ver. 12. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that be bathe is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. Then the Lord (who was willing to prove the virtue of his servant in an afflicted estate, as he had done in a prosperous) withdrew the protection he had given him, and granted Satan a commission to dispose of all belonging to Job according as he pleased; excepting only his person, which he commanded him not to touch. This was joyful news to that malicious spirit, who went immediately to do what he had long desired.

Ver. 13. And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their elder brother's house. And within a short time found an opportunity to try the constancy of Job, by doing him all the mischief possible, in one and the same day; which was the birthday of his eldest son, when all his children (far from fearing any evil) were met, according to their custom, at his house, to feast and rejoice together.

Ver. 14. And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the ass feeding beside them. Then it was that Satan put in execution what he had designed; and first of all stirred up a thievish sort of people in Arabia, to fall upon that part of his land which was next to them. Of which tidings were presently brought to Job by a messenger, saying,

Ver. 15. And the Sabean fell upon them, and took them away; yes, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. As the oxen were at plough, and the asses in a pasture hard by them, the Sabeanes made an inroad into thy country, and carried them all away; having slain, by an unexpected assault, all those who should have preserved them, except myself alone, who made an escape to acquaint thee with it.

Ver. 16. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. He had not quite delivered his message before another of his servants arrived, (as evils seldom come single), to tell him that there had been a very great lightening in those parts where his sheep were feeding, which had consumed both them and the shepherds, and left none surviving but himself alone, to give notice of this disaster.

Ver. 17. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. He had not finished his narration before another messenger was at the door, saying, Our neighbours the Chaldeans, seeking for booty, divided themselves into three parties, who set upon us all at once; and they have carried away the camels, and killed all the servants that looked after them, except myself, who made a shift to save myself by flight, to bring the news of this invasion.

Ver. 18. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their elder brother's house. Before he had concluded, came in another, the most doleful messenger of all, saying, Thy children, as thou knewest, were feasting with their elder brother.

Ver. 19. And behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. And behold, a sudden there arose a violent wind, which coming from the desert, and whirling about the house, took away the four corners of it, and buried them all in its ruins; and there is not one of the guests escaped, that I know of, but only myself, to be the messenger of this great calamity.

Ver. 20. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and wept. Then Job (who had heard all the rest without disturbance) was overcome with grief at this last word, and laying aside all other thoughts, gave up himself to the most lamentable sorrow; for he rent his upper garment, cut off the hair of his head, and threw himself upon the ground. Where he deceived the devil's expectation; for he most reverently adored, as became his pious, the Divine Majesty, and submitted himself to his will, saying,

Ver. 21. And said, Naked came I out of my mother's
womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD bath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.] I am but what I was at first, and what I must have been again at last; and he that hath stript me of all before I die, hath taken away nothing but what he gave. Let him, therefore, be praised, who is the donor of all good things, and the disposer of all events.

Ver. 22. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.] This was the worst word that he spake, when all these evils came upon him so unexpectedly, and so thick together; all the rest was like this; and nothing dropped from his mouth which in the least accused or questioned the providence of God.

CHAP. II.

The Argument.—The first part of this chapter is a continuation of the narration, which was begun in the foregoing, of the calamities which befell this good man, whom God suffered the devil to afflict in his body, as he had already done in his goods and children. And then follows a farther testimony of his constancy, notwithstanding his wife's angry and profane accusation of the Divine Providence: Though, it is true, he was so much dejected to see himself reduced to this extremity of misery, that neither he nor his friends that came to visit him, were able for several days to speak a word.

Ver. 1. AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also to present himself before the LORD.] After these things, the angels going again to attend the pleasure of the Divine Majesty, and to give an account of their several charges, Satan also openly appeared among them, and presented himself, as ready and desirous to be examined about his management.

Ver. 2. And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.] But not daring to speak before he was called, he waited till the Divine Majesty asked where he had been, and what he had done. To which he answered, as he had done before, that he had not lost his time, but had fetched a circuit round about the earth, to find opportunity for the exercise of his power.

Ver. 6. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still be bold as his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause. Well then, said the Lord, art not thou convinced how true a character I gave of my servant Job, and how much thou hast calumniated him? for he still resolutely continues as perfectly virtuous as he was in his prosperity, though I have consented to these miserable calamities which he suffers undeservedly.

Ver. 11. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will be given for his life.] To which Satan answered again, and said, that his constancy was not so wonderful, since a man hath reason to think himself rich, who is in health. Who is there that will not give another's skin to save his own; nay, part with his children, as well as his goods, to save his life?

Ver. 5. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.] But enlarge now my commission a little farther, and let me afflict his body, so that it touch him to the very quick, and he will openly renounce thee, and deny thy providence.

Ver. 7. ¶ So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.] No sooner had Satan obtained this new grant, but, withdrawing himself from the presence of the Divine Majesty, he went to pursue his mischievous desires; and smote Job from head to toe with a fiery ulcer, whose sharp humour was extreme, grievous, and painful, and pricked him according to his wish to the very bone.

Ver. 8. And he took him a potsherard to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.] The filthiness of the disease also increased that sorrow and heaviness which before had seized on him, and made him sit down in the ashes: where he laid hold on what came next to hand, a piece of a broken pot, to wipe away the foul matter which issued out of his boils.

Ver. 9. ¶ Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou not yet retain thine integrity? Curse God and die.] And it was a farther addition to his grief, to hear his dear consort (whom the divine goodness, he thought, had still left to help him to bear his affliction) utter this profane speech. What a folly is it still to persist in the service of God, when all thou gettest by it is to give him thanks and perish.

Ver. 10. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh: What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.] These words struck him to the very heart: but instead of being angry with God, he only severely reproved her, telling her that she talked like one of the wicked women: and then piously represented to her, that we ought to take nothing ill which comes from the hand of God, (as all evil things do as well as good); and the more good we have received from him, the less reason we have to complain when we suffer any evil. No discourse but such as this was heard to come from his mouth.

Ver. 11. ¶ Now when Job's - was friends heard of all.
this evil that was come upon him, they came every man from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.] Now, there dwelt in the neighbouring provinces three great men, with whom Job had long maintained a particular friendship; who, hearing the sad tidings of his sufferings, came every one from his country to visit him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; who all three met at his house on the same day, according to an appointment they had made, to come and condole with him, and comfort him.

Ver. 12. And when they lift up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven.] But as soon as ever they entered into the place where he lay, they were surprised with so miserable a spectacle of deformity, that they shrieked aloud, as men affrighted, and burst out into tears, and rent their garments, and threw dust into the air; which falling on their heads, expressed the confusion they were in, to find him so covered over with ulcers, that they could not know him.

Ver. 13. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights: and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great.] And when they approached nearer him, they only sat down upon the earth, in the same mournful posture wherein they found him, but were not able (so much were they astonished) for seven days and nights to say one word of the business about which they were come to him. And indeed his grief was so exceeding great, that they did not well know what to say, till time, which alters all things, had assuaged a little both his grief and theirs.

Ver. 14. And after this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.] And at the end of seven days Job himself began by complaints to give some vent to his grief, which had stupefied him thus long: But he burst out into such bitter lamentations, that he wished a thousand times he had never been born.

Ver. 15. And Job spake and said, That which he said was to this effect:

Ver. 16. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived.] Let the day and the night of my birth be never more mentioned, but be quite forgotten, as if it had never been.

Ver. 17. Let that day be darkness, let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.] Let that day be turned into night, and not be counted among the days: let the sun then withdraw its light, and never shine upon it.

Ver. 18. Let darkness and the shadow of death steal it, let a cloud dwell upon it, let the blackness of the day terrify it.] Let the most dismal darkness and the thickest clouds wholly possess it, and render it terrible to men.

Ver. 19. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it, let it not be joined to the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.] And let the night be of the same sort, and both of them quite blotted out of the calendar.

Ver. 20. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.] Let nobody meet together on that night, to feast or make merry.

Ver. 21. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.] Let it be as the day wherein men bewail the greatest misfortune, or the time wherein they see the most dreadful apparition.

Ver. 22. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark: let it look for light, but have none, neither let it see the dawnings of the day.] Let there not so much: as a star appear in that night, nor so much light as we see at peep of day.

Ver. 23. Because it shot not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.] Because it did not bury me in my mother's womb, and thereby secure me from all these miseries.

Ver. 24. Why did I not die from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?] What a misfortune was it that I did not die before I was born, or at least as soon as I came into the world?

Ver. 25. Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?] That they who received me from the womb did not let me fall on the ground, or my nurse refuse to give the suck?

Ver. 26. For now should I have lain still, and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest:] Then should I have felt none of these miseries which I now endure, but lain quiet and undisturbed;

Ver. 27. With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves:] Equal to kings and the greatest persons, who lie alone in the tombs which they built themselves:

Ver. 28. Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:] Having gold and silver in abundance, whereof now they are bereaved:

Ver. 29. Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not
Chap. IV.

JOB

I. I. intending, it is likely, to remember him also of the destruction of the Emims by the children of Moab, (Deut. ii. 10. 11.) and of the Zammumims, (ver. 20. 21.) who were rooted out by the children of Ammon, as the Horims by the children of Esau: from whose grandchild Eliphaz seems to have been descended, and called by the name of the eldest son of Esau. He tells Job also of a vision he had to confirm the same truth, That man's wickedness is the cause of his destruction.

Ver. 1. THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:] Then Eliphaz (one of his most ancient friends, descended from Teman) replied to him, and said,

Ver. 2. I will walk to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can with-hold himself from speaking?] We must either still keep silence, or speak what will not please thee. But truth sure is more to be regarded than friendship; and therefore I must remember thee.

Ver. 3. Behold thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.] That thou, it is well known, hast given good counsel unto others, (and perhaps reproofed their impatience,) thou hast encouraged those who were dispirited.

Ver. 4. Thy words have upheld him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.] And by thy discourse hast supported those whose hearts were ready to sink, and settled those who trembled under their burden.

Ver. 5. But now is it come upon thee, and thou art distressed; I smiteth thee, and thou art troubled.] And now that thou art fallen into the same condition, thou canst not practise thy own lessons; but faintest, and art struck with consternation.

Ver. 6. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?] Is not this the time to exercise thy piety, (so much famed,) thy confidence in God, thy hope, thine integrity?

Ver. 7. Remember; I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cast off? Consult thine own observation, and tell me when thou ever sawest a righteous man forsaken by God.

Ver. 8. Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.] Quite contrary, I have seen the wicked reaping the fruit of their doings.

Ver. 9. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.] God blasts and consumes them as the nipping wind, or the fire doth the corn in the field.

Ver. 10. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken.] Though they be as fierce as the lions, and as strong, their power is broken.

Ver. 11. The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion waketh and is moved abroad.] The greatest tyrants and their posterity, after they have long enjoyed their power, are deprived of all their riches gotten by oppression, and come to nothing.

Ver. 12. Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof:] If these observa-
tions be not sufficient to convince thee, hear what God himself secretly whispered to me.

Ver. 13. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men. As I was ruminating one night, when all were asleep, of some visions which I had had,

Ver. 14. Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.] I was on a sudden seized with such a fear, that it made every joint of my body tremble.

Ver. 15. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.] Wherupon I saw a spirit pass by me, which made mine hair stand on end.

Ver. 16. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, I am not able to describe what it was like; for though it stood still, and I saw an image of something, yet I can only tell what I heard in a still voice, saying,

Ver. 17. Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?] Can any one think that a miserable man is more righteous than God his judge? or that it is possible for any body to be more unapprovable than he that made him?

Ver. 18. Behold, be put no trust in his servants: and his angels be charged with folly:] The heavenly ministers themselves may fail; for they are not perfectly wise, though they have no flesh and blood as we have.

Ver. 19. How much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are rubbed before the moth?] How can we pretend to perfection, who dwell in bodies of dirt, which stand upon no firm foundation, but are as subject to be destroyed, as a garment to be fretted with moths?

Ver. 20. They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.] We see continual examples of those that are cut off: they are quite taken away, when nobody thinks of it.

Ver. 21. Dost not their excellency which is in them go away? they die even without wisdom.] Though their dignities be never so great, and their posterity never so numerous, all go away with them, and they die like so many beasts, who have no understanding of their latter end.

CHAP. V.

THE ARGUMENT.—Eliphaz still prosecutes the very same argument; endeavouring to confirm it from the opinion and observation of other men, as well as from his own. And therupon exhorts him to repentance, as the surest way to find mercy with God; and to be not only restored to his former prosperity, but to be preserved hereafter from the incursions of savage people, or of wild beasts, and from all the rest of the disasters which had befallen him. Of this he bids him, in the conclusion, be assured; for it was a point he had studied.

Ver. 1. CAll now, if there be any that will answer thee, and to whom of the saints thou turn? If thou dost not believe me, thou mayest inquire of others. There is no good man but is of this opinion: and if an angel should appear to thee, (as there did to me,) thou wouldst have no other information but this;

Ver. 2. For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envying slayeth the silly one.] That God in his anger and indignation destroys the wicked, and him that err from his precepts.

Ver. 3. I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.] This is so certain, that I have predicted his downfall, when he seemed most firmly settled in his prosperity.

Ver. 4. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.] His children also fall with him; justice took hold of them, and would not let them escape.

Ver. 5. Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns; and the robber swalloweth up their substance.] The hungry soldier devoured their harvest, there was no fence could secure it; but the rest of their riches became a prey to the robber.

Ver. 6. Although affliction come not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground:] For we are not to ascribe the trouble and misery of mankind merely to earthly causes, which are but the instruments of God's justice:

Ver. 7. Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward:] Who hath made it as natural to man to suffer, (having offended him,) as it is for the sparks to fly upward.

Ver. 8. I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.] Wherefore, if I were in thy case, I would humbly address myself to God, and desire him to order all things as he pleases.

Ver. 9. Which doth great things, and unsearchable, marvellous things without number:] For he is the author of all those wonderful things, whose causes we can no more find out, than we can count their number.

Ver. 10. Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:] Of the rain, for instance, in its season; and of the springs which run in the fields;

Ver. 11. To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.] Whereby men of low condition are enriched and grow great; as the plants and corn shoot out of the earth, after they are moistened with showers.

Ver. 12. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.] And, on the contrary, he defeats the craftiest designs of subtle men to raise themselves; and it is not in their power to effect that which they have most wisely contrived.

Ver. 13. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong:] Nay, they produce that which they studied to avoid; and when they think themselves sure, make too much haste to their ruin.

Ver. 14. They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night.] They trip in the plainest way; and see not their danger, when it is visible to every body but themselves.
CHAP. V.

Ver. 15. But be saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the band of the mighty.] Whereby many a helpless man is delivered, both from the open force, and from the treacherous flatteries or calamities of those that are too strong for them.

Ver. 16. So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stopper her mouths.] And therefore he that is oppressed should not despair, nor should the oppressors boast themselves; for there is hope that God will save the one, to the utter destruction of the other.

Ver. 17. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despisest thou the chastening of the Almighty?] Behold then, how little reason there is to complain of God’s chastisements, which if thou dost not refuse, he is able to turn to thy good:

Ver. 18. For be made sore, and bindeth up; be wounded, and his bands make whole.] For he doth not merely wound, but, like a wise chirurgeon, by that very means he cures and heals.

Ver. 19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yes, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.] Thy troubles cannot be so many, but if thou submissively accept them, he will free thee from them.

Ver. 20. In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword.] He will feed thee in the most barren years, and defend thee in the day of battle.

Ver. 21. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction which it cometh.] False accusers shall not be able to hurt thee; and when whole countries are depopulated, thou shalt be secure.

Ver. 22. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh; neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth:] When nothing is to be seen but wild beasts, whom famine forces from their dens, thou shalt be cheerful and undaunted:

Ver. 23. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.] For the stony parts of the country shall not fail to bring forth its fruits plentifully; and the beasts of field shall not devour them.

Ver. 24. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.] Wheresoever thou pitchest thy tent, thou shalt find it in safety: and when thou takest an account of thine estate, all things shall answer thine expectation.

Ver. 25. Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.] Thou shalt find thy posterity also very great and numerous, like the grass; though now thou art as bare as the earth in winter.

Ver. 26. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.] Thou shalt not die a violent and untimely death; but be carried to thy grave as corn is to the barn when it is full ripe and fit to be gathered.

Ver. 27. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.] Doubt not of this, for we have thoroughly considered it, and find it so: receive it, therefore, and keep it in memory.

CHAP. VI.

THE ARGUMENT.—Job, not at all convinced by these discourses, justifies the complaint he had made, (chap. iii.), which Eliphaz had now accused; maintaining that his grief was not equal to the cause of it. And therefore he reneweth his wishes of death; at which, though they might wonder who felt nothing to make them weary of life, yet he had reason, he shews, for what he did; and one more than before, which was their unkindness, who pretended to be friends; but by this rude reproof of him at the very first, without so much as one compassionate word, or the least syllable of consolation, shewed how little sympathy they had with him in his sufferings. These things he desires them to consider, and weigh the cause of his complaint a little better, before they passed any farther judgement on it.

Ver. 1. BUT for answer and said.] Here Job replied to Eliphaz, and spake in these terms to him,

Ver. 2. O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!] Would to God some more equal person than you would lay my complaint and my sufferings one against the other, and judge sincerely which is the heaviest!

Ver. 3. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.] He would soon find, that the sand of the sea is not so heavy as my misery; and that I am not able to complain enough.

Ver. 4. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereto drinketh up my spirit: the terror of God do setteth in array against me.] The Almighty himself hath given me such a wound, that I am dispirited: for nothing but dreadful spectacles present themselves ready armed against me.

Ver. 5. Dost the wild ass bray when be bath grass? or loveth the ox over his fodder?] It is easy for you who feel no pain nor want, to forbear complaints, which is no more than the very ass and other brute creatures do.

Ver. 6. Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?] But may not he who eats insipid things, call for a little salt to make them go down better? (How much more then may we call for something to qualify that which is bitter?)

Ver. 7. The things which my soul refuseth to touch, are as my sorrowful meat.] As I do now, who have nothing afforded me for my support, but such discourses as yours, which my very soul loathes.

Ver. 8. Oh that I might have my request! and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!] I cannot but cry unto God, and beseech him to grant me my heart’s desire:

Ver. 9. Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off.] Which is, that he would be pleased not to let me lan-
guish in this miserable condition, but with one stroke
more quite cut me off.

Ver. 10. Then should I yet have comfort, yea, I would
barden myself in sorrow; let him not spare, for I have
not concealed the words of the Holy One.] It would
be a great comfort to me, to hope for this, and would
strengthen me to endure the severest pains: for I
would receive the sentence of death with acclama-
tions of praise, if God would pronounce it against
me.

Ver. 11. What is my strength, that I should hope?
and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?
For I have not strength enough to endure any longer;
nor any hope of better days in the conclusion, which
should make me willing to have my life prolonged.

Ver. 12. Is my strength the strength of stones? or is
my flesh of brass? [God hath not made me insen-
sible, and therefore do not wonder that I desire
to be released from the sharpest pains.

Ver. 13. Is not my help in me? and is wisdom
driven quite from me? Do not think my reason
hath forsaken me, and that I do not understand my-
self.

Ver. 14. To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewn
from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the
Almighty.] Were it so, a friend should shew me the
more pity; as you would do, but that you fear not
God, nor remember that he can afflict you as he
doth me.

Ver. 15. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a
brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away:
My dearest friends prove as deceitful as the torrents,
which make a great noise, and run with a violent
stream:

Ver. 16. Which are blackish by reason of the ice,
and wherein the snow is hid.] When the melted ice
and snow fall thick into them.

Ver. 17. What time they wax warm, they diminish;
when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.] They promise water, but in the summer-time are
dried up.

Ver. 18. The paths of their way are turned aside;
they go to nothing; and perish.] So that you can scarce
find any mark of the course wherein they ran, they
are so perfectly vanished.

Ver. 19. The troops of Tema looked, the companies
of Sheba waited for them.] They that travel into
our neighbouring countries expected to quench thirst
there, where they had sometimes seen so much wa-
ter:

Ver. 20. They were confounded because they had hoped;
they came thither, and were ashamed.] But were
shamefully disappointed, and blushed to think they
should seek relief from such uncertain streams.

Ver. 21. For now ye are nothing; ye see my eating
down, and are afraid.] Just such are you, good for
nothing; who, seeing my calamity, shrink from me.

Ver. 22. Did I say, Bring unto me! or, Give a re-
ward for me of your substance?] And yet I never
sent for you, nor do I ask, now you are come, any
relief from you.

Ver. 23. Or, deliver me from the enemies hand? or,
redeem me from the hand of the wrathful? [I do not ex-
pect you should deliver me from these calamities,
which as so many mighty enemies oppress me.]

Ver. 24. Teach me, and I will speak: and cause me
to understand wherein I have erred.] Do not
mistake me, nor think that I despise the assistance
of your counsel and advice: no, I am ready to receive
your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them, if you
can better inform me.

Ver. 25. How forcible are righteous words! but what
doth your arguing reproves? [What power is there in
truth! but your reproaches are ineffectual.

Ver. 26. Do ye imagine to reproach words, and the
speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?] You
only study to shew your eloquence, and in vain
use words to drive me to desperation.

Ver. 27. Yes, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and you
dig a pit for your friend. [You fall upon him who is
already depressed, and without defence, and in a bar-
barous manner devise counsel against your friend.

Ver. 28. Now, therefore, be content, look upon me,
for it is evident unto you if I lie.] But let it please
you to consider my case a little better, and then judge
if I be in the wrong.

Ver. 29. Return, I pray you, be not be iniquity; yea,
return again, my righteousness is in it.] Discuss
things over again, I beseech you, and do it fairly. I
say, let me have a second hearing, it will but the more
shew my innocency.

Ver. 30. Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my
taste discern perverse things?] Have I said anything
hitherto that is faulty? I do not think my judgement is
so corrupted, but that I can discern what is bad, though
spoken by myself.

C H A P. VII.

The Argument.—Job proceeds still in the defence of
his complaint, and of his wishes to see an end of so
miserable a life; which at the best is full of toil
and trouble. And since his friends had so little
consideration of him, he addresses himself to God,
and hopes he will not be angry, if he eases his grief
by representing to him the dolefulness of his con-
dition, and expostulating a little with him about the
continuance of it, and his release from it.

Ver. 1. Is there an appointed time to man upon
which are his days also like the days of
an ostrich?] Is not the whole life of miserable man
a perpetual conflict with various troubles? and must
he not at best undergo much toil, labour, and wear-
iness?

Ver. 2. As a servant earnestly deviseth the shadow,
and as an ostrich longeth for the refreshment of the
shade; or the labourer longeth for the
evening, when he may rest and be paid for his
pains?

Ver. 3. So am I made to possess months of vanity,
and wearisome nights are appointed me.] I am sure my days are no less void of contentment than theirs; and in the night, when men are wont to forget their sorrows, I can do nothing but restlessly increase them.

Ver. 4. When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossing to and fro unto the dawning of the day.] I no sooner am laid down, but I wish to be up again; and the night seems very tedious while I toss up and down in unquiet and tormenting thoughts, calling for the morning.

Ver. 5. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.] How can I do otherwise, when my body is nothing but ulcers, full of worms, and crustèd over with scabs; which have made such cleats in my skin, that I am loathsome to myself?

Ver. 6. My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.] All my happy days are run away in a moment, and there is no hope I should recover them.

Ver. 7. O remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good.] O my God, remember how short the most pleasant life is, which, when it is gone, I cannot live over again.

Ver. 8. The eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more: thine eyes shall be upon me, and I am not.] I can never return to my friends after I have left them: thou dost but frown upon me, and I vanish quite out of the world.

Ver. 9. As the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away; so be thou gone down to the grave, shall come up no more.] Just so, a cloud dissolves on a sudden before the sun, so doth man sink down into his grave, and appear no more.

Ver. 10. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.] He must make his habitation there, for his house he cannot return; but others shall take his place, which will no longer acknowledge him the owner of it.

Ver. 11. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.] Suffer me then to speak freely, and to give vent to my grief, by complaining a little of the inexpressible misery which oppress me.

Ver. 12. Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?] Am I like a sea, or a whale, (or wild beast), that must be shut up and confined under these insupportable sufferings, and by no means break through them?

Ver. 13. When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint.] If death may not come, and an end to them, we would have hoped; at least to have some intermission of them by sleep.

Ver. 14. Then thou scatterest me with dreams, and rolldest me through visions.] But then I am haunted with such frightful dreams, and such horrid apparitions.

Ver. 15. So that my soul droppeth straggling and death, rather than my life.] That I had much rather die the most violent death, than carry this carcass any longer about with me.

Ver. 16. I loath it, I would not live alway; let me alone, for my days are vanity.] It is loathsome to me; I would not, if I might, live always in it. Dismiss me, therefore, since I have no pleasure in life, which of itself will end shortly.

Ver. 17. What is man, that thou magnify him? and that thou settest thine heart upon him?] Is mortal man so considerable, that thou shouldst honour him so much as to contend with him, and set thyself against him?

Ver. 18. And that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?] That thou shouldst send new afflictions on him every morning; nay, try his strength and courage every moment?

Ver. 19. How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spirit?] It is time to turn away thy displeasure from me; at least for so short a space, as to give me leave to breathe.

Ver. 20. I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?] I am not able to give thee satisfaction for my offences against thee, O thou observer of men! But why dost thou not remove me quite out of thy sight, if I be a burden to thee?

Ver. 21. And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.] Or else forgive my sins, and so far release me from its punishment, as to let me die; which I shall do presently, and not be found in mourning to endure these afflictions, if thou dost not still hold me under them.

C H A P. VIII.

The Argument.—The foregoing apologies of Job, it seems, made little impression on his friends: for he had no sooner done, but another of them, called Bildad, continued the dispute, with as little intermission, as there was between the messengers that brought him (chap. i.) the sad tidings of his calamities. And it doth not appear by his discourse, that he differed at all in his principles from Eliphaz: For though he give him very good counsel, yet be still presses this as the sense of all antiquity, (ver. 8.), that God ever prospered the just, and rooted out the wicked, be they never so flourishing for a season. And he being descended from Shem, one of Abraham’s sons by Keturah, (Gene. xxxv. 2.), seems to me to have a particular respect, in this appeal to history, unto the records which then remained of God’s blessing upon that faithful man’s posterity, who hitherto, and long after, continued in his religion; and of the extirpation of those eastern people, (neighbours to Job), in whose country they were settled, because of their wickedness.
THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, When Job had made an end of his discourse, Bildad (another great friend of his, descended from Shuah, one of Abraham’s sons by Ketura) reprehended him in the same manner as Eliphaz had done, saying;

Ver. 2. How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind? Why dost thou persist to talk on this fashion, and with such vehemence expostulate with God?

Ver. 5. Dost God pervert judgement? or doth the Almighty pervert justice? Dost thou imagine the supreme Judge will not do thee right? or that he who needs nothing, will swerve from the rules of equity?

Ver. 4. If thy children have sinned against him, and have cast them away for their transgression; Is it not now reasonable to think that thy children had highly offended him; for which cause he took a sudden and hasty vengeance on them?

Ver. 5. If thou wouldst seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplications to the Almighty, And that if thou didst now (instead of complaining) implore his grace and favour with humble supplication;

Ver. 6. If thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. And wert thyself sincere in heart, and upright in thine actions, he would certainly have a regard to thee, and restore thy family to its former splendour.

Ver. 7. Though thy beginning was small, yet by latter end should greatly increase. I am confident, thou art not now so low, but in time he would make thee as high, nay, far more eminent than thou wert before.

Ver. 8. For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. I do not desire thee to take my word for it; but let those who are gone before thee instruct thee, and search diligently into the histories of the most ancient times.

Ver. 9. (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.) (For, alas! we are not old enough to understand much; being able to make but few observations, by reason of the exceeding shortness of our lives.)

Ver. 10. Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart? They will not fail to inform thee right; and out of their long experience, and the prudent observations of many ages, justify the truth of my words.

Ver. 11. Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? The rushes and flags, we see, can shoot up no higher, when they want their mud and moisture.

Ver. 12. While it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. There is no need to stop their growth by cutting them down; for they will wither of themselves, even when they are fresh and green; while small herbs, which want not water, continue their beauty.

Ver. 13. So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish: Just such is the condition of all those who neglect God, (without whose blessing none can flourish); who knows him also that counterfeits piety, and will defeat him of the happiness he expects.

Ver. 14. Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web. He may flatter himself with vain hopes, and be so much the more miserable; for the things wherein he trusts, are as weak as a spider’s web.

Ver. 15. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: be files bold it fast, but it shall not endure. He may fancy his family to be so great and potent, that it will support him; but it shall fall as well as himself: he may endeavour to keep it up by strong alliances, but to no purpose.

Ver. 16. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. Nay, he may seem to all the world, as well as to himself, to be like a flourishing tree, which spreads its branches in a fair garden.

Ver. 17. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones. Whose roots have wretched themselves thick about the earth, and whose head lifts up itself above the highest edifices.

Ver. 18. If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee. But when God blasts him, and plucks him up by the roots, there shall remain no remembrance that such a man ever lived in that place.

Ver. 19. Behold this is the joy of his ways, and out of the earth shall others grow. Believe it, the pleasure such men take in their prosperous estate is no better than this; and out of the dust shall others spring-up, and flourish in their stead.

Ver. 20. Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will be he the evil-doer. It is a certain truth, that God will not desert the upright, nor will he uphold the wicked.

Ver. 21. Till be full thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. Thou thyself (if thou art upright) shalt still be so blessed by him, that thou shalt not be able to contain thy joy within thy heart; but it shall appear in thy countenance, and burst out into joyful songs.

Ver. 22. They that hate thee shall be ashamed with shame, and the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to nought. They that rejoiced at thy fall, shall be perfectly confounded at thy happy restoration, and never recover themselves, but utterly perish.

CHAP. IX.

THE ARGUMENT.—Job allows what Bildad had well spoken in the beginning of his speech; and very religiously adores the justice, wisdom, and sovereignty of the Almighty; with whom he protests he had no intention to quarrel or dispute, but only
to assert the contrary maxim to that which they maintained, that piety will not secure us from all calamities, which do not ever fall upon those that deserve them. Witness, on one hand, the prosperous estate of wicked princes, ver. 14. (particularly of one great prince, who then somewhere reigned in their neighbouring countries), and, on the other hand, his own infidelity, notwithstanding his known integrity, ver. 25. About this he confesses he was very much unnatived; though he knew it was in vain to argue with God about it, nor would his affliction suffer him to do it.

Ver. 1. THEN Job answered, and said, When he had done, Job began again, and spake in this manner.

Ver. 2. I know it is so: of a truth; but how should man be just with God? There need not so many words to prove what thou saidst in the entrance of thy speech; for I know very well, that God never perverts judgement, and that man cannot justify himself before him.

Ver. 3. If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. If he should go about to answer to a thousand things which may be objected to him, he would hardly clear himself in one.

Ver. 4. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? I adore also his wisdom and power, as well as his justice; and am sensible that no man can be safe who obstinately oppose him.

Ver. 5. Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Though they were as big and as strong as the mountains, he can hastily overturn them in a moment, before they think of it.

Ver. 6. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. For he is able to remove the whole earth out of its place, and shatter the very foundations of it.

Ver. 7. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars. Nor are the heavens subject to his power; for neither sun nor stars can shine if he forbid them.

Ver. 8. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and extendeth upon the waves of the sea. He alone commands the clouds to cover them, and makes the sea swell and lift up his waves.

Ver. 9. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. All the constellations of heaven obey him in their several seasons: both those which we see, and those in the other hemisphere.

Ver. 10. Which doth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. In short, I agree with Epiphanius, (ver. 9,) that the wonders he doth are immeasurable, and past my comprehension.

Ver. 11. In whose hand shall the eyelash be numbered, and the hair of my head. He sets them before my eyes continually, and yet I am not able to number them.

Ver. 12. Be not therefore afraid, who can smite thee? who will say unto him, What dost thou? If he snatch away any thing suddenly, who can make him restore it, or cause him to give an account why he did it? Ver. 13. If GOD will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. If he will continue his displeasure, there is no remedy; but the proudest undertakers must confess their inability to relieve us.

Ver. 14. How much less shall I answer him, and cause out my words to reason with him? What am I then, poor wretch, that I should contend with his anger? Or where shall I find out words choice enough to plead with him?

Ver. 15. Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication unto my judge. It is not fit for me to open my mouth before him in the justest cause, unless it be to supplicate his favours when he judges me.

Ver. 16. If I bad called, and he bad answered me; yet would I not believe he bad hearkened unto my voice. And if I had made supplication, and he had granted my desire, I would not think my prayer had done the business, (or believe myself to be out of danger).

Ver. 17. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and maketh my wounds without cause. For I am not conscious of any guilt: and yet you see with what violent blasts he hath snatched me and my family in pieces, and given me one wound after another.

Ver. 18. He will not suffer one to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness. No sooner was one pass, but another immediately followed; which have left me not the least pleasure in life.

Ver. 19. If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgement, who shall set me a time to plead? If I stand upon my might; alas! it is not to be named with his: if upon my right, what judge is there above him, to appoint us a day of hearing?

Ver. 20. If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse. If I should justify myself, there would be something in my very plea to condemn me: it will render my cause worse to pretend I am innocent.

Ver. 21. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life. Though I were so, yet I would not be mine own judge in the case: I do not value my life so much, as to contend about it.

Ver. 22. This is one thing, therefore I said it, he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. All that I affirm in this, and I persist in that opinion, that he lets the innocent suffer and things, as well as the guilty.

Ver. 23. If the justarts say publicly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. When a plague comes which kills in a moment, he regards not though it fall on the innocent.

Ver. 24. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the face of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he? And on the other sides, (so false is your discourse), we see the government of the earth given into the hands of a wicked prince, who blinds the eyes of his judges. If you deny all this, tell me, where is the man, and what is his name who administers things uprightness?

Ver. 25. Now my days are swifter than a post: they
Ver. 1. My soul is weary of my life, I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.] And since life is a burden to me, which can find no ease but only in complaining, I will take that liberty, (for it is in vain to contend against it, ix. 27.), though no words can express my anguish and misery.

Ver. 2. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou whatsoever with me.] O thou supreme Judge of all, do not pronounce thy final sentence against me, till thou hast first shewn me what the crimes are for which I suffer.

Ver. 3. Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress? that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands? and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?] What benefit wilt thou receive by my spoils? or is it agreeable to thee to slight thine own workmanship, and to countenance the reasonings and designs of evil men?

Ver. 4. Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?] Hast thou judge of things as men do, who can see no farther than the outside, or are led by their affections?

Ver. 5. Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days?] Must thou take time, as we do, to find out the truth, and understand the bottom of a business?

Ver. 6. That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?] Is that the reason thou usest me thus severely, and hast laid me upon a rack, and as it were examined what I have done amiss?

Ver. 7. Thou knowest that I am not wicked, and there is none that can deliver me out of thine hand:] Surely thou (whose vengeance none can escape) knowest, without the help of such torments, that I am not guilty.

Ver. 8. Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together, round about; yet thou dost destroy me.] There is no part of me but was most elaborately made and fashioned by thee, (and therefore thou canst not be ignorant of me), though now thou art about to ruin me.

Ver. 9. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Need I put thee in mind that I was formed by thee, as the potter works the clay into what shape he pleases, and now thou art crumbling me in pieces again?

Ver. 10. Hast thou not peered me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese?] Didst not thou gather all the scattered parts together, and compact them in my mother's womb?

Ver. 11. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews:] And first cover them with skin, and then with flesh, and at last strengthen them with bones and sinews.

Ver. 12. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit:] And in due time bring me into the world, and give me all the comforts of life, and by thy constant care preserve both it and them.

Ver. 13. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.] Thou canst not have
forgotten these things; and I am sure that this mis-
ery I now endure is not without thy order.
Ver. 14. If I sin, then thou markest me; and thou
wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.] I cannot offend
thee in the least, but thou (by whom I was thus for-
med) must needs know and observe it, and I cannot
avoid thy punishment for it.
Ver. 15. If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be
righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: I am full of
confusion, therefore see thou mine affliction.] If I be
wicked, I am undone; and if I be righteous, I am
so oppressed that I cannot look upon what a lament-
able confusion I am in, beholding nothing but misery
which way soever I cast mine eyes.
Ver. 16. For it increaseth: thou b ancest me as a fierce
lion; and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.] For
it grows greater and greater, while thou pursueth
me as a lion doth his prey; and when I hope there is
an end of my troubles, sendest more to fill me with
new astonishment and horror.
Ver. 17. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and
increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are
against me.] Fresh witnesses of thine anger rise up
against me: thou multipliest thy plagues upon me, so
that there is no end, but only a change of my con-
flicts.
Ver. 18. Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth
out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and
no eye had seen me!] And therefore I cannot but wish,
as I did at the first, that my mother's womb had been
my grave: happy had it been for me if I had died
there, and never come into this miserable world:
Ver. 19. I should have been as though I had not been;
I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.
Or that I had died as soon as I was born, and been
carried from the womb to the grave;
Ver. 20. Are not my days few? cease then, and let
me alone, that I may take comfort a little:] To which
I am now very near. May I beg, therefore, but this
one favour, that since thou wilt not quite remove thy
hand, thou wilt forbear a while to strike, and let me
breathe and refresh myself a little
;  
Ver. 21. Before I go whence I shall not return, even
to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death:] Before
I depart thither from whence I shall not return,
(to ask any more favours), be laid, I mean, in my
grave, the place of dismal darkness:
Ver. 22. A land of darkness, as darkness itself, and
of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the
right is as darkness.] Where it is as dark as dark can
be; and there is no succession of day and night, as we
have here, but one perpetual night.

CHAP. XI.
THE ARGUMENT.—This chapter gives an account of
the sense of Zophar about the business in dispute.
It is uncertain whence he was descended; but prob-
ably he dwelt upon the borders of Idumea, for
there we find an ancient city called Naamah, (Josh.
xv. 42; ) and from thence came to visit Job in his
affliction. But instead of joining with him in his
prayer for a little respite from his pain, (with which
Job had concluded his last discourse), he calls him
an idle talker, and accuses him of irreverence to-
towards God. Concerning whose incomprehensible
counsels, and irresistible power, &c. he discourses
with great sense, and gives Job exceeding good ad-
vice; but still follows the opinion of the other two
friends, that he would not have been so miserable,
if he had not been wicked.
Ver. 1. THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and
said, Here a third friend of Job's (Zo-
phar of Naamah) began to speak with no small pas-
sion;
Ver. 2. Should not the multitude of words be answer-
ed? and should a man full of talk be justified?] Dost
thou think to stop our mouths with abundance of
words; and by thy talkativeness to persuade us thou
art innocent?
Ver. 3. Should thy lips make men bold shew their grace
and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?
] Must we not confute thy false allegations, but suffer
thee to be insolent, because thou art miserable?
Ver. 4. For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and
I am clean in thine eyes.] For thou pretendest not to
have offended either in word or deed, and that God
himself can find no reason to condemn thee.
Ver. 5. But, Oh that God would speak, and open his
lips against thee.] O that he would vouchsafe to
shew thee thine error, and with his own mouth con-
fute thee!
Ver. 6. And that he would shew thee the secrets of
wisdom, that they are double to that which is know-
t, therefore, that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniqui-
ty deserves.] That he would shew thee the secret
reasons of his wise counsels (which far surpass thine)
in this affliction; and make thee know that he would
be just, if he should punish sin more severely.
Ver. 7. Canst thou by searching find out God? canst
thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?] Art thou
able, after all thy busy inquiries, to give an account
of God's judgements, and perfectly comprehend the
reasons of his providence?
Ver. 8. It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do?
deepen than hell, what canst thou know?] Thou may-
est as well take a measure of the height of heaven,
or of the depth of hell.
Ver. 9. The measure thereof is longer than the earth,
and broader than the sea.] The earth and the sea, as
long and as broad as they are, have their bounds, but
that hath none.
Ver. 10. If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together,
then who can hinder him?] If he seize upon any
thing, and shut it up, (as a hunter doth his prey in a
net), he will gather it, and who shall force him to
restore it?
Ver. 11. For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wicked-
ness also, will be not then consider it?] For he knows
vain men, (who mind not what they say or do), he
sees their most hidden wickedness, and will not he
punish it?
Ver. 12. For vain man would be wise, though man

be born like a wild ass’s colt.] Shall man void of understanding take the confidence to dispute with God? man, who is naturally as rude and blockish as a wild ass's colt?

Ver. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.* If thou art truly wise, cease disputing, and fall to prayer.

Ver. 14. *If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.* If thou art guilty of any sin, banish it quite away, and reform thyself and thy family.

Ver. 15. *For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.* For then shalt thou look cheerfully again, and be perfectly freed from this loathsome condition; yea, thou shalt be settled without any fear of losing thy happiness.

Ver. 16. *Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.* Which shall be so great, that it shall blot out the remembrance of thy past miseries; or thou shalt think of them as of waters that are run away, and will return no more.

Ver. 17. *And thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.* The rest of thy life shall be more glorious than the sun at noon: even thy darkness shall be like the morning-light.

Ver. 18. *And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.* Thou shalt be confident though any evil threaten thee, because there is hope God will deliver thee; thou shalt dig wells of water, and none shall disturb thy tents or thy flocks.

Ver. 19. *Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.* Thou shalt be in perfect peace, and none shall disquiet thee: yea, the multitude shall sue to thee for thy favour, and the greatest persons shall desire thy friendship.

Ver. 20. *But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape; and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.* But the wicked shall in vain look for happiness: they shall not escape their deserved punishment, but their hope of deliverance shall faint away.

**CHAP. XII.**

The Argument.—In this chapter Job taxes all his three friends with too great a conceit of their own wisdom, which had not, as yet, taught them common humanity to the miserable: And lets them understand, that he needs not come to them to learn, but might rather teach them the falseness of that proposition, wherewith Zophar had concluded his speech, concerning the infelicity of the wicked. For the contrary, he tells them, was obvious to sense, ver. 7. 8. &c. And as for what Zophar had discoursed of the wisdom and power of God, he would have them know, that he was as well skilled in those points as the best of them, and understood much of the history of ancient times; particu-
Ver. 25. They grope in the dark without light, and be makest them to stagger like a drunken man.] Blind men see as much as they; and their counsels and motions are as uncertain as that of a man in drink.

The Argument.—From the foregoing observations, Job still continues to assert, first, his own understanding to be equal, or rather superior, to theirs, who had better, therefore, rather learn of him, and know that God was not pleased to have his providence defended by untruths, nor to see men partial, though it was in his behalf; and, secondly, his own integrity to be such, that he would ever defend it against all accusers, even before God himself; whom he desires to take cognisance of the cause, and to let him understand what the crimes were for which he was thus severely handled. For he protests that he was ignorant of them, though the punishments he had endured were more than sufficient to awaken the sense of his guilt, he being almost consumed by them.

Ver. 5. Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.] I have said nothing, I would have you know, but what I myself have observed, or received from credible reports, which I have found to be certainly true.

Ver. 2. What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior unto you.] Whereby you may see I had reason to say, that I know as much as you, and am not to learn of you.

Ver. 3. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.] Would to God I might speak with him, and lay my reasons open before him, and be troubled with your discourses no longer.

Ver. 4. But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.] For your conclusions are false; and, like unskilful physicians, you exasperate the diseases which you cannot cure.

Ver. 5. Oh that you would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom!] The best proof of your wisdom would be, to say never a word more of these matters.

Ver. 6. Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.] But listen a little to me, I beseech you, and hear by what reasons I will defend myself.

Ver. 7. Will you speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?] Dost thou stand in need of untruths to justify his proceedings? Cannot he be righteous, unless I be wicked? : .

Ver. 8. Will you accept his person? will ye contend for God?] Hath he so little right on his side, that you must shew him favour? or do you think to oblige his majesty by doing me wrong?

Ver. 9. Is it good that he should search you out? or, as one man mocketh another, do you so mock him?] Will it be to your advantage, think you, that God should strictly examine all you have said? or can he be deceived with your flatteries, as frail men may be?
Ver. 10. He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.] No; he will severely chastise you, for designing to gratify him by condemning me.

Ver. 11. Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?] The incomparable excellence of God; one would think, should have frightened away such a thought; and his dreadful Majesty made you not presume to imagine he wanted your patronage;

Ver. 12. Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.] Whose remonstrances on his behalf are no better than dust; and the arguments you accumulate, but like so many heaps of dirt.

Ver. 13. Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.] Keep silence, therefore, and do not disturb me in my speech; for I will omit nothing.

Ver. 14. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?] And I am so conscious to myself of my innocence, that I must still wonder why I suffer such enraged miseries, and am exposed to so many dangers.

Ver. 15. Though be slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him.] Assurance yourselves I will never forego this plea, but still maintain mine innocence, though I were at the last gasp, and had no hope of life.

Ver. 16. He also shall be my salvation; for an hypocrite shall not come before him.] And I am confident God himself would vindicate it; for I am no hypocrite, nor shall false accusations be admitted at his tribunal.

Ver. 17. Hear diligently my speech and my declaration with your ears.] Do not interrupt me, but give due attention to what I am about to say.

Ver. 18. Bobold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified;] See, I beseech you, I refuse not to be tried, but have framed a process against myself; and am so sure of the goodness of my cause, that I know I shall be acquitted.

Ver. 19. Who is he that will plead with me?] For now if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.] Let who will come and accuse me, I am ready to answer; for to hold my peace, on so just an occasion, is death to me.

Ver. 20. Only do not two things unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee.] Let me only beg, O great Judge of all! that thou wilt forbear to make use of two things against me; and then I will appear confidently, to plead my cause before thee.

Ver. 21. Withdraw thine hand far from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid.] Do not continue my pain, and let not the sight of thy Majesty put me in disorder.

Ver. 22. Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me.] Then summon me to thy bar, and charge me, and I will defend myself; or let me question thee, and do thou clear thy proceedings against me.

Ver. 23. How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.] Tell me, and how many are mine iniquities and sins,

for I am ignorant of them; I desire to know them all, great and small, against thee, or against my neighbour.

Ver. 24. Wherefore diest thou thy face, and buildest me for thine enemy?] For what cause am I thus afflicted, and used as if I was thine enemy?

Ver. 25. Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?] What honour wilt thou get by employing thy power against one who is no more able to stand before thee than the leaf to resist the wind which sports with it, or the dry stubble the fire which instantly consumes it?

Ver. 26. For thou writest bitter things against me, and maketh me to possess the iniquities of my youth.] For thou hast passed severe decrees against me, and punished me for the crimes which were committed before I well knew what I did.

Ver. 27. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.] And thou dost execute them as severely; for I can no more escape than a malefactor, whose feet are in the stocks, who is encompassed with a vigilant guard, and cannot stir a foot from the place where he is.

Ver. 28. And be as a rotten thing consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.] But there he rots and wastes away, as I do, like a garment that is eaten by the moths.

CHAP. XIV.

THE ARGUMENT.—The good man proceeds to plead with God for some mitigation of his miseries, from the consideration of the shortness of life, and the trouble that naturally belongs to it; which he thought might move him not to add any greater burden of suffering, especially considering, that when he is dead, he cannot come into the world again, (as the plants do), to receive the marks of his favour; which he hopes, therefore, he will bestow upon him here, notwithstanding the depth of his misery, (which tempted him to the borders of impatience, ver. 13.), it being very easy for him to remove his affliction, though never so heavy, whose power is so great, that he removed mountains out of their place, and brought a deluge, as we may say, of sand, (as they saw sometimes in their neighbouring countries), to overflow the most fruitful regions.

Ver. 1. MAN that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.] Man is born to die; and as he cannot live long, so his short life is subject to many cares.

Ver. 2. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; be fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.] He may be compared to a flower, which is beautiful indeed, but suddenly cropt; or to the shadow on a dial, which never stands still, but is hastening away apace.

Ver. 3. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgement with thee?] And
dost thou concern thyself so far about such a wretch, as to summon him before thy tribunal, and there pass dreadful sentences against him, as thou dost against me?

Ver. 4. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.] The common frailty of humanity might make thee overlook him; for nothing, thou knowest, can be better than the original from whence it comes.

Ver. 5. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.] Or if he were more considerate than he is, yet, since he can live but to such a time as thou hast pre-fixed, beyond which he cannot prolong his days one moment:

Ver. 6. Turn from them, that he may rest, till she shall accomplish, as an hireling, bis day.] That, I should think, might move thee not to torment him in this manner, but to let him alone till that appointed time come, which will be as welcome to him, as the end of his labour is to the hireling.

Ver. 7. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.] And after that, there is more hope of a tree than of him; for if it be cut down to the very ground, the body of it will grow again, and thrust out new branches.

Ver. 8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground:] Nay, though it hath been so long cut down, that the roots of it are grown old, and the trunk seems quite dead;

Ver. 9. Yet through the scent of waters it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.] Yet, when it is well moistened, it will shoot up again, and bring forth boughs, as if it were but newly planted.

Ver. 10. But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?] But when man dies, he crumbles into dust; and none can set it together, to make him live again.

Ver. 11. As the waters fail from the sea, and the floods decayeth and drieth up; As lakes and great rivers are dried up, when their waters find a new channel:

Ver. 12. So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the heavens be no more: they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.] So man laid down in his grave shall come no more hither; but in that bed of dust shall sleep perpetually.

Ver. 13. Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!] I wish I were buried alive, rather than suffer such things; or that I could take sanctuary somewhere till this storm be over; or at least that thou wouldst set me a certain time when thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 14. If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.] Then (though there be no hope of living here again after I am dead) thou shalt see I will patiently wait all the days of that appointed time, till that happy change come;

Ver. 15. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.] Do thou speak me the word, and it shall be done; shew thou hast some love to thy own workmanship.

Ver. 16. For now thou knowest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin?] Though now thou seest to number every step I have trod in all my life, and dost not spare to punish every fault.

Ver. 17. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou seest it up mine iniquity.] Having taken as great care the memory of them should not be lost, as if they had been sealed up in a bag, and added one punishment to another.

Ver. 18. And surely the mountains falling contumely to nought; and the rock is removed out of his place.] Yet notwithstanding, the highest mountains may fall like a leaf, and the rock be removed from his place.

Ver. 19. The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth, and thou destroyest the hope of man.] The waters, though soft, wear away the hard stones; and the very dust or sand sometimes overflow the fruitful fields: why, therefore, (since such strange and unexpected things come to pass), may there not be some hope for a miserable man?

Ver. 20. Thou prevailst for ever against him, and he is past; thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.] Who is not able to stand before thee; but must yield and be gone for ever when thou requirest; thou spoilest his beauty, and sendest him away into another world.

Ver. 21. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them:] And then, whether his children, whom he leaves behind, be rich, or whether they be poor, it is indifferent to him; for he knows not what passes here.

Ver. 22. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn:] But while he is in flesh he cannot but be in pain for them, and his soul is inwardly grieved to see their misery.

CHAP. XV.

THE ARGUMENT.—In this chapter Eliphaz renewes the dispute with more eagerness and fierceness, than before; being very angry that Job slighted them so much, and thought himself so wise, (as he interpreted it), that he disdained their exhortations, and would not follow the counsel they had given him, of confessing his sin, and praying to God for forgiveness; (ver. 8. viii. 4-5. 6.): But, except this one argument, (that he need not be ashamed to confess his guilt, when he considered how prone all men are to sin), there is nothing new in his discourse; but he merely urges what he had asserted at first, from his own, and the wisest men's observations, that they are not the good, but the wicked, whom God punishes with such calamities as now were fallen upon Job. And with great ornamens of speech, he most admiredly describes the vengeance which God is wont to take upon impious tyrants.
having his eye, I suppose, upon Nimrod, or some such mighty oppressor.

Ver. 1. THEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, "Then Eliphaz, intrenched with these reproaches, rose up again, and said,

Ver. 2. Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?" Dost thou pretend to be wise, who answerest us with such empty discourses; and whose heart is sworn with such pernicious opinions, and venteth them with so much vehemence?

Ver. 3. Should be reason with unprofitable words, or with speech whereunto he can do no good? Is this thy wisdom which teacheth thee to wrangle to no purpose, and to pour out words for which one is never the better?

Ver. 4. Yea, thouatest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God. The better, did I say? They destroy all religion, and discourage men from pouring out their complaint in prayer to God.

Ver. 5. For thy mouth uttereth pride, the sin of iniquity, and thou openest the mouth of the crafty. Thou rather teachest them to dispute with him; whereby thou hast proclaimed thine iniquity, while with fallacious words thou seekst how to disseminate it.

Ver. 6. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips testify against thee. I need produce no further testimony against thee; for thine own mouth hath done the business, and condemneth thee of impiety.

Ver. 7. Are thou the first man that was born? or hast thou made before the hills? Thou art but a man, why dost thou talk as if thou wert God, or at least wert made before the world?

Ver. 8. Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? Hast thou admitted into God's secret counsels, and thereby engrossed all wisdom to thyself?

Ver. 9. Whom knowest thou that thou knowest not? what understandest thou which is not in thee? Wherein (to retort thy own words upon thee) dost thou know knowledge exceed ours? Let us hear what secret thou hast learnt, which we do not understand.

Ver. 10. With us are both the grey-headed, and very aged men, much older than thy father. If by age and long experience men acquire wisdom, there are some of us who are much older than thy father.

Ver. 11. Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee? Why dost thou slight, then, those divine consolations which we have given thee? Hast thou sought some secret ones, which no body else knows of?

Ver. 12. Why dost thinl heart carry thee away? and what dost thou think wise against God, and fustest such words to out of thy mouth? Nay, oppose thyself to God, and take the boldness to argue with him?

Ver. 13. What is man, that he should be clean?

be which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Those will maintain thy innocence, then sayest; but thou forgettest sure what thou art, and whence thou comest; else thou wouldst not stand upon thy justification, nor complain that thou art wronged.

Ver. 15. Behold, be put to trust in his saints; yea, the devotions are not clean in his sight. Remember what I told thee before, (iv. 18.), that the angels are not immutably good; the heavenly inhabitants, if any, are not without their spots.

Ver. 16. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? What a loathsome and filthy creature, thou, is man, who is prone to sin, as he is to drink when he is dry?

Ver. 17. I will shew thee, be, and will shew that which I have seen, I will declare. Do not stay thine own, while I shew thee thine error, and I will say wailing but what thine own eyes have seen.

Ver. 18. Whose wise men have been cast from their fathers; and have not lived it. And which wise men have been observed; and their fathers before them; who have reported it to their children.

Ver. 19. Unto whom alone the counsel was given, and no stranger passed among them. And they are messengers neither, but such as were about thought worthy to be entrusted with the government of the whole country; which no foreign power could enter (as they have done thine) while they ruled.

Ver. 20. The wicked man troubleth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hid unto the oppressor. The wicked tyrant (this is their said by my observation) is never free from inward moment; all his life long he is in dread of some greater oppressor than himself.

Ver. 21. A dreadful sound is in his ears, and prosperity the destroyer itself come upon him. This guilt so pursues him, that it makes him fear some ones disliked or other is still falling on him; and in the most pleasant time he doth not think himself in safety.

Ver. 22. He believeth not that he should come out of darkness, and be is waited for of the sword. When he lies down, he is afraid he shall be killed before the morning; and he fadeth nothing but naked swords round about him.

Ver. 23. He wandereth abroad for bread-sapping. Where is it? be budeth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. He shall wander to get a snared of bread where he can find it; and when he hath it, he shall imagine it will prove his poison.

Ver. 24. Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him as a king ready to the battle. The distress and anguish wherein he was himself, shall afflict him; they shall press upon him and overcome him, as a king did his enemies whom he hath surrounded with his forces.

Ver. 25. For as the tempest is against God, and is my breach himself concerning thee? Which will be a just punishment of his venomed impiety; because he defied God, and resolutely set himself in opposition to the Almighty.

Ver. 26. He runneth upon him, even on the neck,
Chap. XVI. Job.

Upon the thick bones of his bucklers:] Who will suddenly lay fast hold on him and kill him, though he be never so well armed.

Ver. 27. Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh crooks of fat on his cheeks:] Because he mindeth nothing but his belly; and, casting away all fear of God, nourisheth up himself in luxury, pride, and haughtiness.

Ver. 28. And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become beaups:] Possessing cities which he hath laid desolate; and houses out of which he hath driven the owners, and which are running to ruin.

Ver. 29. He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth:] But the riches he hath got by such violence and oppression, shall come to nothing: he may design great things, but shall leave them imperfect.

Ver. 30. He shall depart out of darkness, the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall be go away:] When his troubles begin, they shall not end till they have destroyed both him and his children: one word of God's mouth, so mad a thing as it is to set himself against heaven, will utterly consume him.

Ver. 31. Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompence:] Let such examples teach him that is seduced into evil ways, not to trust to such uncertain greatness; for various disappointments shall be all that he will get by it.

Ver. 32. It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green:] He shall meet with them, when he little thinks of it; and see his children wither away as well as himself.

Ver. 33. He shall shake off his unripe fruit as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive:] They shall die before their time; as the unripe grape, or the blossom of the vine or olive, are struck with hail, or bitten off by the frost.

Ver. 34. For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery:] The most number of families of such ungodly men shall have none in them left: the divine vengeance shall destroy the house which was built with ill-gotten goods.

Ver. 35. They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit:] And they justly deserve to be thus punished, because all they design and do is nothing but the oppression and ruin of their subjects: against whom, when one design miscarries, they conceive new acts to undo them.

Chap. XVI.

The Argument.——Job reproves the vanity and obstructor of Eliphaz, in repeating the same things over again, and still persisting in his inhumanity, though he saw his case so pitiable: Which he again describes, to make him sensible how unworthy——Vol. III.
my is enraged against me, and cruelly sets himself to spy out the least occasion to calumniate me.

Ver. 10. They have gazed upon me with their mouths, they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully, they have gathered themselves together against me. There is no small number of such as these, who look like so many wild beasts coming to devour me; having already most shamefully abused me, and joined themselves together, to give full satisfaction to their wrath, wherewith they are filled against me.

Ver. 11. God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked. So God will have it; who hath abandoned the protection of me, and delivered me bound into the hands of the ungodly, to use me at their pleasure.

Ver. 12. I was at ease, but be hath broken me asunder: be hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. How happy was I heretofore! and now I am crushed in pieces. From an eminent condition he hath thrown me down into the most despicable; and there I am exposed (as a butt to the arrow) to all manner of indignities and miseries.

Ver. 13. His archers compass me round about, be cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; be poureth out my gall upon the ground. He is not content to take away all my goods, and destroy my family; but to the reproach of friends, (which strike like so many darts to my very heart), he hath added ulcers in every part of my body, with inward pains, which rack me without intermission; and, in one word, hath so mortally wounded me, as if my bowels were already shed upon the ground.

Ver. 14. He breaketh me with breoch upon breoch, be runneth upon me like a giant. Before one wound be closed, he makes another; and in such violent a manner, that I can make no more resistance, than a dwarf can do against a giant.

Ver. 15. I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my bow in the dust. The sackcloth which I put on at the first, now cleaves so fast to me as if I had sewed it to my skin; and all my authority and honour is changed into contempt.

Ver. 16. My face is foul with weeping, and on my eye-lids is the shadow of death. My face is dirty, and mine eyes in a manner quite put out by the very tears which have fallen from thence.

Ver. 17. Not for any injustice in mine hands; also my prayer is pure. And yet I must say, I never offered such a violence as this to any man, and was always (so false is Eliphaz his accusation, xv. 4,) a sincere worshipper of God.

Ver. 18. O earth, cover not trow my blood, and let my cry have no place. If this be not true, let my blood be left to the dogs to lick when I am dead, and let neither God nor man regard my complaint when I am alive.

Ver. 19. Also now behold my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. But what need of these imprecations? the great God who rules over all is my witness, and can testify how just I have been toward my neighbours, and how pious toward himself.

Ver. 20. My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. From your judgement, therefore, (who, instead of comforting my innocence, scornfully set yourselves to defame me,) I appeal to his; and beseech him with perpetual tears to vindicate me.

Ver. 21. O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour! I am so assured of the goodness of my cause, (as well as of his justice), that I wish for nothing more than to have it speedily heard and tried by him, in the same manner that pleas are held before earthly judges.

Ver. 22. When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return. For my life cannot last long; and I know that when I am gone, I cannot return hither again for him to do me justice.

CHAP. XVII.

The Argument.—Here Job desires he may be tried presently before God's tribunal, his life being just upon the point to expire, as he had said in the end of the former chapter; and continues to urge again in this, because his friends were very unfit judges in the case, and had passed such a sentence upon him, as upright men would never approve of. Whereby they had given him a new vexation to hear them talk so idly, and put him in hope of recovering his happiness if he would follow their admonitions, when they saw him just dropping into the grave, which was the only thing, he saith, that he could hope for.

Ver. 1. My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. My vital spirits are spent, they give but a glimmering and dying light, whereby I can see nothing but graves on every side prepared for me.

Ver. 2. Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? How can I support my spirits, when my friends, who should comfort me, mock at all I say for myself? This so bitterly exasperates me, that I cannot take a wink of sleep, nor think of anything else.

Ver. 3. Say down now, put me in a sorety with thee; who is he that will strike bands with me? Once more, therefore, I beseech thee, O God, to assure me that thou wilt judge my cause thyself: Let somebody undertake for thee: Who is it that on thy behalf will engage to do me right?

Ver. 4. For thou hast hid their hearts from understanding; therefore shalt thou not exalt them. Not these friends of mine, for they comprehend nothing of the way of thy judgements; therefore thou shalt not confer this honour on them who talk so absurdly.

Ver. 5. He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even in the eyes of his children shall fail. I must speak the truth of them, (though it displeaseth them), and not soothe them up in their errors; for he that flatters his friends, when he should reprove them, may look long enough before either he or his children find one that will deal sincerely with them.

Ver. 6. He hath made me also a by-word of the
people, and of a time I was as a tabret.] This very person who spake last hath made me a proverb in every body's mouth; and it is the vulgar pastime to talk of my calamities.

Ver. 7. Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.] No wonder then that excessive sorrow hath darkened mine eyes, and that all the flesh of my body is so consumed, that I am but the shadow of a man.

Ver. 8. Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.] Upright men hereafter will be astonished at the cruel sentence which my friends pass upon me; and the innocent will resolutely oppose the wicked, when he judges the worse of piety, because of my afflictions.

Ver. 9. The righteous also shall hold on his way, and be that bath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.] The righteous will not be moved by such arguments to change his purpose of well-doing, much less will he do any evil action, but grow rather the better by adversity, and add perseverance to his piety.

Ver. 10. But as for you, all, do you return, and come now; for I cannot find: wise man among you.] And truly I wish that all you who have charged me so heavily, would consider things better, and hearken to what I have said; for I must tell you again, there is not a man of you who judges truly of my case.

Ver. 11. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.] Repent of your harsh censures before I die, as I must speedily, my joys being quite gone, and all the hopeful designs which had possessed my heart being utterly subverted.

Ver. 12. They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.] Instead whereof other thoughts are come to torment me, which will not let me sleep in the night, nor enjoy any pleasure in the day.

Ver. 13. If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.] If I hope for anything now, (as you would have me), it is for a grave; that is the only house I can promise myself; there I am going to rest in a bed where I shall not be disturbed.

Ver. 14. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.] I have already made so near an alliance with death, that my father and mother, and nearest kindred, are nothing so near me as worms and rottenness.

Ver. 15. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?] How vain then are all the hopes you would have me feed myself withal? (xi. 15. 16. &c.) Who shall see, when I am sure I shall not, the happiness you would have me look for here?

Ver. 16. They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust. All these hopes you speak of shall sink down into the bottom of the grave, when you, my friends, as well as I, shall take up your lodging in the dust.
danger, every step he takes in pursuance of his designs shall farther ensure him.

Ver. 9. The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him.] Before he is aware he shall find it so impossible to disengage himself, that they who thirst after his blood, or wealth, or place, shall easily lay hold on him.

Ver. 10. The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.] He shall not foresee his danger, but be caught as a bird or a beast in a snare or a trap, when he thinks himself secure in his proceedings.

Ver. 11. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.] Then he shall be surrounded with a thousand terrors; and which way soever he runs to save himself, he shall meet with them.

Ver. 12. His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.] He shall pine away till he hath no strength remaining: for nothing but mischief shall attend and accompany him in every place.

Ver. 13. It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the first-born of death shall devour his strength.] Rottenness shall eat up his bones; I say, his very bones shall rot and be consumed.

Ver. 14. His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.] Whosoever he relies upon for the support of himself and family, it shall utterly fail him, nay, help to hasten his death, the most dreadful of all his enemies.

Ver. 15. It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.] That man had best take heed, who shall have a mind to dwell in his house when he hath left it; for thunder and lightning shall destroy it.

Ver. 16. His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.] And it shall never be built up again, nor shall his family be restored, but be like a tree, whose roots are so dried up in the earth, that it shall never shoot forth any more branches.

Ver. 17. His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.] His very memory shall perish, as well as himself; and his name never be mentioned among men, unless it be to make him infamous.

Ver. 18. He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.] He shall be cast out of his splendid greatness into some obscure grave, and removed out of the world as some unclean thing.

Ver. 19. He shall neither have son or nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.] None of his descendants shall survive him, nor any of his kindred remain to keep up his name.

Ver. 20. They that come after him shall be ashamed at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.] Future times shall read of this severe vengeance of God upon him with astonishment, as they who see it shall be seized with horror.

Ver. 21. Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.] Certain it is, that this is a just description of the miserable condition of the wicked; they that do not honour God shall thus be abased.

Chap. XIX.

The Argument.—The purpose of this chapter (in which Job repeats to Bildad) is to shew, that it would be sufficient for him also merely to repeat the same things as they had done in ten discourses; but the more to aggravate their want of compassion, or rather cruelty, toward him, he represents several new things, which made his condition more deplorable than he had hitherto said. One of which was, that he could not tell the reason why God dealt thus with him; who, notwithstanding, was so gracious, that in the depth of this misery and anguish, he affords him a glimmering of a comfortable hope, (which began now to appear in his soul, and which he had hitherto wanted,) that God would at last take pity upon him, and shew his friends their error, by restoring him to his former health and splendour. That seems to be the literal meaning of the 24th and 25th verses, and of the two next that follow; where, among other things, he says, he doubted not but his Redeemer should stand at last upon the earth, (so it is in the Hebrew, the word day not being there,) that is, quite overcome the devil, and deliver him from these distresses, like a mighty conqueror, who keeps the field when all his opposers are routed and fled away. But in this he was, as St Austin calls him, extremus profetarum, and prophesied of the resurrection of the body at the last day.

Ver. 1. Then Job answered, and said.] Then Job, hearing him also repeat his former discourse, (chap. viii.), wherein he reflected on him as a wicked man, burst out again into these words:

Ver. 2. How long wilt thou vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?] Will you never cease to torment me, and to break my very heart with your words, which grate upon me as sorely as all the miseries I endure?

Ver. 3. These ten times have ye reproached me; yea are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.] You have reproached me often enough, one would think; and yet you are not ashamed to continue your hard-hearted censures, as if I were a perfect stranger, and my manner of life utterly unknown to you.

Ver. 4. And it is indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.] Suppose that I have done amiss, (which is more than you know,) I suffer sufficiently for it; and it doth not become you to increase my sufferings by your reproaches.

Ver. 5. If indeed you will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach; But if you will proceed to lift up your voice to declaim against me, and allude my calamities, which have made me contemptible, as an argument to condemn me;

Ver. 6. Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.] Let this answer
Which is the less wonder, since I am become so loathsome, that my wife will not come near me, though I have conjured her to do it by the dear memory of our children, these common pledges of our mutual love.

Ver. 18. Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me. After these examples, young children and fools despise me; and when I rise up to invite them to me, abusive language is all the return they make to my courtesy.

Ver. 19. All my inward friends abhorred me; and they whom I loved are turned against me. And, which is worst of all, the men whom I entrusted with my greatest secrets cannot endure me; and they who received so many tokens of my love are become mine enemies.

Ver. 20. My bone cleaveth to my skin, and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. All these afflictions have so wasted me, that I am little more than skin and bone; a mouth to complain withal is all the flesh that is left me.

Ver. 21. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me. O ye my friends, (if you still deserve that name), who are the only persons that undertake to comfort me, have pity, have pity, I beseech you, upon a miserable wretch, and consider what wounds the hand of God hath given me.

Ver. 22. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Will you assume the same prerogative, and think you have the same right to afflict me? and doth it not suffice you to see my body all consumed, but you will vex my very soul also with your perverse reasonings?

Ver. 23. Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! Oh that the protestations and appeals I have so often made might remain upon record, and be registered in the public acts and monuments!

Ver. 24. That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! May they be graven upon a plate of lead with an iron pen; nay, cut into a rock or marble pillar, to continue to all posterity!

Ver. 25. For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. For my hope, which was as dead as myself, (xvii. 13; xix. 10.), begins to revive; because, though I seem for the present to be forsaken of God, yet I know that he can hereafter deliver me out of this miserable condition, since he lives for ever; and will, I doubt not, at last appear victorious over all the enemies which now oppress me.

Ver. 26. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: And though the worms which have eaten my skin should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched body, yet I feel my soul inspired with a comfortable belief, that before I die I shall see myself restored, by the mercy of God, to a happy estate.

Ver. 27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. He will not let me always lie under...
these reproaches; but I begin to assure myself, that with these very eyes I shall see him vindicate my innocence; not only others, but I myself shall live to see it: and I even faint away with vehement desire to behold that happy day.

Ver. 28. But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the rest of the matter is found in me? Which will make you repent that you have thus persecuted me, who have not without ground thus long disputed this matter with you, but am sure the right lies on my side, and not on yours.

Ver. 29. Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgement. Take my advice therefore in good time, and dread the just displeasure of God against you for your perverse reasonings, (for his wrath punishes men’s iniquities with the sword, or some such sore vengeance), whereby you will know to your cost, that there is a more righteous judgement than yours.

CHAP. XX.

THE ARGUMENT.—The abrupt beginning of this speech of Zophar shews that he was in a passion: which, though he pretends to bridle it, would not let him calmly consider the protestation which Job had made of his innocence. But he goes on in the old common place of the certain downfall of the wicked, be he never so powerful and well supported. Which he illustrates, indeed, after an excellent fashion, with great variety of figures and remarks upon histories as old as the world. In some of which he had observed, that the wicked after their fall had made notable attempts to get up again; but by the hand of God were so crushed, that they could never rise more. All the allusion in his discourse is this, (which was common to him with the rest), that he imagined God never varied from this method; and therefore Job, without doubt, was a very bad man, though it did not appear he was so any other way, but by his infidelity.

Ver. 1. THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,] Here Zophar, though he had no new thing to produce, hastily interrupted Job, and said,

Ver. 2. Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste.] These words of thine make my former thoughts return again; and do so provoke me, that I am not able to forbear speaking any longer.

Ver. 3. I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.] While thou pretendest to correct my errors, I have heard myself rather shamefully reproached; yet I will not suffer my passion to reply, but the clear light of my understanding shall answer for me.

Ver. 4. Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth:] It seems thou dost not yet understand, though it be a truth as old as the world;

Ver. 5. That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
shall violently force them from him, and all his other riches together with them.

Ver. 16. He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper’s tongue shall slay him.] Which shall prove as great and as deadly a torture to him, as if, when he squeezed the poor, he had sucked the poison of asps, or been bitten with a viper.

Ver. 17. He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of bony and butter.] This shall be his portion, instead of the pleasures of nature and art, which he flattered himself would flow in several streams to him perpetually.

Ver. 18. That which he laboured for shall be restored, and shall not return it down; according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall rejoice therein.] He may endeavour again with new labour to repair his broken fortune; but it shall be in vain: though he should get as much riches as he had before his change, he shall have no joy in them.

Ver. 19. Because he hath oppressed, and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away a house which he builded not:] When he hath with his oppression grinded the poor, and left them destitute, when he hath violently seized on a house, he shall not be able to build it.

Ver. 20. Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired:] When he hath turned, as we say, every stone, and been as restless as a woman in travail; all his pains shall bring forth nothing of that which he desired.

Ver. 21. There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods:] He shall have no more left to eat than he was wont to leave to others, which shall put him out of all hope of mending his condition.

Ver. 22. In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits; every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.] The greater fulness you can suppose him to regain of worldly goods, the more he shall be distressed; for the hand of every man whom he hath afflicted shall lay hold on him to demand satisfaction.

Ver. 23. When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating:] God himself also shall disturb him in his enjoyments, with the sorest effects of his divine vengeance, which shall come pouring down from heaven, when he thinks himself most secure.

Ver. 24. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through:] He shall run from a lesser danger to fall into a greater; as if one avoiding the weapon in a man’s hand, should be shot through with a bow of steel.

Ver. 25. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall; terrors are upon him.] And though he should draw the shaft out of his body, and the wound in his bowels should be healed, he shall not escape so, for terrors shall perpetually accompany him.

Ver. 26. All darkness shall be hid in his secret places; a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.] Nothing but dread.

ful dangers shall wait for him in those places where he hoped for safety: a fire not kindled by man shall devour him, and the same pestilence or burning fever shall take hold of the rest of his family.

Ver. 27. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.] The heaven by thunder, lightning, or tempests, shall declare itself his enemy; and the earth, by wild beasts or serpents, or some other way, shall make war against him.

Ver. 28. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.] His whole revenue shall melt away as waters poured out, in the day when God intends to punish him.

Ver. 29. This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.] This is the portion which God the righteous Judge will allot to the wicked: thus will the Almighty reward his blasphemies, or his other proud and insolent words.

C H A P. XXI.

THE ARGUMENT.—To bring the dispute to a speedier issue, Job (after a short preface, reproving their incivility) comes close to the business; and doth not content himself merely with denying what they had said, but shews them where the fallacy in their discourse lay; viz. in concluding an universal from some particulars. For he maintains from as good history and observations as they could produce, that though God do not make some wicked men such examples of his vengeance as they had said, yet he lets others, and they of the vilest sort, Atheists and deniers of Divine Providence, live prosperously, and die peaceably, and have stately monuments built to perpetuate their memory. In brief, he shews there is a great variety in God’s proceedings about the punishment of the wicked; which makes them so bold as they are in their impiety: And seems to have respect to the history of Ishmael, who was a wild or barbarous man, grasping at all he could lay his hands on, and persecuting Isaac: and yet had twelve princes descended from him, settled in their several fortresses, as we read, Gen. xvi. 12. xvii. 20. xxv. 16.: And it is possible, to the history of Eliphaz his own country: Esau his ancestor being very rich, (Gen. xxxvi. 6-7.), and having many dukes whose posterity afterward advanced themselves to the title of kings, that sprang from him, before there was any king over the children of Israel, Gen. xxxvi. 15-31.

Ver. 1. BUT Job answered, and said:] But Job, who knew the falseness of this assertion, (in which Zophar secretly struck at him), that God always punishes sinners in this manner, would not let it pass without answer, and therefore said again unto them;

Ver. 2. Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolation:] Let me prevail with you to attend better than you have done hitherto to my discourse: do me this kindness, and it shall serve instead of all the consolations I promised myself from you.
32. **Ver. 3.** Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.] Hear me patiently, and do not so hastily interrupt me, as Zophar just now did, (xx. 2.), who, after I have done, may begin, if he please, to deride me again.

**Ver. 4.** As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?] Have I not all this while made my appeal to God? why then do you interrupt me, and take upon you to pronounce that sentence which I expect from him alone? But if my complaint had been to you, yet, seeing there is just cause for it, can I chuse but be vexed to see you will not hear me patiently?

**Ver. 5.** Mark me, and be astonished, and say your hand upon your mouth.] Consider well my misery, and being astonished at the greatness of it, and of your rudeness, be so civil now as to impose silence on yourselves, while I am speaking to you.

**Ver. 6.** Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling take hold of my flesh.] I am sure I myself am astonished at the very remembrance of it: were I free from it, yet the thought of what is past makes every joint of my body tremble.

**Ver. 7.** Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?] Let me therefore again desire you to answer me this question more leisurely; if what you have said be true, how come we to see so many wicked men, not only enjoy all the good things of this life, but grow old in their enjoyment, and want no honour or power to which riches can advance them?

**Ver. 8.** Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.] Nay, live to see their children settled in the world; yea, their children’s children grow up like young plants before their eyes.

**Ver. 9.** Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.] There is nobody disturbst their tranquility in any of their habitations; nor doth God inflict any punishment on them for their sins:

**Ver. 10.** Their bull gendereth, and filleth not; their cow calveth, and causeth not balm:] But extends his care even to their herds of cattle, where the kine never fail to conceive, and in due time bring forth their calves, and do not miscarry.

**Ver. 11.** They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.] And so do their flocks of sheep, with whom their wives may be compared; who bring forth their little ones as easily and as numerously; and their children dance about their houses, like the little lambs which skip about their fields.

**Ver. 12.** They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.] They lift up their voice, and sing to the timbrel and harp; they dance for joy at the sound of the pipe.

**Ver. 13.** They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.] In a word, they prolong their days to a great old age, in all manner of pleasure, and then do not lie long languishing on a bed of sickness or pain, but go easily and suddenly to their grave.

**Ver. 14.** Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.] And yet these are the men that never think of God; or, if they do, presently bid those thoughts be gone, for they desire to have nothing to do with him or his laws.

**Ver. 15.** What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? They know no such being, they say, as the Almighty, nor do they owe him any service; and if they should worship and serve him, they do not believe they shall be a whit the better for it.

**Ver. 16.** Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.] Do not imagine that I am of their opinion; I know very well that they cannot make themselves rich and prosperous without God; and therefore, let be it from me to join with them in their impiety.

**Ver. 17.** How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? and how oft waketh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger.] But yet, I say, how oft is it that we see the joy of these wicked men extinguished? Sometimes indeed God takes a speedy vengeance on them, but it is not his usual course to destroy them, and to give them such plagues and torments (as you speak of) for their portion.

**Ver. 18.** They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.] We do not see them, so frequently as you say, driven away like stubble before the wind, and all their estates scattered like the chaff which is blown away with a storm.

**Ver. 19.** God layeth up his iniquity for his children; be rewarded him, and he shall know it.] And when doth God punish the iniquity of the wicked in his children, (as you pretend he always doth, xx. 20.), and that while he lives and beholds it himself?

**Ver. 20.** His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty:] It is not such a common thing as you make it, for him to see his own ruin, and to feel the effects of the dreadful wrath of the Almighty.

**Ver. 21.** For what pleasure daph be in his bones after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?] As for what hefals his children when he is dead, be concerns not himself; it is nothing to him though they be cut off in their most flourishing state.

**Ver. 22.** Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high:] Shall we be so bold as to instruct God how to govern the world? and tell him he is not just, unless he punish the wicked when we expect it? He judges the highest beings, and therefore knows sure how to govern us.

**Ver. 23.** One death in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.] Who must not think to tie him to our rules. For one man dies in the highest and happiest worldly prosperity, meeting with nothing all his days to disturb his quiet and tranquility.

**Ver. 24.** His breasts are full of milk, and his bones
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are moistened with marrow.] Health as well as riches accompany him to the grave; his ribs are fat, and his bones full of marrow, even in his old age.

Ver. 25. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.] When another man (who, perhaps is better than he) dies in great pain and anguish, after a miserable life, in which he never enjoyed any pleasure.

Ver. 26. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.] They shall both alike have the dust for their bed, and worms for their covering; and no distinction that we can see be made between them.

Ver. 27. Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices wherewith ye wrongfully imagine against me.] I am sensible that in all this I very much contradict your thoughts, which are as well known to me as to yourselves: I see by what arguments you are studying to oppress me.

Ver. 28. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwellings-places of the wicked?] I hear you say within yourselves, What is become of the house of Job, who lived like a prince? what difference is there between him and those wicked men, whose dwelling-places are destroyed?

Ver. 29. Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their token?] But let me answer you; or rather go and ask the first passenger you meet with, (for it is a thing vulgarly known), and they are not interested in our disputes, let them tell you their observations about God’s providence:

Ver. 30. That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.] Which all agree in this, that the wicked is spared very often in a common calamity; though it be very general, as well as terrible, yet many of them escape it.

Ver. 31. Who shall declare his way to his face, and who shall tell him what he hath done?] Which makes the wicked so bold, that none dare reprove him: much less is he in danger of being punished for his offences, since God spares him, and man dreads him.

Ver. 32. Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.] The pomp of his funeral is answerable to the splendour wherein he lived; and a stately monument is raised to preserve his memory, and represent him as if he were still living.

Ver. 33. The floods of the valley shall be sweet unto him; and every man shall dwell after him, as there are immeasurable before him.] There he lies quietly in the earth, and none disturbs his ashes; he suffers nothing but what all men shall do after him, as innumerable have done before him.

Ver. 34. How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?] See then how ill you discharge the office of comforters, whose answers have so little truth in them. For you maintain that prosperity is the inseparable companion of prosperity, when every body can tell you, that none flourisheth more than the wicked, and that calamities are common to all mankind.

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CHAP. XXII.

The Argument.—Though Job had clearly stated the controversy in the foregoing chapter, yet Eliphaz would not yield, but begins the combat a third time, without any ground at all, but a pure mistake, as I have expressed it in the first verse. And to avoid the reproof, which has been given him, of repeating merely the same things, he now brings in a catalogue, though without any proof, (so much was his anger and bitterness increased), of the particular sins, both against God and against his neighbour, of which he supposes Job to have been guilty. Else, he still boldly concludes, God would not have punished him with such severity; that there was not a greater instance of his indignation to be found any where, unless it was in the old world, and in Sodom. Yet he hath so much moderation, that he invites him at last to repentance, and promises him the happy fruit of it, as he had done in his first speech, but not in his second. Nay, he tells him in conclusion, for his encouragement, that he should be able to do as much for a nation as ten righteous men, could they have been found there, might have done for Sodom.

Ver. 1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,] Then Eliphaz, not being able to deny all this, and yet not minding the scope of it, (but imagining Job had accused the Divine Providence of injustice, in suffering the wicked to prosper, and the righteous to be afflicted), grew very angry, and said,

Ver. 2. Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?] Is God ever the better for anything that we do? because a wise man receives great benefit by his virtue, shall we think that God is a gainer by it too, and that he is bound to reward it?

Ver. 3. Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou maketh thy ways perfect?] Doth he who needs nothing, (being possessor of all things), desire thou shouldest be righteous for his own advantage? or will it turn to his profit, if thou livest never so unblameably?

Ver. 4. Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?] Or, on the contrary, is he afraid that thou shouldst hurt him by thy sins, and will therefore punish them? Is this the reason that he now afflicteth thee, to prevent the damage they might do him?

Ver. 5. Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?] Are not rather thy sins against God and against men so great and so numberless, that no other cause is to be sought of thy sore and multiplied punishments?

Ver. 6. For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.] For, (to begin with those against man), thou hast
been a tyrant, and exacted pawns of thine own kindred for little or nothing; and hast stript even those of their garments, who had no more but just to cover their nakedness.

Ver. 7. *Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast with-broken bread from the hungry.* Thou hast been hard-hearted to the weary traveller, when thou sawest him ready to die with thirst or with hunger.

Ver. 8. *But as for the mighty man, he bad the earth, and the honourable man dwelt in it.* But as for the great and powerful, all thy estate was at his service; if he brought the title to any land in question, he was sure to carry the cause by thy favour to him:

Ver. 9. *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.* When, at the same time, the poor widow and orphans (whose protection God hath in a special manner commanded to us) could not obtain the favour of having justice done them; but were crushed and broken by thee, and had all the means of defending themselves taken from them.

Ver. 10. *Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee.* Thou art guilty, sure enough, of some such sins as these, which are the cause that now thou art beset with these calamities, and most dreadful plagues have on a sudden confounded thee.

Ver. 11. *Or darkness, that thou cannot see; and abundance of waters cover thee.* O thy blindness! dost thou not yet see how God hath, proportioned thy punishment to his crimes? hath the depth of the afflictions wherein thou art plunged, quite taken away all sense from thee?

Ver. 12. *Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are.* Is not God above the heavens? behold, he is the head and governor of the stars, although they be so high; and therefore, how shouldst thou think to escape his justice?

Ver. 13. *And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he be judged through the dark cloud?* But perhaps thoukest (such is thy impiety against him, as well as cruelty to thy neighbour) that, because he is so high, he minds not what is done here below; or that he cannot discern the difference of things so very remote, through such a mist as is between us.

Ver. 14. *Thick clouds are covering to him, that he seeth not; and is walked in the circuit of heaven.* He is wraped, thou imaginest, in such thick clouds, that they obscure us from his sight: or he is confined to the heavens, and so busied in their affairs, that he hath no leisure to attend to our's.

Ver. 15. *Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?* But didst thou never observe, or hast thou forgotten, the course of the old atheistical world, who ran licendiously into all manner of wickedness?

Ver. 16. *Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overthrown with a flood.* To whom God therefore put a stop, by destroying them before their time, and carrying them quite away with the flood, when they thought themselves firmly settled in the earth;

Ver. 17. *Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?* And were saying, (as thou wouldest have us believe the wicked now do, and yet prosper, xxii. 14.) We have nothing to do with God, nor he with us. Dost thou remember what God then did to them, for their horrid ingratitude to him?

Ver. 18. *Yet be filled their houses with good things; but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.* Who hath filled their houses with all manner of good things: O vile wretches! whose wicked thoughts I abhor as much as thou thyself, (xxi. 16.)

Ver. 19. *The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.* Whose overthrow, Noah and his family beholding, rejoiced in God's righteous judgement: that innocent man derided their incredulity.

Ver. 20. *Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.* Whereas we, who believe God's care and providence, are untouched in our estates; when the felicities of those impious men are devoured by fire from heaven.

Ver. 21. *Arise now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.* Let me advise thee, therefore, (whom God hath not yet quite consumed), to join thyself to the society of the righteous, and to become like Noah: then be secure, and doubt not: but by that means all happiness shall return to thee.

Ver. 22. *Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.* Do not refuse the instruction which such men give thee from God; but heartily embrace it, and faithfully preserve it to be the rule of thy life.

Ver. 23. *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up: thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.* Thou shalt soon feel the comfortable fruits of it; for if thou return to the Almighty, who hath laid thee thus low, he will return to thee, and raise thee up as high as ever: he will pardon thine iniquity, and remove the punishment of it far from thee and thine.

Ver. 24. *Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.* Thou shalt recover all thy losses with usury; and no more value gold than the dirt on which it shall lie, nor the purest gold more than the pebbles in the brook.

Ver. 25. *Tea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.* Thou shalt be as at no pains to secure thy vast heaps of gold and silver; because thy Almighty Restorer, who gave them to thee, will defend them better than the stoutest fortress, and be himself thy treasure.

Ver. 26. *For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.* For then thou shalt be so far from doubting of his care over thee, that thou shalt delight to think how.
he loves thee: thou shalt not be dejected any more, but confidently and cheerfully expect his blessing on thee.

Ver. 27. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and be shall bear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.] Thou shalt ask nothing of him, but thou shalt obtain it; and have abundant cause to be continually giving thanks to him, for his bounteous goodness in fulfilling thy desires.

Ver. 28. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.] Thou shalt accomplish whatsoever thou designest, and all thy undertakings shall be prosperous.

Ver. 29. When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up: and he shall save the humble person.] Thou shalt pray to God also to lift up others, who are in a low condition; and he shall grant thy petitions, by delivering him that is depressed.

Ver. 30. He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thy hands.] Yes, a whole country shall owe its safety to thy innocence: it shall be delivered by thy pious prayers and blameless actions.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.—To the foregoing discourse of Eliphaz, Job thought at first to make no answer, but only by complaints of their injustice, and fresh appeals to God: by whom he desires, more earnestly than ever, to be tried: being assured that he would acquit him. And though for the present God was not pleased to give him audience, (of which he complains with too much passion,) yet he maintains that hope, which began to appear in his soul, (in his last discourse with Bildad, chap. xix.), that God would at last clear him from all the aspersions which were cast upon him.

Ver. 1. THEN Job answered and said,] Then Job, hearing his person thus defamed, and his discourse perverted, renewed his complaints, and said:

Ver. 2. Even to this day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.] Still, my just defence of myself is judged to be rebellion against God: which renders my sufferings heavier than all my sighs and groans can express:

Ver. 3. Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!] And makes me once more appeal to God, and wish I could be admitted into his presence, (so free from the conscience of any guilt), and approach even to his judgment-seat.

Ver. 4. I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.] I would set before him the justice of my cause, and fill my mouth with confessions of your false accusations.

Ver. 5. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.] I would press to know his judgement of me, and diligently attend to the sentence which he would pass upon me.

Ver. 6. Will be plead against me with his great power? No, but he would put strength in me.] Do you think he would make no other use of his absolute power, than to oppress me? I cannot believe it; he would rather employ it to support me.

Ver. 7. There the righteous might dispute with him: should I be delivered for ever from my Judge.] Till at his bar I had proved myself a righteous person, and been perfectly acquitted by him my righteous Judge.

Ver. 8. Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him.] But all these, alas! are vain wishes; for which way soever I turn myself, whether to the east or to the west, I cannot see him appear to do me right.

Ver. 9. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.] He works and moves invisibly in all other quarters of the world; but I can discover nothing he does to clear my innocence.

Ver. 10. But he knoweth the way that I take: when be bath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.] My only comfort is, that though I cannot know all his ways, yet he, being every where, knows the whole course of his life; and when he hath proved me by these afflictions, as gold is by the fire, I doubt not, I shall be cleared from these imputations which you lay upon me.

Ver. 11. My foot hath held his steps: his way have I kept, and not declined. I am sure I have ever followed his guidance, and so steadfastly observed his commandments, that no temptation hath made me swerve from them.

Ver. 12. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.] I have prevented the advice you gave me, (xxii. 21.), having never done otherwise than he bid me, and laid up his words more carefully than my necessary provision for this life.

Ver. 13. But be is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what is his soul desirous, even that he doth.] But for the present, this doth not at all move him to relieve me: he continues his purpose, (whatever it be), and none can alter it, no more than they can hinder the fulfilling of it.

Ver. 14. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.] For what he hath resolved to inflict upon me, that I find he will accomplish: and many such things as these he doth, of which he will not give us the reason.

Ver. 15. Therefore am I troubled at his presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him.] This terrifies me, when I reflect upon it, notwithstanding my innocence: I tremble at the thoughts of his absolute power and unsearchable wisdom, which may think fit still to continue these afflictions:
Ver. 16. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.] Which, by the weight of them, have broken my spirit, and made me so timorous, that I cannot but dread the danger I am in, of suffering more from his Almighty hand.

Ver. 17. Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither bath be covered the darkness from my face.] For still he keeps me alive under all these evils which I endure, and will not let me have the favour to die by that hand which strikes me so severely.

CHAP. XXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.—Upon farther consideration, Job thought good again to confute their rash assertion, about the plagues which always befall the wicked, by an induction of particulars that prove the contrary. Among which the wild Arabs, he tells them, are a notorious instance, whose profession is rapine, and yet they thrive and prosper in it, ver. 3. &c.; and so do the more civilized oppressors, of whom he says something before, and again, ver. 11. 12.; where he seems to reflect upon hard landlords, and grining merchants, and traffickers in cities. To whom he adds murderers, adulterers, pirates, with several other villains, (in the conclusion of the chapter), who notwithstanding die like other men, and are not called to an account for their enormous crimes in this present world.

Ver. 1. WHY, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?] But to answer a little what you have so often asserted: if punishments from the Almighty be so apparent and visible upon the wicked, why do not they who are truly pious see the public and open judgements?

Ver. 2. Some remove the land-marks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.] Especially when the wickedness of some of them is so notorious, that they violate all known rights; seizing on the lands of their neighbours, taking their cattle, and (not content with that) owning it when they have done, by putting them openly to their pastures.

Ver. 3. They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.] If a poor fatherless child have an ass left him to carry his burden, they drive it away on some pretence or other; and have no more mercy than to take of the widow, for the security of her debt, the only ox she hath wherewith to plough her ground.

Ver. 4. They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.] They offer abuses to helpless people upon the high-way, so that the meaner sort dare not appear for fear of their insolence, or their violence.

Ver. 5. Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work, rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.

And you shall see others of them, who (making pil lage their trade) leave the cities and towns, and go to skulk in forests and desert places; where, becoming wild and savage, they live on rapine and spoil; in which they are so diligent, that those wildernesses (where they neither plough nor sow) maintain their families.

Ver. 6. They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.] For they make inroads out of these woods into the neighbouring fields and vineyards, and thee wickedly carry the corn and the grapes, never regarding who is the owner of them.

Ver. 7. They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no other covering in the cold.] They spare not the poor reapers and vintagers; but, stripping them to the very skin, leave them never a rag to defend them from the cold, when they go to rest after their wearisome labours.

Ver. 8. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock, for want of a shelter.] They are exposed (poor wretches!) to the injury of the weather, as they lie asleep at the foot of mountains; they have no whither to run, but into caves and holes of rocks, where they endeavour to shroud themselves, when they see a tempest coming.

Ver. 9. They pluck the fatherless from the brooks, and take a pledge of the poor.] Nay, the persons of men are not safe from the violence of these out-laws; but they snatch away young children from their mother's breasts, and carry away the poor, (pretending they owe them something), to make them their slaves.

Ver. 10. They cause them to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry:] Whom, when they have stolen, they will not allow so much as cloaths to cover their nakedness, nor let him that is ready to starve eat of the sheaf which he hath gleaned.

Ver. 11. Which make oil within their walls, and tread their wine-presses, and suffer thirst.] They cause these miserable creatures to press out their oil and their wine in their cellars; but let them not taste a drop, though they be ready to die with thirst.

Ver. 12. Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yea, God layeth not folly to them.] Whole cities groan under the oppression of some or other of these wicked men, and cry out like those that are dying of their wounds: and yet God, who knows all this, doth not make them examples of his displeasure, nor can we tell when he will punish them for their injustice and cruelty.

Ver. 13. They are of those that rebel against the light: they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.] The world would be very empty, if he should destroy all such persons; for besides these open, there are more secret sinners, who look upon the light as their enemy: they dare not be seen in the day-time; or if they be espied, they presently seek to hide themselves, that they may not be discovered.

Ver. 14. The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.] The murderer, for instance, rises before the sun, to kill those whose poverty calls them up to early labour.
and then lurking all day in the close thickets and woods, he turns robber, and riles rich men's houses in the night.

Ver. 15. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me, and disbelieveth his face.] The adulterer also, whose eye hath let an unlawful love into his heart, waits for the dusk of the evening to favour his lewd desire: then he hopes nobody he meets withal will know him; but lest they should, he wraps his face in his cloak to prevent discovery.

Ver. 16. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.] And when all are at rest, he will dig through the walls of houses, if there be no other way to come at the adulteress: the assignation was made between them in the daytime, and the place then marked out, at which he may most easily enter; but it is the night which brings them together to act the works of darkness.

Ver. 17. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terror of the shadow of death.] These are their delight, and if they chance to sleep too long together, and the morning surprise them, they are ready to die with ear; if any one know them, they are in the very gions of death.

Ver. 18. He is swift as the waters, their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.] To this wicked crew you may add the pirate, who robs upon the sea, and runs from one little cove to another in swift ships: which bring him in so much riches that he despises the employment of those who fill the earth, and plant vineyards, as poor and unprofitable.

Ver. 19. Drought and heat consume the snow-waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.] And yet all these, after they have spent their life in such horrid villainies, do not die of lingering and tormenting diseases; but go down to the grave as easily as snow-water sinks into the dry ground when it is melted by the sun.

Ver. 20. The womb shall forget him, the worm shall feed sweetly on him, he shall be more remembered, and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.] God sets no such mark of his displeasure upon him, but that his mother may soon forget him, the hand of justice doth not hang him on a gibbet for the birds to feed on; but he is carried to his grave like other men, to be the sweet food of worms. There he lies quietly, and neither he nor his wickedness are any more remembered than a tree which is broken all to shivers.

Ver. 21. He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doth not good to the widow.] This is true even of him, who, to hide his villany, kills the child in the womb of her whom he hath deflowered; and when he hath abused a poor widow, makes her no satisfaction.

Ver. 22. He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.] The greatest persons are not able to stand before him: when he rises up to assassinate, there is no man, be he never so strong, is sure of his life.

Ver. 23. Though he be given him to be in safety wherein he resteth, yet his eyes are upon their ways.] Though he give you his hand, and promise you security so solemnly, that you think you may rely upon him, yet he watches all occasions, and lies in wait secretly to do you mischief.

Ver. 24. They are excited for a little while, but are gone, and brought low; they are taken out of the way, as all other, and out off as the tops of the ears of corn.] Thus these impious men flourish, and are lifted up above all other; and then they depart the world without any punishment: they are laid down and shut up in their graves like all other men; nay, they die as easily, (without those tedious pains which some endure,) as the top of an ear of corn is cropt with your hand.

Ver. 25. And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?] All this I know to be so true, that I challenge all the world to disprove me: I am sure it is in any man's power to shew that my discourse is frivolous.

CHAP. XXV.

THE ARGUMENT. The foregoing discourse of Job, in the 24th chapter, was so undeniable, that Bilbadd begins to break off the dispute: For he says not a word to it, but only advises him to speak more reverently of the majesty of God, than he imagined he had done in his appeal to him, chap. xxiii.

Ver. 1. THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said.] Then Bildad, (whose turn it was to speak), being unable to refute what Job had said, only desired him in a few words, to beware how he reflected upon the justice of God, or imagined himself to be just if he examined him. The words were these.

Ver. 2. Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places.] Take heed what thou sayest of God, the sovereign of the world, who ought to be worshipped by thee with the most awful reverence; as he is in the heavenly places, where they never rebel against his orders.

Ver. 3. Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise? Hath he not innumerable troops of angels and other creatures, all ready to execute his pleasure? And where is the man that is out of the verge of his all-overreaching providence?

Ver. 4. How then can man be justified with God? or can he be clean that is born of a woman?] Why then doth such a pitiful wretch as he talk of his rightful condition, before this glorious Majesty? He forgets the condition of his birth, who pretends to purity in his sight.

Ver. 5. Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.] Let a man
Ver. 23. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.] At which the beholders shall rejoice, and applaud God's righteous judgement, which I confess he sometimes executes: They shall hiss at his name when he is dead, in that very place where he hath been so much magnified.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Argument.—The connection of this chapter with the foregoing, I hope I have truly expressed in the first verse. And that being found, it is not difficult to see at what it drives, viz. to stop the busy inquiry of mankind, who are very wise, who shews, in other things, but have not wit enough to comprehend the reasons why God doth not inflict those punishments upon all wicked men, which fall upon some. It is not needful to set down here how this argument is managed, with such admirable elegance of words, and such weightiness of matter, as make it deserve the name of Psalm, Parable, or Proverb, because it will sufficiently appear in the Paraphrase.

Ver. 1. Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold, where they find it.] You would have me give a reason, perhaps, why God punishes some wicked men, and not all; but the wise and industry of mankind, which have discovered mines of silver and gold, must not think to find out this secret, which God hath reserved to himself.

Ver. 2. Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is melted out of the stone.] They invent means to extract iron and brass out of the earth, and out of stone.

Ver. 3. He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection; the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.] There is no mine so dismally dark, but there some man or other sees things: in order for his work, he searches to the very bottom of it, and finds out those stones which lie in the most obscure and hidden parts of the earth.

Ver. 4. The flood breaketh out from the inhabitants; even the waters forgotten of the foot; they are dried up, they are gone away from men.] A flood breaks out from some neighbouring place, and disturbs the miners, (for the waters seem as if they would stagnate there, and never stir a foot;) but, by the hard labour of men, they are drained, and leave the place dry again.

Ver. 5. As for the earth, out of it cometh bread; and under it is turned up as in a meadow fire.] Out of the surface of the earth he gets herbs and corn for his food and sustenance, and underneath it he finds lime and brimstone, and such like fiery stuff, for other uses.

Ver. 6. The stones of it are the place of sapphires; and is bath dust of gold.] He goes into countries where stones are the place where sapphires are lodged, and whose dust is gold as good as gold.

Ver. 7. There is a path wherein no foot knoweth, and which the unwary's eye hath not seen.] He treadeth in paths which no bird of prey knoweth, which the most quicksighted among them hath never seen.

Ver. 8. The dun's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.] Where the wildest beasts, who search for solitary places, never made their den, or so much as approached, no, not the ravenous lions, whose hunger leads them everywhere to seek satisfaction.

Ver. 9. He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.] He diggeth through the hardest rocks by his obstinate labour, and undermines mountains, that he may find the treasure hid in their bowels.

Ver. 10. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks, and his eyes seeth every precious thing.] And if he meet with waters which hinder his work, he cuts a channel through the rock to convey them away, and never rests till he hath discovered every thing that may quite his indefatigable pains.

Ver. 11. He bindeth the floods from overflowing, and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.] Nay, more than this, he stops the course of rivers, and leaves not a drop remaining, that he may bring to light all that is hidden in the bottom of them.

Ver. 12. But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? But though he be so successful in these searches, he must not think to comprehend the reasons of such Providence. He may study as long as he pleases, and weary himself with busy inquiries, but never be able, with all his labour, to dive into the bottom of this secret, why God doth not punish all the wicked who so insolently contend with him.

Ver. 13. Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living.] Alas! this wisdom is not to be purchased with all that wretched man hath to give for it; it is not a thing that any part of this world affords.

Ver. 14. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not with me.] The miners, poor souls, dig they never so deep, are never like to come within the reach of it; nor is it to be fetched by the mariner from any, of those countries, to which he sails.

Ver. 15. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.] All the gold and silver which men have heaped up by such long toil and labour, are too inconsiderable a price to be offered for it.

Ver. 16. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.] Though it be the purest gold which comes from Ophir, together with all the precious stones wherewith that rich country abounds, they are of so little value.

Ver. 17. The gold, and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.] That if you should add the gold, and the crystal which are brought from other places, with all the vessels made by the art of man, of the most refined and massive gold, they could do nothing to obtain it.

Ver. 18. No mention shall be made of coral, or of
pearls; for the price of wisdom is above rubies.] The precious stones which are fetched out of the mountains of the East are not worthy to be named with it; men may dive into the sea, and fetch up pearls, but this wisdom lies a great deal deeper.

Ver. 19. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.] The Arabian topaz, which is so much esteemed for its wonderful lustre, doth not come near it; nor are all the golden ornaments which they wear in those parts proportionable to it.

Ver. 20. Wherefore, then, cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?] By what means, then, shall we get this wisdom of which we are desirous? Who can shew us where it lies, that we may go and search for it?

Ver. 21. Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.] We may ask this question as often as we please, but none can resolve us, for it is concealed from all men living; the most soaring wits were never able to disclose it.

Ver. 22. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.] Death is the best informed, and the grave the only place where we may learn something of it. But this is all that they can tell us, which is as far short of a full account as a rumour is from a certain knowledge), that they will shortly make all men equal, and then it will be of no great moment whether we have been happy or miserable.

Ver. 23. God understandeth the way thereof, and be knoweth the place thereof.] None but God understands the way and method of his own providence; he alone knows the place of that wisdom we inquire after, which is no where else but in his own mind.

Ver. 24. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and setteth under the whole heaven:] For who should govern the world but he, whose understanding is infinite, and sees the motions of all creatures, from one end of it to the other?

Ver. 25. To make the weight for the winds; and be weigheth the waters by measure.] Which he hath set in such exact order, and given to them such just measures, that the wind cannot blow, nor the waters flow, but in those proportions which he hath prescribed.

Ver. 26. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:] To the like laws he hath bound the rain, and appointed the course which the thundering cloud shall take.

Ver. 27. Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.] And when he ordered all these things, he was pleased in the wisdom which he saw in his works; he made it visible and apparent; he fixed it, therefore, and made these laws perpetual, because, after all the search that could be made, he found no fault in it.

Ver. 28. And unto man be said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.] And making man at the same time, he imprinted this sense upon his heart, that he ought to be an humble adorer, not a censor, of his secret wisdom, whereby he governs the world. For the highest wisdom and skill that man can attain, is to be possessed with such a religious fear of the great Lord of all, as not to dare to do any thing which he knows will displease him.

C H A P. X X X I X .

The Argument.—To such discourses as these, Job presumes his friends would have given greater attention than it seems they did, had not the vileness of his present condition made his speeches also contemptible. And therefore he puts them in mind with what reverence all his orations were formerly received by great and small, wishing God would restore to him those happy days; and inserting all along so remarkable instances of his integrity, (especially as a judge), in the height of his princely prosperity, when he had an uncontrollable power to do as he pleased, and yet not abused it, but employed it constantly for the defence and comfort of the meanest people in his province.

Ver. 1. Moreover, Job continued his parable, and said,] Here Job made another pause, to see if his friends would return any answer; but they continuing silent, he proceeded in his eloquent vindication of himself, saying,

Ver. 2. Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me!:] Oh that God would re-establish me in that happy condition, wherein, some time ago, I was a principal part of his care! You would then give a greater regard to my words, than you do now in my misfortune.

Ver. 3. When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness:] Which has left me nothing but only wishes, that he would restore me those pleasant days, when I saw nothing but continued tokens of his favour, by which I passed untouched through all the inconveniences and troubles of this life.

Ver. 4. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle:] Oh the flourishing season of that prosperous estate! Would it were possible to recall the felicity of those days, when the divine Providence treated me so kindly, that all my answers were held for oracles:

Ver. 5. When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me:] When the Almighty goodness had not ceased to be gracious to me; but I saw myself surrounded with my children and servants, waiting to know my pleasure:

Ver. 6. When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil:] When my lands were so fertile, and blessed with such plenty, as if the rivers had flowed with butter and oil:

Ver. 7. When I went out to the gate, through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street:] When I went in state to the court of judgement, and sat on the bench in the open place, where the people are wont to have their causes heard:

Ver. 8. The young men saw me, and hid themselves,
and the aged arose, and stood up:] And the youth, seeing me appear, were seized with such fear, that they durst not look me in the face; and the aged no sooner perceived me, but they rose up from their seats; and, in token of reverence, stood in my presence.

Ver. 9. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth: Immediately ensued a general silence, the princes themselves breaking off their discourses, and not taking the liberty to speak a word.

Ver. 10. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth: The nobles and great commanders could not have heard me with greater attention and stillness, if they had quite lost their voices, or their tongues had been tied to the roof of their mouths.

Ver. 11. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: And (so far was I from being a tyrant, as you have accused me, xxii. 5. 6.) there was no ear heard the sentence I gave, but prized my integrity; no eye saw me after I had spoken, but you might have beheld therein the respect and honour which they all bare me.

Ver. 12. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and such as had none to help them: Because I never failed to ease the poor when he complained of his oppressions; the fatherless, and such as had none to take their parts, ever found me their defender.

Ver. 13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy: I had his prayer for my prosperity, whose life and estate I preserved when he was in danger of utter undoing; and I made the sorrowful widow such a joyful woman, that she openly proclaimed my praise.

Ver. 14. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem: For in the morning I put on a resolution to do justly, together with my cloaths, and I never swerved from it all the day after, but looked upon the righteous sentence which I pronounced as a greater ornament than the purple robe on my shoulder, and the diadem upon my head.

Ver. 15. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I instructed him who did not well understand his own business, and assisted him who wanted means to carry on his cause.

Ver. 16. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out: For the poor I had such a paternal affection, that it made me his advocate as well as his judge; and I never left studying his cause, (when there was an obscurity in it,) till I had cleared the business, and done him right.

Ver. 17. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth: By which means I disabled the unjust to oppress them, and forced them to restore that which they had violently extorted from them.

Ver. 18. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand: And having done so many virtuous actions, and being in such high authority, I was apt to promise myself, that after an exceeding long and happy life, I should die quietly in mine own house, among my children and friends.

Ver. 19. My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch: For, being like a tree, whose root spreadeth out itself by the waters, and whose boughs are perpetually moistened by the sweet dew of heaven, I thought I should never wither.

Ver. 20. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand: My esteem and reputation increased every day, and grew greater; and so did my power to defend the authority and dignity I had obtained:

Ver. 21. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel: Though there was no need I should employ it; for when I spake, all men gave me the greatest attention, and my words were a law to them.

Ver. 22. After my words they spake not again, and my speech dropped upon them: Which, when I had uttered, no man contradicted, or so much as corrected, but it sweetly instilled itself, and sunk into their hearts.

Ver. 23. And they waited for me as for the rain: and they opened their mouths as for the latter rain: For they expected my opinion with the same eager desire that the husbandman doth the showers, after he hath sown his seed; they gaped for it as the thirsty earth doth for the latter rain, to plump the corn.

Ver. 24. If I laughed on them, they believed it not, and the light of my countenance they cast not down: The reverence they bare me was so great, that when I laid aside my gravity, and jested with them, they would not believe it, but still took all I said to be serious; and whatsoever pleasantness I used with them, it did not diminish my authority among them.

Ver. 25. I chose out their ways, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners: But if I went to visit them, they still preserved their respect to me, and gave me the pre-eminence. And as my condescension to them did not make them less honour me, so their submission to me did not make me less familiar with them; for when I sat as a king, guarded with many troops of followers, I comforted the meanest, and would not suffer them to be dejected.

CHAP. XXX.

THE ARGUMENT.—From the foregoing account of his ancient splendour, he takes occasion to annex a no less elegant description of the vileness of his present condition. Hoping that the consideration of such a prodigious change, (which he represents in several particulars, and not without some touches still upon his integrity,) might at last move his hard-hearted friends to some compassion towards him; especially, when they saw how near he was
to his grave, notwithstanding all his prayers to God for relief.

Ver. 1. **BUT now they that are younger than I, have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.**] But now, alas! there is so sad an alteration, that the youths who durst not look me in the face, have the confidence to mock and jeer me; even those youths, whose fathers were so mean, that I disdained to employ them in the vilest service.

Ver. 2. **Tea, whereto might the strength of their bands profit me, in whom old age was perished?**] Men, whom if I had had a mind to employ, were fit for nothing; being so lazy, listless, and unable to do any business, that it was in vain to call them to it.

Ver. 3. **For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness, in former times desolate and waste.** Beggarly fellows, who being ready to starve, were ashamed to be seen, and sneaked into desert places to hide their poverty; it is but yesterday that they were most wretchedly miserable.

Ver. 4. **Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper-roots for their meat.** Satisfying their hunger with those unsavoury herbs, which they cut up in the salt marshes; and having no other bread but the roots of juniper-trees.

Ver. 5. **They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them, as after a thief.)** They were driven from the society of men; and if ever they appeared, an out-cry was raised against them, as there was against a thief when he is discovered.

Ver. 6. **To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.** They had no other habitation but the cliffs which the brooks sometimes make in the valleys, or the caves which they found in other parts of the earth, or in the rocks.

Ver. 7. **Among the bushes they braided, under the nettles they were gathered together.** Their sighs might be heard, like the braising of asses, among the thorn-bushes; they lurked together under nettles or thistles:

Ver. 8. **They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; they were viler than the earth.** Being lewd villains, the children of obscure parents; viler than the earth upon which they trod.

Ver. 9. **And now am I their song, yea, I am their by-word.** And now am I become their pastime: they have made songs of my calamity; and it is the common entertainment to discourse of my misery.

Ver. 10. **They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.** They express an abhorrence of me, and, as vile as they are, will not come near me; or if they do, it is only to shew their extreme contempt of me.

Ver. 11. **Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.** God, they see, hath scattered all my estate, and by sore afflictions laid me very low, which hath made them forget all respect to me, and take an unrestrained licence in their insolent behaviour towards me.

Ver. 12. **Upon my right hand rise the youth, they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.** They set up the very boys to accuse me; they push me down, and then trample on me. I am become the beaten path, as I may call myself, of their pernicious reproaches.

Ver. 13. **They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.** They so disturb my thoughts, that I know not what course to take in this miserable condition; which they heighten by their calumnies, and are so fruitful in them, that they need none to help to invent them.

Ver. 14. **They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled thy floods upon me.** They assaulted me with such a fury as soldiers do their enemies, when they have made a wide breach in the wall of a besieged city, and pour in all their forces to destroy them.

Ver. 15. **Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my soul as the wind; and my welfare passes away as a cloud.** This dismal change hath fearfully astonished me, to see all my wishes and hopes dispersed like the wind, and all the happiness I possessed passed away as swiftly as a cloud.

Ver. 16. **And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.** I can do nothing now but melt into tears; my very soul is ready to faint away with grief, when I think how those joyful days are gone, and what distresses have seized on me, and come to take their place.

Ver. 17. **My bones are pierced in me in the night; season; and my sinews take no rest.** In the night, (when sleep is wont to bury our grief,) I feel such sharp pains, as penetrate through my very bones; my blood boils so violently in my veins, that I can take no rest.

Ver. 18. **By the great force of my disease, is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.** It requires a great deal of strength, when I would shift my cloaths, to pull them off; my outward garment, by the filthy matter of my sores, being glued as fast to me as the collar of my shirt.

Ver. 19. **He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.** I look as if I had been thrown into the dirt; there is little difference between me and dust and ashes.

Ver. 20. **I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.** And, which is saddest of all, I call upon thee, O God, but cannot prevail with thee to relieve me: I continue praying and waiting for thy help, and thou sufficiently understandest my miserable case.

Ver. 21. **Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.** But thy former kindness to me is turned into such severity, that it looks like cruelty: thou hast given me such deadly blows, as if thouatest me.

Ver. 22. **Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.** Thou didst lift me up on high, and madest me, as it were, to ride upon the clouds; but hast thrown me down with so much the sorer fall, which hath broken me in all its pieces.
Ver. 23. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living: So that I can think of nothing but dying, and going to my grave, the common sanctuary of all mankind:

Ver. 24. Heebight, he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry, in his destruction.] Whither thy afflicting hand will not pursue me; for thought men cry when they are sent thither, yet when they are there, all their sufferings and complaints are ended.

Ver. 25. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?] Strange that I should be thus punished without any mercy! was I wont to be so unmerciful to others? No, I never looked upon men under any hardship without tears; and was so sensibly touched with the miseries of the poor, that I ever relieved them.

Ver. 26. When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.] Which gave me good hope that I should be very happy; but instead thereof, the saddest afflictions and troubles have befallen me.

Ver. 27. My bowels boult and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.] Which have so suddenly surprised me, that they have put me into the greatest commotion and disorder: my bowels boil without the least intermission.

Ver. 28. I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.] My affliction is so constant, without any glimpse of joy, that I am a perpetual mourner; and am not able to lie still, nor to refrain from shrieks and cries, in the greatest assemblies.

Ver. 29. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.] I can do nothing but lament myself, as if I were one of those mournful creatures which make such doleful noises in desert places.

Ver. 30. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burnt with heat.] The boiling heat of my body hath so parched me, that my skin looks black; and the marrow in my bones, and all my vital moisture, is dried up.

Ver. 31. My harp is also turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.] And, to say no more, all banished has manished my house, the musical instruments are laid aside, and nothing but mourning and weeping come in their room.

C H A P. XXXXI.

The Argument.—It was possible his friends might make quite another use than Job intended of the relation he had made of his miserable condition, in the chapter foregoing; and therefore, lest it should harden them in their old error, and they should take what he had said to be an argument of his guilt, he gives in this chapter a large and particular account of his integrity, which in general he had so often asserted; laying his very soul, and the most secret inclinations of it, open before them; together with the actions of his whole life, in his private capacity, (for of his public he had spoken before, chap. xxix.), both in respect of his neigh-

bours, of all sorts, and in respect of God; to whom he again most solemnly appeals in the conclusion of this discourse, that he did not boast of more virtues than he had; but would most gladly be tried before him, by some impartial judge. I need not here enumerate his virtues, because they are plainly and distinctly expressed in the paraphrase; and I do not pretend to give the entire contents, but the design only of each chapter.

Ver. 1. I MADE a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?] But do not, I beseech you, any longer look upon these sufferings as an argument that I am not innocent; for I protest to you, I have been very resolute, and careful to avoid even the occasions of lasciviousness; and therefore, how should I ever so much as deliberate to corrupt a virgin?

Ver. 2. For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?] For I know there is a God in heaven; an Almighty Being, who rules over all: and what could I expect from him as the reward of such impurity?

Ver. 3. Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?] Dost it not lead to destruction? Nay, do not strange and horrible punishments fall upon the workers of that iniquity?

Ver. 4. Dobb be not see my ways, and count all my steps?] Is it possible to commit it so secretly, that it shall not be known by him, who observes every motion and tells every step I take?

Ver. 5. If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;] If I have broke my promises, or have been forward to deceive and cheat my neighbour;

Ver. 6. Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.] I refuse not to be tried, but rather desire my actions may be scrupulously weighed and examined, for God, I am sure, will approve of my upright dealing.

Ver. 7. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my bands:] If I have turned aside from the rules of justice for fear or favour; if I have coveted the goods of other men, or my hands have taken any bribes:

Ver. 8. Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.] Let me be served in my kind, and let other men eat the corn which I have sowed, and pluck up the trees (roots and all) which I have planted.

Ver. 9. If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour’s door:] If my heart hath been seduced to filthy desires after another man’s wife; if I have watched for his absence, or some fair opportunity to enter his house, and defile his bed:

Ver. 10. Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her:] Then let others take away my wife from me, and make her the vilest slave, whom they may use at their pleasure.

Ver. 11. For this is an heinous crime, yea, it is an
iniquity to be punished by the judge.] I ever thought this a crime of the highest nature, an iniquity to be corrected by the severity of the public justice.

Ver. 12. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.] For it is a fire, which, if it be extinguished, consumes men and their estates, yea, destroys whole families and kingdoms; and so incenses the divine displeasure, that should it escape the magistrate's punishment, I could never hope that any thing of mine (were I guilty of it) should thrive, but all come to utter ruin.

Ver. 13. If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or of my maidservant, when they contended with me:] So far was I from doing such foul injuries to my neighbour, that I never extended my power to the oppression of my slaves; but as was content to wave the privilege the law gave me, of using them as I pleased, and to allow them a fair hearing when they had any difference with me.

Ver. 14. What then shall I do when he riseth up? and when he is awake, what shall I answer him? For thought I with myself, that though men could not punish me for my rigour towards them, yet I should never be able to excuse it to God, when he came to judge me, nor tell what to answer, when he called me to an account for my ill usage of them.

Ver. 15. Did not he make it in the womb? is it not made by the hand of the maker? and did not one fashion us in the womb?] I often also called to mind that there was no such difference in our estates, as there was an equality in our births; and that we having one common Creator, my slave was as nearly related to God as myself.

Ver. 16. If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail:] Nor have the poor any reason to complain of me; for if I ever denied to satisfy their desire, or let the widow in vain expect my relief:

Ver. 17. Or have I eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof?] Or have sitten down at my table alone, without the company of fatherless children.

Ver. 18. For from my youth was I brought up with me as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb.] For whom I have always had a natural compassion from my very youth; I brought it into the world with me, and hath been my companion ever since.

Ver. 19. If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering:] If I have suffered any to perish for want of clothing, or let the poor go naked without a covering;

Ver. 20. If bis loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep:] If his loins did not admonish him to bless as oft as he girded on his garment, and he were not kept warm with the cloth made of my wool:

Ver. 21. If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:] If I ever have beaten the fatherless, because I knew I should be too strong for him in the court, in case he complained there of the injustice:

Ver. 22. Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken at the bone:] Then let that guilty arm fall off from my shoulder, or be broken in two in the midst.

Ver. 23. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.] For I never thought I could escape the divine vengeance, the dread of which affrighted me, when men could not, from all such insolence; for I knew I could not support myself against his majesty:

Ver. 24. If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence:] Whose favour I do not desire, if I have put my trust in riches, and thought myself safe; and sure because I was furnished with the noblest treasures:

Ver. 25. If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much:] Or if I was vainly elevated and puffed up with the large possessions left me by my ancestors, or with the great increase I had made to them by my own industry:

Ver. 26. If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness:] If when I beheld the sun arise, or the moon appear in her full lustre,

Ver. 27. And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:] I ever entertained an opinion in my mind, that they were gods, or kissed my hand in token of worship and reverence to them:

Ver. 28. This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above:] This also were a fearful crime, which God's vicegerents should punish; because it were to put those stars in the place of him who is above all heavens:

Ver. 29. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lift up myself when evil found him:] Whom I do not wish to be my friend, if I ever was glad at the ruin of mine enemy, or insulted over him when any mischief befell him.

Ver. 30. (Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul;) (No, I was not so much as guilty of making any imprecations against him, nor was provoked by his malice to wish him dead:)

Ver. 31. If the men of my tabernacle said not, O that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.] Though the people of my family were so enraged at him, that if I would yield to their passion, they were ready to eat him up with an insatiable anger.

Ver. 32. (The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.) Much less was I guilty of unkindness to strangers, whom I never suffered to lodge in the streets; for the door of my house stood open, that any traveller might turn in there, if he pleased.

Ver. 33. If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:] If I have studied to seem better than I am, and have not now made a free confession; but, like our first parent, have concealed or excused my faults, and out of self-love have hidden mine iniquity:

Ver. 34. Did I fear a great multitude, or did I boast?
contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door? Because I dread what the people will say of me, or am terrified by the contempt into which the knowledge of my guilt may bring me with the neighbouring families; then I am content my mouth should be stopped, and that I never stir out of my door any more.

Ver. 35. Ob that one would bear me! Behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.] Oh that the truth of all this might be examined by some equal judge! Behold, I continue still to desire of God this favour; and let him that can accuse me bring in his libel in writing against me.

Ver. 36. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.] Surely I would not endeavour to obscure it, but openly expose it to be read by all; nay, wear it as a singular ornament, which would turn to my honour, when the world saw it disproved.

Ver. 37. I would declare unto him the number of my steps, as a prince would I go near unto him.] I myself would assist him to draw up his charge, by declaring to him freely every action of my life; I would approach him as undauntedly as a prince, who is assured of the goodness of his cause.

Ver. 38. If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain:] For if so much as a bit of my land was unjustly gotten, or if I have defrauded those who plowed it of their wages;

Ver. 39. If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:] If I have taken the fruits of it from my tenants, and paid nothing for them; or let them such hard bargains, that it broke their heart:

Ver. 40. Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.] Then let corn never grow there any more; but let it be over-run with thistles and the most stinking weeds.

Here Job ended his defence.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Argument.—It appears by the 15th verse of this chapter, that there were several other persons present besides those that are named, when this dispute was held between Job and his three friends; among whom there was a young man named Elihu, and who was either a Syrian, (in which language this book was first written, and translated by Moses into Hebrew, says the author of the commentaries under Origen's name), descended from the second son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, Gen. xxii. 21. or an Idumean, of the same country with Eliphaz the Temanite, Jer. xxv. 23. I have made him a Syrian in my paraphrase, because he is said to be of the kindred of Ram; by whom we are to understand either Aram, or, as the Hebrews think, Abraham, by whom such wisdom and piety might be promoted in his brother's family, as is apparent in Elihu, who, though much inferior to the rest in years, (for which reason he had held his peace thus long), yet was much superior to them in knowledge; which he discovers in the judicious censure he here passes, not only upon the three friends, but upon Job himself, whom he hath nothing to charge withal, relating to any crime committed before this affliction befell him, but thinks he had not managed the dispute about it with so much calmness and submission to God, as became his piety. In this he differs from those that spake before him; for I do not find that he blames him for any miscarriages, but those only which he observed in the heat of his disputation; and he spends his time rather in justifying God, than in carping at Job, as the other had done.

Ver. 1. So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.] And his three friends also left off disputing with him, because they saw him immovably fixed in the opinion of his innocence.

Ver. 2. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram; against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.] Which very much displeased a young man, who had stood by all this time, and heard what both sides said for themselves. His name was Elihu, descended from a brother of Abraham, who was exceeding angry with Job, because he spent more time in justifying himself, than in justifying God;

Ver. 3. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet bad condemned Job.] And with his three friends also, because they were not able to maintain their charge against Job, and yet had condemned him to be a wicked hypocrite.

Ver. 4. Now Elihu bad waited till Job bad spoken, because they were elder than he.] Yet he moderated his passion so discreetly, that he said not a word till he had waited, as well as Job, to see whether they would resume the debate; because it was not fit, he thought, for him to meddle, as long as his elders had any thing to say.

Ver. 5. When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.] But when he saw that none of the three offered to reply, but sat as men that knew not what to say, he was not able to hold his peace any longer;

Ver. 6. And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old, wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.] But in this manner addressed himself unto them, saying, I have considered all this while mine own youth, and your aged experience, which have deterred me so much, that I have hitherto been afraid to interpose my opinion.

Ver. 7. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years shall teach wisdom.] I thought with myself, that it was becoming one of my small standing to
hear, rather than to speak; and to learn wisdom in such grave company as yours, rather than pretend to teach it.

Ver. 8. But there is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.] But I see I was mistaken; man is a very wretched thing, though he live never so long, if God do not illuminate him. It is the divine inspiration which gives understanding.

Ver. 9. Great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgement.] They are not always the wisest who are in authority, and the teachers of others; nor do old men always so well employ their years, as to understand the difference of things.

Ver. 10. Therefore I said, Hearken unto me, I also will shew mine opinion.] Therefore let me intreat you to lend your ears a little to me; I also will tell you what I think about this matter.

Ver. 11. Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst you searched out what to say.] Do not think me too forward; for I have with great patience heard all your discourses, and observed your arguments, and let you proceed till you have searched as far as you could into the business:

Ver. 12. Tea, I attended unto you; and behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words.] And having duly considered and comprehended every word, I must needs pronounce, that there is none of you hath confuted Job, nor said any thing to the purpose in answer to his defence of himself.

Ver. 13. Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom; God hideth it from man.] For it is sufficient for you to say he is obstinate, and therefore it is wisely done of us to leave him to God: He shall confound him by continuing his affliction, not we by our arguments;

Ver. 14. Now be not afraid to answer me; neither will I answer him with your speeches.] Which truly are so weak, that I shall make no use of them: But as Job hath directed none of his words against me, so I shall trouble him with none of your replies.

Ver. 15. They were amazed, they answered no more; they left off speaking.] See, I beseech you all, you that hear us, how these disputants are amazed; how silent they are, as if their speech had forsaken them.

Ver. 16. When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more,) You are my witnesses, that I have waited for satisfaction; but after long expectation they brought forth nothing; they are at a stand, and furnished with no further answer.

Ver. 17. I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.] Which made me resolve within myself, that I would have a share in this dispute, and shew, as I have often told you, what my opinion is concerning it.

Ver. 18. For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.] And indeed it is high time, for I am so full, by long thinking of what I have to say, that I am in pain till I have uttered my mind.

Ver. 19. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles.] My thoughts work within me, like new wine in a vessel; and we are both alike in danger to burst, unless there be a vent.

Ver. 20. I will speak, that I may be refreshed; I will open my lips, and answer.] I must speak, therefore, if it be but to ease myself; I will open my lips, as they do such vessels, and make an answer, because I cannot with safety hold my peace any longer.

Ver. 21. Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.] And, I beseech you, let me speak with all freedom, with regard only to the cause, and not to the person; and do not expect that I should compliment, and give to man any glorious titles.

Ver. 22. For I know not to give flattering titles, in so doing my Maker will soon take me away.] For I do not understand that art of soothing men into a great opinion of themselves; or, if I did, I should not venture to use it, lest he that made me should presently stop my mouth, for not dealing plainly.

Chap. XXXIII.

The Argument.—Here Elihu addresses his speech to Job alone, (for he rejected all that the three friends had said, as sufficiently confuted by Job in his dispute with them), and tells him, first, that he was the man who would now plead with him in God's behalf, (as he had oft desired), and that he was no unequal match for him: And then begins to reprehend those passages which he thought were blamable in Job's speeches; particularly his insisting so much upon his integrity, which, though true, should not have been mentioned, without due acknowledgement, that the Sovereign of the world had done him no wrong in thus afflicting him; and that it was not fit for him to question the wisdom and justice of God's providence, because he did not understand it. For the care of God over man, and his kindness to him, he shews, is so apparent, upon so many scores, that it ought not to be denied because of the unaccountable afflictions that may befall us, which we ought rather to think are one of the ways whereby he doth man good.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, bear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.] And truly I think I need not use any farther preface to persuade thee, O Job, to hear my discourse, and to give an attentive ear to all I have to say.

Ver. 2. Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.] Behold, now I begin; the words are upon my tongue, if thou art ready to receive them.

Ver. 3. My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart; and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.] And I assure thee they shall be the unsigneag language of mine heart, which it shall not be hard for thee to understand; for the instructions they give thee shall be clearly and perspicuously delivered.
Ver. 4. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty given me life.] And first of all consider, that I am no other creature than what thou art: a man whom the power of God hath formed, and then inspired with life.

Ver. 5. If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.] Thou needest not, therefore, decline the encounter; but if thou art able to answer, set thy forces in order against me, and stand up to oppose me.

Ver. 6. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay.] Thou hast formerly desired (ix. 33. xiii. 3.) that somebody would appear in God’s stead, to reason the case with thee: behold, thou hast thy wish; I am the man that appears for him, who am made of the same matter with thyself.

Ver. 7. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.] Look upon me, the combat is not unequal, (as thou complainest when thou lookedst upon God, ix. 31. xii. 21.) thou seest no dreadful majesty in me to affright thee, nor any power to oppress thee.

Ver. 8. Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I do not accuse thee neither, as thy three friends have done, of crimes uncertain or unknown, but of what I myself, with mine own ears, have heard thee utter.

Ver. 9. I am clean without transgression, I am innocent: neither is there iniquity in me.] For surely thou hast said more than once, (x. 7. xiii. 23. xvi. 17. &c. xxxi.) I am pure and without any fault, in my heart and in my actions, both towards God and towards man.

Ver. 10. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy.] Behold, he who I thought would have vindicated my innocence, seeks for occasions to fall out with me, and for slight matters declares himself mine enemy.

Ver. 11. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.] Whom he keeps so fast in prison, that I cannot stir, and watches so narrowly, that I can find no way to escape.

Ver. 12. Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.] This is thy complaining language, and mark what I say to thee: though I cannot accuse thee, as thy friends have done, of other sins, yet in this thou dost offend; and I must reprehend thee for it, by remembering thee, that there is no comparison between God and man.

Ver. 13. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.] And, therefore, why dost thou presume to dispute with him, and call him to an account for his actions, who will not reveal to us all the secrets of his providence?

Ver. 14. For God speaketh once, yes twice, yet man perceiveth it not.] Not that God envies knowledge to us, for he teaches man more ways than one, and a great deal more than he takes care to learn.

Ver. 15. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed:] One way is by a dream, (which you may call a night-vision, when men fall into a deep sleep, or lie on their beds between sleeping and waking:

Ver. 16. Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.] Then, (when their minds are free from the business and cares of the day,) he secretly whispers instruction in their ears, and imprints it upon their minds:

Ver. 17. That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.] Not to make them understand, indeed, all the secret reasons of his providence, but to turn man from his evil way, and to dispose him with all humility to submit himself to his heavenly instructor:

Ver. 18. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.] Who by this means mercifully preserves him (if he obey his admonition) from running on to his own destruction, and rescues him from the violent death which the sword of justice, or of an enemy, would have inflicted on him.

Ver. 19. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:] Another way (and more common than this by dreams) is the painful diseases whereby he chastiseth man, and lays him low on his bed, though his constitution of body he never so firm and strong.

Ver. 20. So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.] In which languishing case he loathes his foods; yes, nauseates that very meat which formerly was his greatest delight.

Ver. 21. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen, stick out.] Which make so great a change in him, that his flesh, which formerly appeared plump and fair, cannot be seen; and his bones which stick out formerly did not appear.

Ver. 22. Yes, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.] There is but a step between him and his grave; the pangs of death being ready to seize on him.

Ver. 23. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:] If, then, (which is a third way whereby God teaches men,) there come a divine messenger unto him, a rare person that can expound the mind of God, and persuade the sick man to repent and amend his life;

Ver. 24. Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom:] He shall beseech God to be gracious to him, saying, Sпаси хому, good Lord, and rescue him from going down to the grave; let it satisfy thee that thou hast corrected him, and that I have found him a penitent.

Ver. 25. His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth:] Presently the sick man shall begin to recover, and become a new man in his body, as well as in his mind: His flesh shall look as fresh as when he was a child; and he shall be restored to the vigour and strength of his youthful age.

Ver. 26. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy:
for he will render unto man his righteousness.] His prayer also shall be acceptable to God, and prevail for the blessings he asks: he shall go into the house of God, and with the most joyful voice give thanks unto him, and praise his goodness; who will then acquit him, and restore this poor man to his favour.

Ver. 27. He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not.] And he, (as becomes a true penitent), casting his eyes upon his neighbours, shall openly confess and say, I have offended God, and he hath chastised me; I have done wickedly, and he hath punished me according to my desert:

Ver. 28. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.] But hath redeemed me from that death into which I was going; and not only made me live, but given me hope that I shall enjoy prosperous days.

Ver. 29. Lo, all these things worketh God sometimes with man.] Behold in all this the wonderful goodness of God, who by so many means very often admonishes man:

Ver. 30. To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.] To reduce him from those evil courses which had just brought to his grave, and to raise him up again to live in all true happiness and pleasure.

Ver. 31. Mark well, O Job; hearken unto me: bold thy peace, and I will speak.] Mark this well, O Job, for it may very much concern thee: consider what I have said; and if thou pleasest to hear me patiently, I will still instruct thee more fully.

Ver. 32. If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.] Or if thou hast any thing to object to what I have said, I am willing to hear it: speak before I go any farther; for I heartily desire thou mayest clear thyself, and appear a righteous person.

Ver. 33. If not, hearken unto me: bold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.] If thou hast no exception against my discourse, then continue thy attentions, and silently listen to me, and I will teach thee more wisdom.

CHAP. XXXIV.

The Argument.—Here Job shews himself a far more humble and teachable person than his three friends; for, though Eliphaz had invited him to make what exceptions he pleased to his discourse in the former chapter, he would not open his mouth, because he plainly saw that Eliphaz had hit upon the thing wherein he was defective. And so this young man proceeds to carry the charge a little higher, and tells him, with more sharpness than before, that there were some words in his discourses, which sounded in his ears as if he accused God's justice and goodness. For what else did he mean when he complained that God did not do him right, and that he destroyed alike both good and bad? Which rash assertions he overthrows, from the considera-

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Ver. 12. Ye, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgement.] Surely I need not fear to affirm this with the greatest confidence, that the Supreme Judge of the world will never condemn an innocent person; nor will he that possesses all things be corrupted to pronounce an unrighteous sentence.

Ver. 13. Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world? [For he doth not receive the government of the world from any above himself; nor is there any higher being, whose authority he may be thought to dread, and for fear of whom he may be tempted to do unjustly.

Ver. 14. If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; [No, he made and he sustains all creatures; so that if he should contain his goodness within himself, and recall that spirit and life which he hath infused into them,

Ver. 15. All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again into dust.] Nothing could subsist one moment, but all mankind would expire together, and return unto their dust.

Ver. 16. If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.] If thou art wise, mind what I say; and consider also what follows.

Ver. 17. Shall even he that hateth right govern? and will thou condemn him that is most just? [Can he be an enemy to justice himself, who binds us so fast to the practice of it; and wilt thou condemn his actions, who is most powerful, as well as just; and therefore need not serve him by any wrongful dealing?

Ver. 18. Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked; and to princes, Ye are ungodly?] There is no king on earth but looks upon it as a great and unsufferable reproach to be called a tyrant: Nor will inferior rulers endure you should say, that they have no regard to equity.

Ver. 19. How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they are the work of his hands.] Shall we impute, then, any thing to him, before whom a prince or a rich man is no more than the meanest and poorest persons? who shall have the same justice from him with the greatest, because they are all alike the work of his hands.

Ver. 20. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without end.] How should he stand in awe of the power of kings, or be bribed with the gifts of the rich, who can strike them all dead in a moment? Whole nations tremble before him, and in their deepest security are destroyed. He needs not the help of any force on earth to put down a mighty tyrant; but invisible powers carry him away.

Ver. 21. For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.] For there is no one passage of man's life, but he is acquainted with it: and therefore cannot be suspected, through ignorance of their actions, (no more than through fear of their persons), to overlook their crimes, or to do them any injustice.

Ver. 22. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.] They may seek to hide their wickedness, when they have committed it; and may make excuses and subtle pretences: but they cannot cast a mist before his eyes, who sees into the thickest darkness, and the deepest secrets.

Ver. 23. For he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgement with God.] And therefore, as he will never charge man with that of which he is not guilty; so, when he calls him to an account, he will not delay nor put off his judgement, to hear what man can say for himself.

Ver. 24. He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.] For he needs not to be informed how matters stand; and therefore breaks in pieces mighty men, without inquiry or examination of witnesses against them, and confers their dignity upon others.

Ver. 25. Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overcometh them in the night, so that they are destroyed.] And by this means shews that he knows their works; when he so suddenly overturns them, that they are crushed in pieces.

Ver. 26. He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others.] He punishes them as men that in his eyes are apparently wicked; and therefore makes them public examples for the terror of their neighbours:

Ver. 27. Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:] Because they would not follow his counsels, nor regard any of his commands:

Ver. 28. So that they caused the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he hearketh the cry of the afflicted.] But went on in their oppression of the poor, till they cried to heaven for vengeance upon them: and the cry of such afflicted people God never fails to answer.

Ver. 29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:] And if he will grant such poor wretches rest and ease, who can disturb them? or if he be angry with their oppressor, who can shew him favour? (which is as true of whole nations, as of one single person).

Ver. 30. That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.] He will not let the wicked tyrant reign alway, though he pretend piety and the public good never so much; lest the people should be ensnared into sin by his example.

Ver. 31. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.] Wherefore it is best for an afflicted person not to complain, but to suspect himself, (though he be never so good), and presently to say to God, I confess this suffering is just; I will not offend by pleading my innocence.

Ver. 32. That which I see not, teach thou me: if I
have done iniquity, I will do no more.] If I have over-
looked any thing that I should have observed, do thou
shew it me: if I have committed any fault, I will
take care to do so no more.

Ver. 33. Should it be according to thy mind? be
will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou
abuse, and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.
Hast thou addressed thyself to God in this manner?
Answer that question; for God will recompense it,
it thou dost despise such good counsel; which per-
haps thou wilt choose to do, but so would not I. Speak
therefore what thy opinion is.

Ver. 34. Let men of understanding tell me, and let a
wise man hearken unto me.] Or let any understanding
person tell us what is their opinion; for such, as I
said before, would I have to judge between us.

Ver. 35. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his
words were without wisdom.] Job seems to me to be
very much mistaken; and his discourses to be uncon-
siderate, and without reason.

Ver. 36. My desire is, that job may be tried unto the
end, because of his answers for wicked men.] And there-
fore, I am so far from wishing he may be presently re-
leased from his afflictions, that I take it to be more de-
sirable he should be still tried and proved by them,
till he recant the answers in which he hath complain-
ed of Divine Providence, after the manner of wicked
men.

Ver. 37. For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he
clapeth his bands amongst us, and multiplieth his words
against GOD.] For otherwise he will add greater of-
fences to those lessor he hath already committed: he
will defend what he hath inconsiderately spoken;
nay, triumph as if he had got the better of us: and,
instead of making the confession to which I have ex-
horted him, continue to multiply his complaints against
God.

CHAP. XXXV.

THE ARGUMENT.—Job still keeps silence, withnot-
withstanding that Elihu had made the harshest construc-
tion of his words; because he was sensible he
meant him well, and had now, in the conclusion of
his discourse, given him very wholesome counsel;
and, allowing his integrity, had only charged him
with some unhappy expressions which had fallen
from him when he was in great anguish of spirit.

Which, I suppose, was the reason he doth not
contradict him, though he continue here in this
chapter to fasten the very same harsh sense upon
his words, ver. 2. 3. Which he refutes from the
consideration of the infinite disproportion there is
between man and God: who is never the worse in-
deed for any evil, nor at all the better for any
good that we do; and yet hath such a love to man-
kind, that it is certain he would not have them
miserable, but takes care for their relief when they
are oppressed, if they address themselves, as they
ought, to him.

Ver. 1. ELIHU spake moreover, and said,] To
this Job making no answer, Elihu pressed
him again, and said,

Ver. 2. Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou
saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?] Let me
appeal to thy own conscience: dost thou think this to
be right, that thou saidst, God is not so righteous as I
am?

Ver. 3. For thou saidst, What advantage will it be
unto thee? and what profit shall I have, if I be clean-
sed from my sin?] What else could be thy meaning,
when thou utterest such words as these, What doth
God care whether I be innocent or no? Or what be-
nefit shall I have by it, if I be?

Ver. 4. I will answer thee, and thy companions with
thee.] I will answer thee, and such as thou art, in a
few words.

Ver. 5. Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the
clouds, which are higher than thou.] Cast up thine eyes to
the heavens; look upon the clouds and the sky, and
consider, that as high as they are, they are not so
much above thee as God is above them.

Ver. 6. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him?
or, if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou
unto him?] And therefore it is true, that he is never
the worse for the sins which thou hast committed, nor
will be the worse, though thou shouldst proceed to com-
mit more and greater:

Ver. 7. If thou be righteous, what giveth thou him?
or, what receiveth he of thine hand?] And that he is
never the better for thy being righteous, which can
confer nothing upon him which he hath not already,
nor add any thing to his greatness.

Ver. 8. Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art,
and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.] But
thou shouldst not conclude from thence, that it is all
one whether a man be good or bad: for thy wicked-
ness will prove hurtful to thyself, and to the rest of
mankind; and thy righteousness will do thee and
them great service.

Ver. 9. By reason of the multitude of oppressions,
they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason
of the arm of the mighty.] The cries of the oppressed
tell us what injustice doth, and how miserable it
makes them: the tyranny of the mighty forces them
to cry aloud to God for vengeance; who, though
he be not hurt himself by it, is touched with a sense
of their affliction.

Ver. 10. But none saidth, Where is God my maker,
who giveth songs in the night?] The greatest mis-
chief is, that not one of these miserable wretches in-
quires seriously after God, who gave him his being,
and is able therefore, not only to relieve him, but to
comfort, yea, to fill him with joy, in the midst of the
saddest affliction.

Ver. 11. Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the
earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowl of hea-
ven.] Having endured us with reason and wisdom,
to consider that he, who takes care of the beasts
and the birds, will not neglect us, if we do not
merely cry and groan under our oppressions, (as those brute creatures do,) but with hearty repentance, and a thankful sense of his benefits, and humble confidence in his goodness, piously address ourselves unto him.

Ver. 12. There they cry (but now giveth answer) because of the pride of evil men.] This is the reason that God doth not deliver them; because they lie, crying indeed under their affliction, but it is not a sense of him, but only the haughty violence of their oppressors, which extorts it from them.

Ver. 13. Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.] For we must not think that God (though he be inclined to relieve the afflicted) will give ear to men so void of piety; he will not regard those who have so little regard to him; even for this reason, because he stands in need of nobody.

Ver. 14. Although thou sayest thou shalt see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore truce thou in him.] Therefore, although thou complainest that thou dost not see him appear for thy deliverance, (xxiii. 8.) yet do not conclude from thence that he is unrighteous; but go and condemn thyself before him; and then patiently wait for his mercy.

Ver. 15. But now, because it is not so, be hath visited in his anger, yet be knoweth it is not in great extremity:] But now, because there is nothing of this in thee, God hath thus severely afflicted thee; and not at all regarded the exceeding great prosperity wherein thou hast hitherto lived.

Ver. 16. Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain: be multipliceth words without knowledge.] And Job may spare his complaints hereafter, for they are to no purpose; he hespeth up words without reason.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The Argument.—Having reprehended some of the unwarrantable expressions in Job’s discourses, (which he himself would not justify), Elihu comes closer to the business, and speaks to the very cause itself: Shewing, from the nature of God, and the methods of his providence, that if Job had, instead of disputing, submitted himself humbly to God’s corrections, he would have delivered him; (it being as easy for him to lift up as to cast down). And that his not discerning the reason of his corrections (which Job had made a great cause of his grief, xix. 7.) ought not to have hindered his humble submission; because we are not able to comprehend any of the works of God, which we see every day, and acknowledge to be most excellently contrived.

Ver. 1. ELIHU also proceeded, and said.] Job still keeping silence, Elihu proceeded in his discourse, and said,

Ver. 2. Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf:] Be not weary, and I will open my mind more fully; for thou hast not yet heard all that God hath to say for himself by my mouth;

Ver. 3. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and I will describe righteousness to my Maker.] Which shall now, from the most sublime contemplations, assert the righteousness of my Maker.

Ver. 4. For truly my words shall not be false: be that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.] For assuredly will not seek to battle thee with sophistical arguments: he that discourses with thee is none of those subtle disputers, but loves sincere and solid reason.

Ver. 5. Bebold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.] Know then, that God is most mighty, but despiseth not the meanest: the excellence of his power, and the greatness of his mind, will not suffer him to wrong any body.

Ver. 6. He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.] When men are extremely wicked, and fit to be punished, he will let them live no longer; but the poor at last shall recover their right, and be delivered out of their affliction.

Ver. 7. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne, yea, be doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.] For whatsoever affliction the righteous suffer, God never ceases to take a special care of them, and sometimes raises them to the highest offices that kings can confer upon them, in which they are settled as long as they live, and exalted above the power of their enemies that would pull them down:

Ver. 8. And if they be bound in fetters, and are bolded in cords of affliction:] Or if they should fall into any trouble, which lies as heavy on them, and holds them as fast, as if they were bound with chains and with cords;

Ver. 9. Then be sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.] It is only to make them reflect upon their lives, and to shew them their sins; because they grow strong, and begin to prevail over them.

Ver. 10. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.] He disposeth them hereby to listen to instruction, and admonishes them to forsake their sins, and return to their duty.

Ver. 11. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures:] And if they profite so much by their affliction, as to obey his counsel, and devoutly serve him, they shall regain their former splendour; and pass the rest of their life in prosperity and pleasure.

Ver. 12. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.] But if they be disobedient, they shall be utterly cut off, and die in their folly.

Ver. 13. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when they are bindeth them:] And they that are false-hearted do but heap up wrath to themselves by their counterfeit piety; which surprises them so suddenly, that it gives them no time so much as to cry to God, when his punishments seize on them.

Ver. 14. They die in youth, and their life is among
They die before their time, in the flower of their age; and perish, like the impure Sodomites, with an hasty and unexpected destruction.

Ver. 15. He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.] Whereas he delivers the poor humble man in his affliction; and makes his oppression the means of giving him wholesome counsel.

Ver. 16. Even so would be have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table, should be full of fatness.] Even so would he have rescued thee (if thou hadst humbly submitted to his correction) out of those miserable straits to which thou art reduced; and not only enlarged thee, but set thee so far from all danger of falling again into them, that peace and plenty should have been thy portion.

Ver. 17. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked; judgment and justice take hold on thee.] But thou hast maintained the cause of the wicked; and such as a man's cause is, such will the judgement of God be upon him.

Ver. 18. Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.] And because God is angry with thee, take heed lest thou farther incense him to punish thee so heavily, that upon no terms he will deliver thee.

Ver. 19. Will be esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.] Dost thou think he will have any regard to thy riches? No, not if thou hastad all the treasure and all the force which all the power on earth can muster up.

Ver. 20. Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.] Do not dream that they can do thee any service; or entertain thyself with vain hopes as thou art musing on thy bed in the night; when God sometimes destroys whole nations on a sudden.

Ver. 21. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this host shall be won rather than affliction.] But let thy sufferings teach thee caution, and make thee afraid to go on to provoke offended justice; for thou hast done it too much already, in chusing rather to accuse Divine Providence, than to submit patiently to his chastisement.

Ver. 22. Be bold, God speaketh by his power: who teacheth like him?] Consider the vast extent of God's power, which lifts men up as well as casts them down. What Lord is there so absolute as he? or who shall teach him how to govern his dominions?

Ver. 23. Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?] What visitor is there over him, to examine and take an account of his actions? or who can presume to say, This or that is not well done?

Ver. 24. Remember that thou magnifyest his works, which men behold.] See that thou leave off this carping at his providence, and remember to extol and magnify it, as well as the wonderful fabric of the world, which men behold with admiration and praise.

Ver. 25. Every man may see it, man may behold it after off.] All mankind contemplate it with astonishment: there are none so dull, but in the farthest parts of the earth they behold, if they open their eyes, the majesty of God;

Ver. 26. Be bold, God is great, and we know him.

not; neither can the number of his years be searched out.] And must confess that he is great in wisdom and power, and cannot be comprehended by our shallow understandings; which are presently confounded, when they enter into the search of his eternal being.

Ver. 27. For he maketh the small drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:] For it is he who dissolves the clouds into water, and doth not pour it down all at once; but by small drops sweetly restores to the earth the vapour which was exhaled from thence:

Ver. 28. Which the clouds do drop, and distil upon
man abundantly.] For he hath made the clouds to be fluid bodies, which distil their showers in so many places, that there are multitudes of spectators and admirers of this wonderful contrivance.

Ver. 29. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacles?] And can any one understand how he spreads those clouds, and makes them hang in the air, when they are full of water? or give an account of the dreadful sounds which are heard from thence, and which tell us that he dwells in those celestial places?

Ver. 30. Be bold, be spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.] Observe also how he spreads the beams of the sun upon the sea, and covers it all over with light; which raises new vapours and clouds in the room of those which are exhausted,

Ver. 31. For by them judgeth he the people; be giveth most in abundance.] Which he useth for quite contrary ends; both to punish mankind by storms, and tempests, and floods, and to make a plentiful provision for them by fruitful showers.

Ver. 32. With clouds, he covereth the light; and commandeth it to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.] By those clouds also he sometimes quite hideth the sun from us, that it cannot ripen the fruits; and sometimes only intercepts its beams a while, that it may not burn them up by immoderate heat.

Ver. 33. The noise thereof is heard concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.] The very cattle perceive the cloud as soon as it rises, and declare what God intends to do with it; whether to turn it into storms and tempests, or into fruitful rain and showers.

CHAP. XXXVII.

THE ARGUMENT.—Elihu continues his speech, which he had begun before, concerning the incomprehensible works of God; and limits himself chiefly, as he had in the foregoing chapter, to the wonders God doth in the clouds. To which, at last, he subjoins the amazing extent, brightness, and firmness of the sky, in which the sun shines with a luster which we are not able to behold: And thence concludes, that the splendour of the Divine Majesty is infinitely more dazzling, and that we must not pretend to give an account of his counsels.

Ver. 1. At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.] These are a few of the works of God; and though there be immi
merable more, yet this one single effect of his power strikes terror into me, and makes my heart tremble, as if it would leap out of my body, and leave me dead.

Ver. 2. Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.] Hearken, I beseech you seriously, to the horrible noise which comes out of some of those clouds, and it will astonish you also. The smallest murmurs are so dreadful, that it may be fitly styled the voice of God, calling men to stand in awe of him.

Ver. 3. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.] It is heard far and near, for he darts it through the whole region of the air, accompanied with his flashes of lightning, which shoot to the ends of the earth.

Ver. 4. After it a voice roarcth; be thundereth with the voice of his excellency, and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.] After them follow the claps of thunder, more terrible than the roarings of a lion; which grow louder and louder, till they conclude in a violent rain, or hail, or tempest.

Ver. 5. God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.] And he who thundereth thus with his most wonderful voice, doth other great things which the wit of man cannot comprehend.

Ver. 6. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain, of his strength.] For in those clouds which I have so often mentioned, he makes the snow, and commands it to cover the earth; and on a sudden they turn into rain, which sometimes falls in gentle showers, and sometimes in impetuous spouts of water.

Ver. 7. He sealoth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.] Which stop the labour of all those whose business is in the fields, and makes the husbandmen know that he disposeth of it as he pleases.

Ver. 8. Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.] The very beasts also are driven at that season into their lurking-places, and are forced to stay in their dens.

Ver. 9. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind; and cold out of the north.] From one quarter of the heavens blow turbulent winds; and from the opposite quarter those cold blasts which clear and purify the air again.

Ver. 10. By the breath of God frost is given; and the bread of the waters is strained.] By the like sharp blasts God sends the frost; and binds up the waters so fast that they cannot flow.

Ver. 11. Also by waterings be weareth the thick cloud: be scattereth his bright cloud.] In serene evenings also he presses the cloud into drops of dew upon the earth; or the dewy cloud, receiving the sun-beams by a dispersed and various light, makes the beautiful rainbow in the heavens.

Ver. 12. And it is turned round about by his counsel; that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.] For it is turned about and whirled several ways, according to the orders of his wise counsel; and so are all the rest that I have mentioned, which execute his commands upon the face of the whole earth:

Ver. 13. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.] Being sent either to bring a dearth, and to scourge our sins with plagues and pestilential diseases; or to produce the wondrous crop of the earth, for the necessary sustenance of man and beast; or to reward our obedience with extraordinary plenty, and very healthful seasons.

Ver. 14. Hearken unto me, O Job; stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.] Listen diligently to these things, O Job; do not dispute any more with God, but silently consider these his wonderful works.

Ver. 15. Dost thou know when God disposeth them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?] Canst thou tell beforehand what orders God will give about them? art thou able to tell so much as when a rainbow will appear in the clouds?

Ver. 16. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?] What canst thou tell us then of the hanging of the clouds in the air, as in an equal balance, and such like stupendous works of his most absolute wisdom?

Ver. 17. How thy garments are warm when be quieteth the earth by the south wind?] Whence comes the violent heat which we sometimes feel? or how do calms come out of the same quarter from whence come whirlwinds? ver. 9.

Ver. 18. Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?] Lift up thy thoughts still higher, and tell us, didst thou join with him when he stretched out the sky; in which, as in a mirror, we behold the admirable power and wisdom of him, who, though it be so wide and vast, made it as firm as it is clear and bright?

Ver. 19. Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.] Teach us (as thou art so well skilled) what we shall say to him of his power and wisdom, for we must confess our ignorance is so great, that our thoughts are confounded when we attempt it.

Ver. 20. Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.] Is any thing that I have said of him worth his hearing? whoever he be that goes about to describe him, shall lose himself, and be dazzled with the brightness of his glory.

Ver. 21. And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds; but the wind paseth, and cleanseth them.] For, alas! men are not able to look upon the brightness of the sun when it shines in the heavens, after a wind hath swept and cleansed them;

Ver. 22. Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.] And brought pure and serene weather out of the northern parts: how then shall they look upon God, whose majesty is most dreadful, and therefore not be pried into with curiosity, but worshiped and praised with the humblest reverence?

Ver. 23. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him
hast the courage to argue the case with me, (as thou hast often desired), make thyself ready for the debate, and answer me the questions I shall ask thee.

Ver. 4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Where wast thou when I founded the earth? Speak, man, and relate how I went about that work, if thou art so skilful as thou pretendest.

Ver. 5. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? How came it to have these dimensions? (for thou, sure, who presumest to censure my providence, canst not be ignorant of such matters). After what manner was the line and the rule applied, to give it these exact proportions?

Ver. 6. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof? Canst thou tell how it was fixed and settled upon its centre, or what it is that holds all the parts of it so firmly together?

Ver. 7. When the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Where wast thou when the bright stars first appeared to proclaim my praise with one consent, and all the angelical powers expressed their joy, but did not assist at the birth of the world?

Ver. 8. Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb? What midwife had the sea to bring it forth, when it burst out of the confused abyss, like an infant out of the womb?

Ver. 9. When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it. And I covered it with clouds, as with a garment, and wrapped its boisterous waves, in a thick veil, with as much ease as a nurse swaddles a new-born child.

Ver. 10. And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors.] And laid it in that bed, which I had appointed to be broken up for it in the earth; where, though it be tossed to and fro as an infant in a cradle, yet it keeps within its shores, which cannot be overturned.

Ver. 11. And said, Huberto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shalt thy proud waves be stayed.] For I have fixed its bounds, and resolved, Thus far shalt thou flow, but no further; these sands and these cliffs shall stop thy swelling waves, be they lifted up never so tempestuously.

Ver. 12. Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days, and caused the day-spring to know his place? Raise up thy thoughts still higher, and tell me, Dost thou remember since the morning-light was made? or was it thou who ordered the sun, in what part of the heaven it should every day arise?

Ver. 13. That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? And spread its beams to the end of the earth, that the wicked, who delight in works of darkness, may be detected and dragged to their deserved punishment.

Ver. 14. It is turned as clay to the seal, and they stand as an armament.] For they are daunted at its ap-
proach, and change colour as oft as the clay doth its form under different seals; they are no more consist-
ent with themselves than a changeable garment;

Ver. 15. And from the wicked their light is with-
bolden, and the high arm shall be broken.] And at last lose the use of that light, which innocent persons en-
joy with so much pleasure; their insolent power,
which in the night was so audacious, being broken in pieces in the morning.

Ver. 16. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? O thou who art venturer to enter into the abyss of my judgements, didst thou ever penetrate into the spring of the sea? or hast thou perfectly discovered all that lies at the bottom of that great deep?

Ver. 17. Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hath the earth opened all her dark caverns to thee? or hast thou gone down to the very centre of it?

Ver. 18. Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare, if thou knowest it all.] Nay, dost thou so much as understand all that grows upon the surface of the earth? Shew thy skill, if it be so comprehensive.

Ver. 19. Where is the way where light dwelleth; and as for darkness, where is the place thereof?] Tell me, which is the way that leads to the place where light takes up its dwelling when the sun goes down? or what becomes of the darkness when the sun rises again?

Ver. 20. That thou showest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?] Art thou able to go, and bring either of them hither? or to carry them back again away from hence, and prescribe them their limits at thy pleasure?

Ver. 21. Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born; or because the number of thy days is great?] Art thou acquainted with these things, because thou wast then born when I made them? How comest thou to discourse so confidently of my government of mankind, who canst neither tell that thou shouldst be born, nor art able now to say when thou shalt die?

Ver. 22. Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, And when wast thou in the clouds, to see how the snow or the hail is made in such abundance;

Ver. 23. Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?] That I need no other weapon than these, if I please to use them, for the destruction of mine enemies?

Ver. 24. By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?] Art thou able to give an account how the light diffuses itself all over in an instant? or what makes the east wind blow so violently upon the earth?

Ver. 25. Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters? or a way for the lightning of thunder.] Didst thou make a channel in heaven for the conveyance of overflowing showers? or open the way for the breaking out of lightning and thunder?

Ver. 26. To cause it to rain on the earth where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man?] Is it by thy direction that these showers go, and fall upon the desert places, where are no inhabitants to employ their art to provide them with water?

Ver. 27. To satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?] And that they satisfy the dry and barren parts of the earth, where all the labour of man is unprofitable, without such plentiful rains to make them fruitful?

Ver. 28. Hast the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?] What is more common than the rain and the dew? But who is able to produce one drop of either?

Ver. 29. Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?] In whose womb was the ice formed? or who can make so small a thing as the hoary frost?

Ver. 30. The waters are bid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.] Whence comes the cold that turns the waters into stone, and settlers the raging waves of the sea?

Ver. 31. Canst thou bind the Burnett influence of Plei-
deres? or loose the bands of Orion?] Canst thou forbid the sweet flowers to come forth, when the seven stars arise in the spring? or open the earth for the husbandman's labour, when the winter season, at the rising of Orion, ties up their hands?

Ver. 32. Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?] Is it by thy power that the rest of the stars, great and small, appear in the southern and the northern signs, in their proper seasons?

Ver. 33. Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof on the earth?] Dost thou understand the orders and the laws which I have established among the heavenly bodies? or couldst thou tell what to do, if it were referred to thee here on earth, to settle the government of them?

Ver. 34. Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?] Let me see an instance of thy power and skill; lift up thy voice to the clouds, and command them to pour out an abundance of waters upon the place where thou now art.

Ver. 35. Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?] Or call to the lightnings, and bid them go whither thou hast a mind to send them; and let me hear them answer, Behold, we are ready to obey thee.

Ver. 36. Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?] Didst thou give thyself understanding? How comes it, then, to be so small, that thou canst not tell how a thought is made?

Ver. 37. Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven?] Nor, with all the wisdom thou hast, so much as count the number of the clouds, whose showers thou art as unable to stop, as to make them run:
Ver. 38. When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clouds cleave fast together? Though they have fallen so long, that the earth is abundantly satisfied, and fit for the plough, or for the seed.

Ver. 39. Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions? Or dost thou pretend to have great power upon earth, though none in heaven? Wilt thou undertake, then, to provide food for a lion and all his whelps?

Ver. 40. When they couch in their den, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? And that in a desert, where they lie lurking in their dens, and greedily watch for a prey in close and shady places?

Ver. 41. Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat? Or, which is less, wilt thou take upon thee to feed the young ravens? who, expelled by the old ones out of their nest, complain to me of their cruelty, but know not where to get a bit of meat.

**CHAP. XXXIX.**

**THE ARGUMENT.**—This chapter continues the discourse begun in the latter end of the foregoing, concerning God's providence about beasts and birds. And to the two before mentioned, he adds seven more. First, the wild goat, or hind, whose hard labour among the rocks, God is wont to help and promote (as the psalmist observes, xxix. 9. and other authors agree) by a clap of thunder; the terror of which puts her into such an agony, that she presently excludes her young one, which sticks in the birth. Then he mentions the wild ass; and after that a tall creature, in those countries called Reem, which we render an unicorn; but Bochartus hath proved to be a two-horned goat in Arabia, of great strength, with an erected head and ears. Of the rest I need say nothing here, they are so well known.

**Ver. 1.** **KNOWEST thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hind do calve?** Vain man, who wouldst so fain pry into my secrets! didst thou ever climb the rocks to see the wild goats bring forth? or hast thou assisted at the hard labour of the hind, and helped to ease them of their burden?

**Ver. 2.** Canst thou number the months that they fulfill? or knowest thou the time that they bring forth? Dost thou know the moment of their conception? or keepest an account when they will be delivered?

**Ver. 3.** They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows. Hast thou seen how they bow themselves, with what pain they bring forth, and with how much difficulty they are freed from their sorrow?

**Ver. 4.** Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn: they go forth, and return not unto them. And yet their young ones are lusty and strong; they grow up in the open fields; they leave their mothers, and return to them no more.

**Ver. 5.** Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath lost the bands of the wild ass? Was it thou that gave the wild ass his liberty, and made him so free from their servitude, in which you keep no other creatures?

**Ver. 6.** Where have I made the wild-asses, and the barren land his dwellings? Who but I made that difference between him and them; and laying no burden on them, assigned them the wilderness, and barren countries for his habitation?

**Ver. 7.** He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. Where he laughs at those that live in the tumult and bustle of cities; and hears none of the cries of him that drives other asses to their labour.

**Ver. 8.** The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing. Nor is confined is small inclosures, but hath whole mountains to range in for his pasture; where he finds sufficient food to appease his hunger.

**Ver. 9.** Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Go to the unicorn, (thou who wouldst have all things conformable to thy will), and see if thou canst persuade him to serve thee: will he be content to be tied to thy crib all night?

**Ver. 10.** Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he bear the valleys after thee? Or submit his proud neck to thy yoke all day? canst thou make him go to plow? or will he draw the harvest over thy land?

**Ver. 11.** Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou rely upon him (because his strength is great) to do all the rest of thy work in the field?

**Ver. 12.** Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn? Or leave thy harvest out of doors, till thou hast prevailed with him to bring it home, and lay it in thy barn?

**Ver. 13.** Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? Have other birds any reason to complain that they are not so goodly as the ostrich; whose wing is triumphant, if it be compared with the wing and the feather of the stork.

**Ver. 14.** Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust? But her inward qualities are not so beautiful as her plumage: for she doth not seek for solitary places wherein to lay her eggs, but drops any where upon the ground, and negligently leaves them to be corrupted by the heat of the sand and of the sun.

**Ver. 15.** And forgettest that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She doth not secure them from the foot of travellers, or of wild beasts, who frequently tread upon them, and crush them in pieces:

**Ver. 16.** She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear. But is hardened against the fruit of her own womb, as if it were not hers; and so she loses all her labour, because she hath no fear it may be lost.

**Ver. 17.** Because God hath deprived her of wisdom; neither hath he imparted to her understanding.
God hath not given her that wisdom which he hath bestowed upon other creatures; but made her of a stupid and careless nature:

Ver. 18. What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.] Though he hath imparted so much as is necessary for her preservation: for when she raises herself, and lifts up her wings, she runs so fast, that she despises a man on horseback, who cannot overtake her.

Ver. 19. Haste thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?] And now I speak of the horse, let me ask thee again, Who was it that made him so much superior to other creatures in strength and in courage? Didst thou give him his valiant spirit, or clothe his neck with such a stately mane?

Ver. 20. Canst thou make him afraid as a grass-hopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.] Or put that vigour and mettle into him, which makes him leap and bound in the air like a grass-hopper: there is a majesty in his looks; and when he snores vehemently, it is terrible.

Ver. 21. He poureth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.] He stamps impatiently on the ground, and breaks it up with his feet: he glories in his strength, and goes out boldly to meet the arms that oppose him.

Ver. 22. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted: neither turneth he back from the sword.] He degrades all the dreadful instruments of war, and cannot be dismayed by them: he runs upon naked swords;

Ver. 23. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.] And is not drowned at the noise of arrows which come whizzing by his ears, nor at the sharp points of spears and lances which are thrust at his breast.

Ver. 24. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.] He makes the earth quake and tremble, as he gallops over it, and rides abundance of ground in a moment: neither can he stand still, when he hears the sound of the trumpet:

Ver. 25. He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha: and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting.] But the louder it is, the more he neighs and dances for joy. He perceiveth the battle before it begins, by the thundering voice of the captains, and the shouting of the soldiers.

Ver. 26. Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?] Behold also, how the hawk mounts up aloft. Didst thou give her those swift wings; or teach her, when the winter comes, to fly into the southern parts, that she may still enjoy the warmth of the sun?

Ver. 27. Dost the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?] But what bird soars so high as the eagle? Is she beholden to thee for that strength which carries her unto the clouds? or was it by thy direction, that she builds her nest quite out of all men's reach?

Ver. 28. She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.] She dwells on the top of high rocks; in the steep and craggy rock, as in an inaccessible fortress, she settles her abode.

Ver. 29. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.] There she leaves her young ones safely, while she goes to provide them food; from thence (so sharp is her sight) she spies her prey a vast way off.

Ver. 30. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.] Which when she hath seized and torn, she brings to her nest, that they may suck its blood: she looks down to the very earth; and where the carcasses lie, there may she be found.

CHAP. XL.

The Argument.—Job modestly declining to say one word in his own defence, (though he was graciously invited by God to speak, if he had any plea remaining), is still more humbled by a plain declaration from the Divine Majesty, that Elihu had reason to reprove him for his immoderate complaints, (which some might look upon as an accusation of God's providence), and for maintaining his own righteousness so much, and God's righteousness so little, in the dispute he had had with his friends: Shewing him withal, that he was not sensible enough of the infinite distance and inequality between him and God; when he desired so vehemently to argue his case with him, that he forgot to make those submissions to the Divine Majesty, which had better become him. This disproportion is most lively represented and illustrated, by an admirable description of the strength of the Behemoth, a word of Egyptian termination; signifying, not the elephant, (which seldom lies down, and never among reeds, as this doth, ver. 21.), but a creature in that country, called by the Greek writers Hippopotamus, i.e. river-horse. For it appears by the second book of Esdras, chap. vi. 49. that the Hebrews reckon Behemoth, not among the land-creatures, but among those belonging to the water, which were created on the fifth day. And there is none, that we know, of that sort, to whom the characters here mentioned belong, but the creature now named.

Ver. 1. MOREOVER, the LORD answered Job, and said.] After a short silence, to see what Job would reply to this long discourse, the Lord proceeded, and said,

Ver. 2. SHALT he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.] Why dost thou not speak? hast not the Almighty brought arguments enough to convince thee? Let him that will argue with God about his providence, first, make an answer to these questions.

Ver. 3. Then Job answered the LORD and said.] Then Job, whose confusion had made him silent, answered with great humility, and said,
Ver. 4. Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.] Behold, I am a wretched creature, and not worthy to speak unto thy majesty: nor do I know what to answer; and therefore I will hold my peace.

Ver. 5. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.] I have said too much already, in speaking only these two words to thee: but I have done; I will add no more.

Ver. 6. Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said.] Then the Divine Majesty spake again, after the same manner as before, saying,

Ver. 7. Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare unto me.] What! hast thou (who desirest so much to plead with me) lost thy courage? Pluck up thy spirit, man, and prepare thyself (as I said at the first) to answer the questions I shall farther ask thee.

Ver. 8. Will thou also disannul my judgement? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?] Is there any reason to suspect my care of mankind, who have shewn it so much about other creatures? canst thou not defend thyself, but thou must also complain of me? must I be condemned, that thou mayest be justified?

Ver. 9. Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?] Who art thou, that talkest so much of thine own innocence, that thou forgettest to maintain thy righteousness? hast thou a power equal to mine; or canst thou speak with a voice like this; or imitate the thunder thou hearest in the clouds?

Ver. 10. Deck now thyself with majesty and excellency, and array thyself with glory and beauty.] Lift up thyself, then, and let me see thee appear in the highest majesty; put on thy robes, and shew thyself in such royal state, that all may honour and reverence thy excellent greatness.

Ver. 11. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.] Let all thine adversaries round about thee (as becomes a mighty prince) feel the fierceness of thy wrath; frown upon all the haughty, and make them hang down their heads.

Ver. 12. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low: and tread down the wicked in their place.] Look, I say, upon every proud oppressor, and make him cringe and throw himself at thy feet: tread down all the wicked, wheresoever thou shalt find them.

Ver. 13. Hide them in the dust together, and bind their faces in secret.] Cast them all into one grave, that the world may be no more troubled with them: cover those faces with perpetual shame and confusion which now bear themselves so high, and overlook all others.

Ver. 14. Then will I also confess unto thee, that thine own right hand can save thee.] When I see thee do such things as these, then will I myself also magnify thy power, and acknowledge that thou needest none of my help to deliver thee.

Ver. 15. Behold now Behemoth, which I made with thee, be eateth grass as an ox.] But consider a while (if thou art not yet humble enough) a creature which I have made in a country not far from thee: He lives among the fishes in the great river of Egypt, but he feeds upon the earth, and eateth grass like an ox.

Ver. 16. Lo, now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.] Consider, I say, the greatness of his strength, and the firmness of his flesh, not only in his loins, but even in the navel of his belly, where other creatures are wont to be weak and tender.

Ver. 17. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.] He hath a tail as thick and as stiff as a cedar, but he bends and throws it back at his pleasure: The nerves of his thighs are so many, that they are intricate and perplexed one within another.

Ver. 18. His bones are as strong pieces of brass, his bones are like bars of iron.] His bones (for so they are rather than gristles) are as strong as bars of brass, and as hard and firm as rods of iron.

Ver. 19. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.] He is one of the principal works of God, a very singular instance of his power: he that made him hath fastened such crooked teeth in his jaws, exceeding sharp, that therewith he mows the grass and the corn as with a scythe.

Ver. 20. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.] For he goes in the night to graze upon the hills, in the company of the rest of the beasts of the field; who sport themselves in those rich pastures:

Ver. 21. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reeds and fens.] But (in the day) he lies down in shady and close places, under the covert of the reeds, and in the fenny mud.

Ver. 22. The shady trees cover him with their shadow: the willows of the brook compass him about.] The bushy trees, which are there very numerous, afford him a shelter: he is encompassed with the willows, and the osiers, which grow in abundance on the banks of Nile.

Ver. 23. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and causeth not: be trusted that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.] Nay, behold he dives to the very bottom of the river, and there takes his repose without fear: he will be secure, though Jordan also should break out, and be poured upon his mouth.

Ver. 24. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snare.] Who dare come in his sight, or attempt to take him by open force? Where is he that will undertake to fasten hooks in his nose?

CHAP. XLI.

The Argument.—In this chapter another creature of vast bigness and strength is described, called in the Arabian language Leviathan. By which we are not, in this place, to understand the whale; be-
cause that fish is not armed with such scales as Leviathan is here said to have, ver. 15.; nor is impenetrable, as every body knows; and, to say no more, never creeps upon the earth, which is part of the description of this Leviathan, ver. 3. Whereby we are therefore to understand the crocodile, (to whom every part of this description exactly belongs,) a creature as big again as a man of the greatest stature, and in some places vastly greater: There have been crocodiles seen of twenty, nay, forty feet long; and in some places of an hundred. To this fierce and uncturable creature God sends Job, that he might learn more humility than to contend with his majesty, when he saw how unable he was to stand before one of his creatures. That use he himself teaches Job to make of this description, ver. 10. 11. 12.

Ver. 1. Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord whic thou letteth down? There is another creature also in the same river, which I would have thee consider; and behold therein the divine power, and human weakness. Canst thou catch the Leviathan, as you do the other fishes? Canst thou let down a line, and draw him out by the tongue with a hook?

Ver. 2. Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? When thou hast made a cord of the rushes of the river, canst thou put it about his nose; or strike an iron, as sharp as a thorn, into his jaw?

Ver. 3. Will be make many supplications unto thee? Will be speak soft words unto thee? Will he importune thy favour, and with many prayers beseech thee to spare him? Will he sue for his liberty with submissive words, and speak thee fair to let him go?

Ver. 4. Will be make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Will he enter into bonds, and make a solemn covenant with thee, never to do thee hurt, but to be thy slave, and serve thee for ever?

Ver. 5. Wilt thou play with him, as with a bird, or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? Wilt thou adventure to play with him, as with a sparrow, or tie him by the leg for the sport and pastime of thy daughters?

Ver. 6. Shall the companions make a banquet of him? Shall they part him among the merchants? Shall the society of fishermen make a feast for joy they have taken him, and sell their share in him among the merchants?

Ver. 7. Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish-spears? Where is the dart wherewith thou canst hope to penetrate his skin? Or the fish-spear that is able to wound his head?

Ver. 8. Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.] Go, and touch him if thou darrest: the battle will be soon ended, for thou shalt not do it the second time.

Ver. 9. Behold, the hope of him is vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?] Mark what I say; he will be sorely disappointed that thinks to take him: for he will be ready to sink down with fear at the very sight of him.

Ver. 10. None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who, then, is able to stand before me?] Though he lie asleep on the shore, there is none so hardy as to dare to awake him. Who is he, then, that takes upon him to contend with me? If one of my creatures be so terrible, how dangerous is it to provoke my majesty?

Ver. 11. Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him: whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.] And where is the man to whom I am a debtor? How came I, that made the whole world, to be obliged to thee, or any one else? Did you first begin to do me kindnesses, that I should owe you a requital?

Ver. 12. I will not conceal bis parts, nor bis power, nor bis comely proportion.] What insolence is it to dispute with me, when thou art not able to stand before this single work of my hands? None of whose limbs or joints I will conceal, nor forbear to speak of his strength, and the comely disposition of all his parts.

Ver. 13. Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with bis double bridle?] And first, take a view of his scaly skin, wherewith he is covered: who hath ever stript him of that upper garment? or who dare come within his doubled snout?

Ver. 14. Who can open the doors of bis face? bis teeth are terrible round about.] Who will venture to open his wide jaws, and so much as look into his mouth, in which his long rows of teeth are very dreadful?

Ver. 15. His scales are bis pride, shut up together as with a close seal.] The scales of his back are like the plates of a shield, which I have provided for his defence: every one of them is closely compacted, and strictly sealed to the next.

Ver. 16. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.] They are knit so close, that the air, which presses into all things else, cannot come between them.

Ver. 17. They are joined one to another, they stick together that they cannot be whnder.] They cleave one to another, they hold so fast together, that no art or violence can make a separation.

Ver. 18. By bis nostrings a light dost shine, and bis eyes are like the eyes-lids of the morning:] When he neezeth as he lies gaping in the sun, the spirits break forth with such a force, that they seem to sparkle: and when he riseth up out of the river, his eyes appear before the rest of his body, as the morning-light before the sun.

Ver. 19. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.] The steam also which then comes out of his mouth is as vehement as if it were full of burning torches; or there were a fire in him, that sends forth sparks.

Ver. 20. Out of bis nostrils goeb smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.] Out of his nostrils goes a
smoke like the reek of a seething pot or a boiling caldron.

Ver. 21. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.] His breath is so hot, though he come out of the water, that it is sufficient to kindle coals; and may be called a flame, which issues out of his mouth.

Ver. 22. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.] His neck is exceeding strong, as if it were the very seat of strength: sadness and terror marches before him, and seizes on all those that meet him.

Ver. 23. The flanks of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.] The muscles of his flesh are gleeved together: every one of them is compact and solid; they are not easily moved.

Ver. 24. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.] He is as far from fear as he is from pity: for his heart is as firm as a stone; as hard as an anvil, or a piece of the nether millstone.

Ver. 25. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves. But the stoutest hearts tremble when he lifts himself up above the water: they are seized with such a fright, that they are at their wits end, and know not which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 26. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the bageron.] Though they assault him with the sword, it will do them no service; for the hardness of his skin will break it in pieces; the spear, also the dart and the javelin, are altogether as feeble, and cannot enter into him.

Ver. 27. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.] All the other weapons of iron (which the wit of man can devise) he values no more than a straw; and those of brass no more than rotten wood.

Ver. 28. The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.] The arrow shot out of the strongest bow, cannot make him flee: and those stones which are thrown out of a sling with so much force, move him no more than a little chaff.

Ver. 29. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the breaking of a spear.] Lay at him with heavy clubs, and he regards them no more than if they were stubble; shake the launce at him, and he contemns its most violent thrusts.

Ver. 30. Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp-pointed things upon the mire.] For instead of him, it meets only with the rough shells wherewith he is armed; which are so hard, that he beats back the sharpest weapon, and throws it into the mire.

Ver. 31. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.] When he tumbles about in the bottom of the river, he raises bubbles on the top; and the water of the lake is so troubled with the slimy mud which he stirreth up, that it looks like a pot of ointment.

Ver. 32. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.] When he swims, he makes furrows in the face of the deep; and leaves a path behind him, so covered with a froth and foam, that it looks as if it were grown old, and were full of grey hairs.

Ver. 33. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.] His fellow is not to be found upon the earth; where he creeps indeed to the dust, but is so made that he cannot be trodden under foot and bruised.

Ver. 34. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.] No, though he lie so low, yet he despises the tallest beast; and reigns over the oxen and camels, and all those creatures whose long legs raise them to the loftiest height; whom he masters and rends in pieces at his pleasure.

CHAP. XLII.

THE ARGUMENT.—This chapter concludes the book, with an account how Job completed the submission which he had begun before to make to God; whose pardon he sorrowfully begs, confessing and repenting of his fault, resigning himself entirely to be instructed by him; but resolving never hereafter to complain, nor to move any questions about his providence. This repentance God accepts; and for his sake grants a pardon also to his friends, whom he condemns as more faulty than Job; who after this receives extraordinary marks of God’s favour; and hath such an ample recompense made him for his losses, as may encourage all posterity to persevere in well-doing and patient suffering; believing steadfastly, that nothing can be done or permitted by God without much reason, (whose wisdom shines so gloriously in all his works), and humbly expecting a comfortable issue out of all our troubles.

Ver. 1. THEN Job answered the Lord, and said.] These words so livelily represented the power and wisdom of God in his works, that Job, seeing his error more clearly than ever, submitted himself unto the great Lord of all, and said,

Ver. 2. I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be with-bolten from thee.] I am abundantly satisfied, that thy power is as large as thy will, and that nothing can hinder thee from effecting every thing which thou designest; but as thou hast reason to cast me down, so thou canst restore me, and lift me up again.

Ver. 3. Who is he that bideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.] I am sensible also of the justice of the reproof which thou hast given me, (xxxviii. 2.), and do confess I very much forgot myself, when I adventured to talk so ignorantly of thy wise administrations. It was that which made me so rash as to discourse of things far above my reach, wonderful things, which I ought humbly to admire, not arrogantly censure.

Ver. 4. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.] Be not angry with me, I beseech thee, but graciously hear
me speaking in thy own words. I do not pretend to give an account of thy wonderful works, and of thy providence, and therefore ask me no more questions, (xxxviii. 3.), but let me learn of thee, and do thou instruct my ignorance.

Ver. 5. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.] Something I did know before of thy greatness, and mightiness, and wisdom, but nothing so clearly as I do now, by this revelation and visible appearance of thy dreadful majesty.

Ver. 6. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.] Which touches me with a sensible displeasure against myself, for my indecent complaints, and vehement expostulations, and eager desires to die, or to be delivered: I condemn them all, (together with whatsoever I have spoken too boldly about thy government,) and in the most sorrowful manner repent, that I have justified myself so much, and thee so little.

Ver. 7. ¶ And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.] Which ingenuous confession pleased the Lord so much, that he did not chide Job any farther; but turning his voice to Eliphaz, (his principal accuser,) he said, I am angry with thee, and with thy two friends; for you have made a perverse construction of the afflictions I sent upon Job; whom, notwithstanding all his errors, I acknowledge to be my servant, and to have spoken better of me than you have done.

Ver. 8. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.] And therefore take no less than seven bullocks, and as many rams, and carry them to my servant Job, whom I appoint to be your priest, to offer for you a burnt-offering, in token of my absolute dominion over all creatures. And that faithful servant of mine shall pray for you, and obtain your pardon; for I have a great love for him, and will be favourable to you for his sake. Do not fail to go about this, lest I inflict some grievous punishment upon you, because, as I said, you have made an ill representation of my providence, and repeated those things confidently, which my servant Job shewed you to be false.

Ver. 9. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.] So Eliphaz and his two companions submitted themselves also unto God, and went, as he commanded them, and desired Job to intercede for them. And the Lord heard his prayer, and was reconciled to them.

Ver. 10. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.] And at that very time when Job was performing this charitable office for his friends, the Lord was pleased to begin to restore to him all those things which he had taken away from him; and never ceased till he had not only established him in his former splendour, but made him twice as rich as he was before.

Ver. 11. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house; and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an ear-ring of gold.] All his kindred likewise, and his familiar acquaintance, (whom his unusual affliction had estranged from him, xix. 3.), when they heard of the wonders the Lord had done for him, came to visit him, and to feast with him: and after they had consoled his misery, and testified their sorrow for all that had befallen him, they congratulated his happy recovery; and, in token of their joy, every one of them presented him with a piece of money, and a pendant of gold.

Ver. 12. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.] Thus the Lord impoverished this good man, only to make him richer. For instead of seven thousand sheep, which he had before his troubles, he found he had fourteen thousand, when they were ended; and for three thousand camels which were taken from him, the Lord gave him six thousand; and multiplied his yokes of oxen, which were but five hundred, into a thousand; and his she-asses in the same proportion.

Ver. 13. He had also seven sons, and three daughters.] His wife also became very fruitful, and brought him as many children as he had lost; seven sons and three daughters.

Ver. 14. And be called the name of the first Jemima, and the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Kerenappuch.] And to preserve the memory of such a marvellous deliverance, (of which they were so many living monuments,) he called the name of the first Jemima, that is, the day, because of the felicity wherein he now shone, after a sad night of affliction, wherein he had lain; and the second Keziah, (a spice of an excellent smell,) because God had healed his filthy stinking ulcers, which made even his wife refuse to come near him, xix. 17.; and the last Kerenappuch, i.e. plenty restored, or an horn of varnish, because God had wiped away the tears which fouled his face, (as he complains, xvi. 16.)

Ver. 15. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.] The beauty also of these women proved as bright as their names, for there were none so amiable in all that country; and their father did not (as the manner was) endow them with a small portion of his goods, but (having a large estate, and a great affection to them) he made them co-heirs with their brethren in the inheritance which he left them.
Ver. 16. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. After which glorious restitution of him and his family, his years were multiplied as well as his estate; for the Lord added almost an age and a half (no less than an hundred and forty years) to those he had lived before; so that he had the pleasure to see his children's children to the fourth generation.

Ver. 17. So Job died, being old and full of days. And departed not out of the world till he was so fully satisfied, that he desired not to live any longer.

AN APPENDIX TO THE PARAPHRASE.

HERE ends the book of Job, whose short sufferings (for the space of twelve months, as the Hebrews reckon in Seder Olam) were recompensed with a very long life, in great prosperity. If we could rely upon all their traditions, this might have been added to the paraphrase upon the last words, that the whole time of his life was two hundred and ten years. For, in the Hierusalem Targum upon Exod. xii. 40. and in Bereschit Rhabba upon Gen. xliii. 2. they make account that the Israelites staid just so long in Egypt: and, in the chronicle forenamed, and in Bava Bathra, and other books, they tell us, that Job was born that very year when Jacob went with his family down thither to sojourn; and died that same year when they were delivered from thence by the hand of Moses. But this agrees neither with what other of their authors say, whom I mentioned in my preface; nor with the LXX. who, in the last verse but one of this book, insert this clause, "all the days of his life were two hundred and forty years."

This indeed might be easily reconciled with the account before mentioned, if we did but rectify their numbers in the beginning of that verse by the Hebrew truth, and cut off the thirty years which they have added to the true time that he lived after his recovery from his sickness; for then this passage also must be corrected, and, instead of two hundred and forty, we must set down two hundred and ten. Which we might also prove in this manner (out of Seder Olam, chap. 3.) to be the right account of his age; because it is said, ver. 10. of the last chapter, that "the Lord added to Job the double of what he had before;" and therefore, if an hundred and forty years were added, he had seventy before, which in all make two hundred and ten. But it is not worth our while to trouble ourselves with such uncertainties; much less is it safe to rely upon any thing that is supported by no stronger authority than the Hebrew tradition. The vanity of which appears most notoriously in this, that Manasseh Ben Israel saith *, it is evidently certain by tradition, that the Mahometans at this day pay a great reverence to this holy man's sepulchre, and honour it at Constantinople with much religion and devotion; when all men that have any considerable acquaintance with other authors besides those of their own nation, (upon which the Hebrews dote), may easily know, that the Job whom the Turks honour was a captain of the Saracens, who was slain when, they besieged that city, in the year of Christ 675.

It will be better purpose, if I take notice of an observation of theirs, which hath more certainty in it, because clearly founded upon the holy scriptures; which is, that Job was a prophet among the Gentiles, and a prophet of very eminent quality and degree; who deserved to have been at least mentioned by Josephus in his book of Antiquities, where he hath not vouchsafed to name him; nay, to have been praised by the son of Syrac, in his catalogue of famous men, Ecelus. xlvii. &c. who were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. But, according to the humour of the Jews, he magnifies only those of their own country, or such from whom they were directly descended; not considering how much it was for their honour, that by the care of their noble ancestors, the history of Job, and his excellent virtues, had been preserved. Which he ought not,
therefore, to have omitted, but to have celebrated him among the chief of those worthy persons, by whom God wrought great glory; such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies, &c. Ecclus. xlv. 2. 3.

Nay, his friends deserved a short remembrance, who seem nothing inferior to the wise men among the Jews, (though they mistook in the application of many excellent truths,) but are acknowledged by themselves to have been prophets among the Gentiles. And not without reason; for Eliphaz, we read, iv. 15. &c. had night-visions, an apparition of an angel, and secret whispers, like the still small voice which Elijah heard, 1 Kings, xix. 12. which made R. Sol. Jarchi not fear to say, that the Shechinah was upon him. And Elihu, it is easy to discern, felt a divine power working in him mightily, xxxii. 18. 19. which was not altogether a stranger, he shews, (xxxiii. 15. 16.) to other men, whom God in those days instructed by dreams, amongst other ways that he had of communicating his mind to them. But there was none equal to that wherein he made himself known to Job, who in three things seems to have had the pre-eminence among all the Gentile prophets. First, In that God was pleased to speak to him aloud by a voice from heaven, xxxviii. 1. (which the Jews call the Bath Col,) and not merely in silent whispers as he did to Eliphaz. Secondly, That this voice was attended with a notable token of a divine presence, from whence it came, viz. a whirlwind, which I take to have been something like the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, wherein the Holy Ghost came upon the day of Pentecost. And, Lastly, he saw likewise, in all probability, the appearance of some visible majesty, (xlii. 5.) suppose in a glorious cloud, (as the LXX. seem to understand it, xxxviii. 1.) or something like that which Moses beheld in the bush, when God first called to him out of the midst of it, Exod. iii. 4.

Which need not at all puzzle our belief, when we consider that the church in those days was catholic, and not as yet confined to any one family or nation. God was pleased indeed to shew an extraordinary grace to Abraham, in calling him out of his own country and father's house, where idolatry had taken a deep root, or had been long growing without any hope of amendment. For if we give any credit to Kessaeus, a Mahometan writer, or to Elmacinus, a Christian, they were infected with it in the days of Heber, who stoutly opposed it, but with so little effect, that though God sent a whirlwind, which threw down all their idols, and broke them in pieces, that false worship still prevailed. But this doth not warrant us to imagine that God utterly rejected and neglected all other people; to whom he revealed himself in a very familiar manner, and gave many demonstrations of his divine presence among them, till they corrupted themselves by such abominable idolatries, that they became altogether unprofitable, and unfit for the society of that Holy Spirit which oft-times moved them. Even among the Canaanites (into whose country God led Abraham) we find Melchisedec was then a priest of the most high God; a greater person than that prophet, and the minister of that oracle (some fancy) which Rebekah went to consult when she felt the twins struggling in her womb, Gen. xxv. 22. To whom I might add several others, if I had a mind to prolong this discourse. And though the book before mentioned (Seder Olam Rabba, chap. 21.) is pleased to say, that the Holy Ghost ceased to inspire men of any other nation after the giving of the law; yet it is easy to shew, that therein it contradicts even their own affirmation elsewhere, which is grounded on good reason, that Balaam was a prophet divinely moved among the Syrians in Mesopotamia. He was a man indeed of naughty affections, and inclined to superstition, but still had many illuminations and motions from the Most High; as appears not only by his predictions, but by the express words of Moses, who says, "the Spirit of God came upon him," Numb. xxiv. 2. To which, if I should add his own testimony concerning himself, that he "heard the words of God," and "saw the vision of the Almighty," and that in an extraordinary manner, "having his eyes open" in his ecstasy, I see no reason why it should be rejected; especially since he declared at the first, when the princes of Midian importuned him to go with them, that he would be wholly guided by the Lord in the business; and when he was come to Balak, constantly went to meet the Lord, to ask him what he should say, and professed his care to speak what the Lord had put in his mouth, xxii. 8. xxiii. 3. 12. 15. &c. These considerations, to which many more might be added, are sufficient to shew, that there is little if any ground for the opinion of Theodoret, who resolves*, that Balaam did not inquire of the true God, though the answer was given by him of whom he was ignorant, not by him whom he invoked: and that the conclusion of St. Basil †, or Greg. Nyssen ‡, (it is uncertain whose work it is wherein we find it,) is more remote from truth, who determine, that when the scripture saith, he went to consult with God, we are thereby to understand the devil. For should we allow the word Elohim, or God, to be so equivocal, that it may be applied not only to other excellent beings besides the Divinity, but to the devil himself, which is the foundation there laid for that conclusion; yet the word Jehovah, or Lord, is never so used; and Balaam always says, that he would go and meet with him. And accordingly the Lord is said to put a word in his mouth, even then when just before we read, that God met him, xxiii. 4. 5. where it is most reasonable by God to understand the angel mentioned xxii. 35. whom the Lord employed to deliver his mind unto him.

All which I have said, to shew that God did not quite desert the Gentile world, as long as there were

* Quest. 39. in Num.  † Epist. 80. ad Eustath.  ‡ Lib. De Trinitate.
any considerable relics of the ancient religion remaining among them; and they did not wholly divert to fables, and deliver up themselves to the guidance of evil spirits, against the apparent testimony of the Holy Spirit of God; who spake to them by such good men as Job, in whose days those sinners were not only reproved, but punished also by the judges, who worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; which seems to have been the oldest idolatry of all other, as not only Maimonides, but Diodorus Siculus, observes.

And if they had listened to such instructions, and not suffered themselves to be led merely by sense, to which those heavenly bodies appeared in such an amazing brightness, that struck with admiration, (as the last-named author speaks), they fancied them to be stella atque v sinister et portae, both eternal and the first Gods; we cannot conceive that they would have sunk so low, as to fall into image-worship, which in Job's country doth not seem to have obtained in his days.

But the chiefest part of the wisdom of this prophet consisted in his piety; of which he proved a rare example, as I have said already; especially in adversity: wherein he behaved himself with such admirable virtue, that though the apostle to the Hebrews does not mention him among those who were famous for their faith, (he not being of their race to whom the promises were made), yet St James, in the next epistle, highly magnifies and applauds his patience: And not only propounds him, together with the prophets and holy men "who had spoken to them in the name of the Lord," ver. 10, as a pattern of well-doing, and contented suffering, to the Christian Hebrews, but numbers him among those blessed souls, whose worthy deeds we praise, and whose happiness we admire, ver. 11. Or rather, he names him alone, as an example of a happy man, who endured more than that we read of in ancient times, and in the end found the Lord so mercifully gracious and bountiful to him, that it may encourage all pious men to endure with such a wonderful submission as he did.

Who, when he lost his goods, his house, his children, his health, nay, was all over ulcerous, and in great pain; and moreover, was solicited by his wife to speak irreverently, if not irreverently, of God, and to deny his providence; and by his friends was upbraided as an hypocrite, nay, accused in their passion as a tyrannical oppressor, whereby they endeavoured to bereave him (as St Ambrose observes *) of that great comfort in afflictions, culpa suae, to be conscious of no enormous crime, and to make him appear to himself as the author of his calamity; at which his inferiors mocked and scoffed, who had formerly had him in great reparation; nay, it exposed him to the scorn of those who were not worthy to be set with the dogs of his flock; so that he looked as if he had been deserted by God, and made an example of his heaviest displeasure;—yet he bare all at the very first, (when men are wont to be shaken, nay, overthrown by the sudden news of such dreadful disasters), not only with much resolution and resignation, but with hearty thanksgiving; and through the whole course of his calamity, committed no error that I can discern, but what the indiscreet and uncharitable censures of his friends provoked him unto: Which put him upon too frequent and long justifications of himself, and perplexed him extremely, (which seems his greatest trouble), that he could not find out the reason why God afflicted him so severely.

But in the issue, God revealed to him what it was fit for him to think in this matter also: and thereby hath given us such satisfaction in that great controversy and difficult question about God's providence, as is no where to be met withal, but in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even prudent men, as St Ambrose observes in a book he hath written about Job, are apt to be extremely moved when they see the wicked abound with good things, and the just very much afflicted: and truly, says he; it is lubricus locus, a slippery place, in which the saints have scarce been able to tread in the path of true opinion; as we see in David, and Job, who maintained a long conflict with his three ancient friends: that came to comfort him, upon this subject. And God himself brought the dispute at last to such a conclusion, as may fully settle the minds of all those who meet with this book, and preserve them from being scandalized, or in the least offended, on such occasions. The Mahometans themselves seem to be fully satisfied, as we read in the Lives of the Fathers, written in the Arabian language by Kessaeus; who brings in the Most High, speaking to Job's friends after this manner †, "Do you not know, that Job is a prophet of God, whom he hath chosen to his apostleship; and to whom he hath committed his inspiration? God would not have you think that he is angry with him, as you seem to gather from this afflicted state wherein he lies. For you know, that God is wont to prove the prophets, the just, the martyrs, and other good men; wherein, notwithstanding, there is no indignation or contempt of them, but honour rather, with God most high."

Thus St Chrysostom, I find, most elegantly represents him as a far more glorious spectacle, when he sat on the dunghill, than the greatest prince, without his virtue, is when he sits upon a throne. "His ulcers," says he, "were far more valuable in my account, than all their precious stones. For what profit do we receive by them? what necessity, what want, do they supply? But these ulcers of his are the comfort of all manner of heaviness that can seize upon us. You may know this to be true, if, when a man hath lost his genuine and only son, you shew him a thousand jewels and precious stones; which give no comfort at all to his grief, nor in the least assuage his trouble and pain. But in this case, if you remember him of the wounds of Job, he presently finds some ease; when you ask him, saying, Why dost thou weep and lament, O man, on this fashion? Thou hast lost one
son, but that blessed man lost all the children he had! And, together with that blow, received a stroke in his flesh, and sat naked in the dung, besmeared all over with the filth that ran out of his wounds; in a deep consumption, which by little and little wasted that just, that true, that devout man, who abstained from all manner of evil, and had God himself for the witness of his virtue. If thou but speak these words, instantly thou expungestiest the heaviness of the mourner, and riddest him out of all his grief; and so the ulcers of that righteous man become more profitable to him than jewels.

"Do you therefore conceive now, that you have that champion before your eyes; and that you see the dung, and him sitting in it; a statue of gold, of diamonds, I am not able to say of what; for there is nothing so precious as to be worthy to be compared with that unctioned body, whose sores shine more brightly than the beams of the sun; which enlighten only the eyes of the body, but these illuminate the eyes of the mind. They make us see, and they made the devil quite blind; for after he had given those wounds in his body, he fled, and appeared no more. See here, beloved, how great the gain of affliction is! For when that righteous man was rich, and enjoyed his ease, the devil had something to say against him; though falsely indeed, yet this he had to say, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" But after he had shrivelled naked, and made him a beggar, he had not a word to say; he durst not so much as open his mouth against him. When he was rich, then he adventure to wrestle with him, and threatened to supplant him; but after he had made him poor, deprived him of all he had, and reduced him to the extremest grief and sorrow, he ran away, and durst not renew the assault. When his body was sound, then he laid violent hands on him; but when he had filled it with wounds, he was routed, and fled away vanquished. By this, thou seest how much poverty may prove better than riches, weakness than health, temptation than ease and quiet, to those that are vigilant and watchful; who make a profit of all these; and by fighting grow more illustrious and courageous. Who ever saw, who ever heard, such noble combats?"

But there is none, that I have met withal, who represents him in such lively colours, as the great St. Basil; who, in a sermon of his, (the latter part of which was occasioned by a lamentable fire, that happened near their church, and put it in danger), exhorts all the rich, who were untouched by the flames, to relieve their poor neighbours, whose goods were consumed in them; and then addressing himself to those, who had saved themselves, but nothing else, beseeches them, "Not to take their loss too heavily, nor to let their minds be disturbed; but to shake off the misty cloud of sorrow with such generous and manly thoughts, as might turn this accident into an occasion of crowns. For which end, he advises them to put themselves in mind of the constancy of Job; and to say to themselves, as he did, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it seemed good to the Lord, so it is come to pass." And by no means, says he, let any of you be moved with what hath happened, either to say, or think, there is no Providence which rules our affairs; or presume to accuse the dispensation and judgement of the Lord; but let him fix his eyes on that champion, and make him his counsellor, who will advise him to better thoughts.

"Let him recount in order all the agonies he endured, and then observe how bravely he came off; and how the devil threw all his darts at him in vain, not one of them giving him a deadly wound. First he set upon his goods, and endeavoured to overwhelm him with the doleful news of various calamities, which came tumbling, like the waves of the sea, one upon the neck of another; but all to no purpose, for the just man received them as a rock, doth the fury of a tempest, turning the rage of the waves into froth, and standing itself immovable. He said not a word that we read of; he made no complaints of these disasters; or, if he said any thing, we may well presume it was those decent and becoming words which we read in the conclusion; "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so is it come to pass." But he did not think any of those calamities that befell him to be worth his lamenting with his tears.

"Well, but there comes one afterward that tells him a most dismal story, of the death of all his children by the fall of the house wherein they were making merry. At this, it is true, he rent his garments; and it is the first expression of his grief that we meet withal, in compliance with the passions of nature, and to declare himself a most tender father. But he set some bounds to his grief, and adorned what had happened with those pious words, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," &c. As if he should have said, I was called their father, as long as he that made me so pleased; but now he hath taken off this crown of children from my head, and it is not fit for me to contend or dispute with him about his own. Let that be which seemeth best to the Lord. He it was that formed them, I was but the instrument. Why should I, who am but a servant, foolishly complain of my master, and repine at that decree which I cannot alter?"

"With such words as these that righteous man wounded the devil, and, as one would say, shot a dart quite through his heart, which so enraged him, that seeing him still a conqueror, he made an assault upon his body, which he turned into corruption, and made it become such a bag of worms, that from a throne it was cast upon a dunghill. And yet the good man remained immovable; and when his body was torn, preserved still the hidden treasure of piety in his soul, of which the devil could not rob him. And therefore, not knowing what to do more, he took himself to his old stratagem; and instigating his

* Hom. V. ad Pagulum Antiochenum.
† Hom. I. Homil. XXIII. p. 365. &c.
wife to entertain irreligious and blasphemous thoughts, attempted that way to overthrow this champion. For she, tired with the long continuance of his calamities, came to him, and clapping her hands at what she beheld, upbraided him with these lamentable fruits of his piety, and rehearsing his former prosperity, and then pointing at this present misery, asked him, If this was the reward which he received from the Lord for all his sacrifices? with abundance of such like words, which were enough to disturb the most composed, and subvert the most steady and resolved mind:... I am a vagabond, said she, and am forced to crutch to others like a slave: I, who was a queen, am constrained to depend upon my servants for relief! I, who maintained many liberally, am now nourished myself out of other folks charity: Adding, that it would be far better for him to provoke his angry Creator, by impious words, to cut him off, than by an unprofitable patience, thus to prolong both his and her misery.

But he, more offended with these words than any of his former sufferings, with eyes full of indignation, looked upon her as an enemy, and asked what ailed her to talk thus like one of the foolish women? Lay aside, said he, these thoughts, and let me hear no more of this advice, which makes me appear to myself as if one half of me were wicked and irre- ligious. “What! shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not suffer evil?” Remember all the past happiness thou hast enjoyed, and oppose better unto worse. No man’s life is entirely and thoroughly happy. To be always as well as we can wish, belongs to God alone. If thou art grieved at what is present, fetch thy comfort from what thou hast received before. Now thou weepest, but formerly thou didst laugh; now thou art poor, but there was a time when thou wastedst nothing. Then thou drankst of the pure fountain of life; be content, and drink now the more patiently of the troubled waters. Behold the rivers, their streams are not clear in all places; and our life, thou knowest, is like one of them, which slides away continually, and is oft-times full of waves, which come rolling one upon another; one part of this river is passed by, and another is running on its course. This part of it is gushing out from the fountain, and the next is ready to follow it as soon as it is gone. And thus we are all making great haste to the common sea; death, I mean, which swallows up all at last.

If we receive good from the hands of the Lord, shall we not suffer evil? Think of that again. Shall we go about to compel the Judge to afford us just the very same things for ever? Shall we presume to instruct our Lord and Master how he ought to conduct our life? He hath the power of his own decrees, and orders as he pleases; so he appoints our portion for us. And we know that he is wise, and that he dispenses to his servants what is most profitable for them. Do not, then, curiously pry into the counsels and resolutions of thy Lord and Governor; only take in good part, and affectionately embrace, whatsoever is ordered by his wisdom. Love his administration; and whatsoever he is pleased to give, receive it with pleasure. Demonstrate now, in a sorrowful condition, that thou wast worthy of all the joy which thou hadst formerly in a better.

Thus Job discoursing, he baffled the devil once more, and gave him such a repulse, that he made him perfectly ashamed to see himself thus vanquished. And what ensued after this? Why, when the devil was beaten, his disease fled away too, having assaulted him in vain, and got no ground of him. His flesh began to recover into a second youth; he flourished also in his estate, which was restored to him with increase. For riches flowed so plentifully into his house, that they were double to what he had before; first, That he might be no loser by his affliction; and, secondly, That he might have a merciful reward of his patience under it. Therefore it was that his horses, and mules, and camels, and sheep, and all the rest of his revenue, were doubled, only his children were no more than equal to the number he had before, seven sons and three daughters. The reason was, because his beasst’s indeed perished entirely, but the better part of his children still survived, when they were taken from him. And therefore, being again adorned with as many sons and daughters as formerly he enjoyed, he had a double portion of them also; those who are present with him here, and those who expected him in the other world. Behold, then, what good things this just man, Job, heaped up to himself by his patient submission to God. And do thou, therefore, if thou hast suffered grievously in this fire, which the malice of the devil kindled, bear it constantly, and lenify the affliction with these better thoughts; according to that which is written, Cast all thy care upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.

To this purpose that great person St Basil discourses, when he represents how Job received the first assaults of his affliction, and how happily it ended. And there is great reason to think that he did not, in the progress of it, swerve from those good beginnings which had so blessed a conclusion; but whatsoever expressions fell from him when he was engaged in the heat of disputation, he still preserved such a religious temper of mind, as made him not cease to submit himself reverently to God’s will, and to thank him for all the benefits he had formerly received from his bounty. Nor do I find any cause for the censures which Maimonides (and out of him Manasseh Ben-Israel;) hath passed upon the disputation between him and his four friends, about Divine Providence, which he hath thus stated.

“Job (saith he) maintains that mankind is so vile a sort of being, that God doth not regard the best of them any more than he doth the worst; but it is all one to him, when a calamity comes, whether it light upon the offenders, or upon the innocent. Nay,
more than this, he affirms that there is no expectation after death, and consequently no hope remaining for him." Which are such blasphemies, that Maimonides is fain to seek excuses for him; and, for that end, alludes a common saying among their wise men, That a man is not apprehended or seized on because of his grief; that is, what he says in extremity of pain, is not imputed to him for sin. But there is no need of this apology; for the places he alludes do not prove him guilty of uttering such things as (to speak in his words) are evil in the highest degree; though Manasseh Ben-Israel is so presumptuous, as to charge him with such a profane denial of Divine Providence, at least here below the moon, that he makes him impute all his misery to the malignant aspect of the planets, under which he was conceived and born.

To which opinion of Job, say they, every one of his friends opposed a particular opinion of their own, differing each of them from the other. And first, Eliiphaz endeavours to establish this for a certain truth, "that as afflictions do not come by chance, but by the providence of God, so they are sent for the sins of men;" and therefore, without all doubt, Job was a great offender, which was the cause he was handled on this manner. "This opinion," says Maimonides, "he held to the last; only was fain to add, in conclusion, that all the ways whereby we deserve punishment do not appear."

Then after him (when Job had argued against this) comes Bildad, who produces a new opinion, grounded upon the doctrine of permutation, or recompence, as they speak; that is, "he believed the evils which Job endured here should, if he proved innocent, be changed into good things, and, in the issue, be highly serviceable to him in another world."

After whom succeeds Zophar, with a different resolution from all these, viz. "That God acts according to his own pleasure, and that we are not to search for any cause of his actions out of his own will; nor to say, Why doth he this, and not that? In short, we are not to seek the way of equity, and the decree of wisdom, in his doings; for it necessarily belongs to his essence, that he do what he will; and our understanding is too shallow to comprehend the secrets of his wisdom, whose right and propriety it is that he may do according to his pleasure, and for no other cause."

And these four opinions about Providence, Maimonides undertakes to shew, have had their several asserterers since, who have propagated them among their scholars. Job's opinion, he saith, is the same with Aristotle's, who attributed all to accident. Bildad was followed by the sect of Mutaazali, (a kind of Phariscees among the Ismaelites), who ascribed all to wisdom. Zophar, by the sect of Assazia, who attributed all to will and pleasure. And Eliiphaz, he saith, held the opinion of the law, which is, that God deals with men according to their works.

But when that all these men had disputed, nothing moved Job, there stands up another, whose name was Elihu, "who first proves the providence of God from prophetical dreams, xxxiii. 35. and to those things which Eliiphaz had said, adds, according to the imagination of Manasseh Ben-Israel, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, (which he labours to find in ver. 14.), and thereby in a wonderful way, says he, resolves all the doubt, by determining that Job, and other just men, may be punished for sins which they committed in a former body."

But as there is no footstep, that I can see, for this food conceit, which he honours with the name of a mystery, so it is evident these men follow their own vain inventions in all this discourse, directly contrary to the book itself. For they make Job's opinion the very worst of all the rest; when the Lord himself tells Eliiphaz, in the conclusion of the book, (xlii. 7.) that he was angry with him and his two other friends, because they had not spoken of him so rightly as Job had. And it doth not appear by their speeches, that they held several opinions about Providence, and took every one of them a different way (that is a more Rabbinical subtlety) to solve the doubt, where-in Job's unusual sufferings had perplexed them. But they seem to have harped all of them upon one and the same string, as I have represented in the arguments before each chapter.

From whence the conclusion of Maimonides will be very evident, (which is the best thing he says), that "the scope of the book is, to establish the great article of Providence, and thereby to preserve us from error, in thinking that God's knowledge is like our knowledge, or his intention, providence, and government, like our intention, providence, and government. Which foundation being laid, nothing will seem hard to a man, whatsoever happens; nor will he fall into dubious thoughts concerning God, whether he knows what is befallen us or no, and whether he takes any care of us. But rather he will be inflamed the more vehemently in the love of God, as it is said in the end of this prophecy. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." So say our wise men, "They that act out of love, will rejoice in chastisement."
THE

BOOK OF PSALMS

AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

PARAPHRASED: Simplicius

WITH ARGUMENTS TO EACH PSALM.
To all Devout Christians,

Especially those that frequent the

Daily Prayers of the Church,

The Author dedicateth this

Paraphrase upon the Book of Psalms;

Wishing them increase of Grace and Comfort,

By

Singing praises unto God with understanding,

Psal. xlvii. 7.
THE

PREFACE.

THE work itself proves so long, that I must make the preface the shorter; which shall be confined to these two heads: First, A brief account of the book of Psalms; Secondly, Of my paraphrase upon it.

I.

For the first,—The book is a most admirable piece of poetry, which moves more powerfully, and touches the mind more sensibly, than sentences in prose; especially when it is in such perfection, as we find it in these divine inspirations. For, as Melancthon truly speaks, this is the most elegant work extant in the world; and hath performed that, I may add, which Plato himself wished for; but confessed was above the reach of men. There was no more efficacious way, that philosopher clearly saw, of instructing youth, than by odes and songs; about which he discourses at large, and gives a great many cautions in his Second Book of Laws; but after all, concludes at last, τὸ γὰρ ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἐφέθη, ὡς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, “This must be the work of God, or of some divine man:” wherein he plainly acknowledges the defect of their institution, (though certain poems were pretended then to have been anciently made by their goddess Isis), and marvellously justifies the Hebrew discipline, who taught their children or scholars by hymns.

Which Moses, the man of God, began to compose, Exod. xv. Deut. xxxii.; and other inspired persons afterwardsimitated, Judges, v. 1 Sam. ii.; but was brought to perfection by David: Who, as he was an admirable artist in music, 1 Sam. xvi. 18. and himself invented some musical instruments, as we learn from the prophet Amos, vi. 5. so was an incomparable poet, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. 2. and took all occasions to exercise this faculty, not on such low subjects as those to which it is commonly debased, but in abundance of divine meditations; which are gathered together in this book, wherein he calls upon them to listen unto him, saying, “Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord,” Psalm xxxiv. 11.

It is called in their language, Sepher Tehillem, the book of Psalms, or Hymns, i. e. praises of the Lord; because, though there are many complaints, and intercessions, and prayers in it, yet the greatest part are praises or thanksgivings unto God; and in those other, there are many mixtures of acknowledgments of what God had formerly done for him, or of confidence what he would still do, or of resolutions how thankful he would be, when God granted him deliverance: Which gave them such a strange power, “to cure heaviness, to extirpate grief, to wipe away sorrow, to lay aside troublesome thoughts and passions, to ease us of our cares, to recreate those who are oppressed with any sort of pains, (they are the words of Proclus, archbishop of Constantinople †), as well as to move compunction for sin, and to stimulate unto piety,” that no book in the world is to be compared with it for these purposes.

And as it is called the book of Psalms, or praises, from the major part, so they are called David’s Psalms, because he made the most of them, though it must be confessed, there were several other authors, by whom some of them were composed.

In the Hebrew they are divided, like Moses’s law, into five books, as I shall shew in due place; and so may be called a second Pentateuch: which seem to have been collected by several persons, (as will appear in the preface to each of them); for no other reason but that can be given, why all that belong to one subject were not put together; or at least, all those composed by David, placed by themselves, and not so mixed, as they are, with those made by other authors.

Some think they were gathered together by the friends of Hezekiah, before the captivity. But if they had been so, they would, in all probability, have been disposed in such order as they were penned; all the

† Serm. de Incarn. Dom.
sacred books being preserved in the temple, (as Josephus witnesses*), with great care: from whence they might have taken the copies of them, with the names of all their authors, which now, in many of them, are wanting. Which makes it more likely, that, after the temple and the sacred records were burnt by the king of Babylon’s army, some pious persons collected as many as they could find, by inquiring among their friends, in those good men’s hands who had transcribed them heretofore for their own private use, every one as he had most need. For the songs of Zion the people were very well acquainted withal, though it lay desolate, as it appears by the 157th Psalm; where the Babylonians desire to hear one of them sung by the mournful captives; who preserved them, no doubt, to their comfort in that sad condition, and added to them such as were made by divine men, during its contumacy, and after their return from-captivity.

When, as St Athanasius † resolves in his Synopsis, (following the Hebrew tradition), Ezra put them together in one volume, as we now have them, which is not affirmed without reason; for we find that the foundation of the second temple was no sooner laid, but Ezra (as the Hebrews call him) restored the ancient custom of psalmody, or singing psalms of praise, (Ezra, iii. 10. 11.), which David had appointed to accompany the sacrifices as soon as the ark was settled, (1 Chron. vi. 31. xvi. 17. Ecclus. l. 15. 16. &c.), and which Solomon continued after he had built the temple, and brought the ark into it, 2 Chron. v. 12. 13.

Now, when all those bloody sacrifices were abolished, by the offering which Christ made of himself, the sacrifice of praise alone remained, as the principal service of the Christian church: several persons being inspired, not only to pray divinely, but to prophesy also, or to sing psalms, and hymns of praise; as we read in the epistle to Cor. xi. 5. xiv. 15. 26. And in the book of Revelation, we find the apostles and elders thus employed, Rev. iv. 9. 10. 11. in which the people bare a part; as we learn from the next chapter, ver. 9. 12. and xiv. 1. 2. 3. So that St Austin might tell Januarius ‡, that concerning singing hymns and psalms, we have instructions, and examples, and precepts, both of our Lord himself, and of his apostles: According to which, the churches of Africa sung Divina Cantica Prophetarum, the divine songs of the prophets, while the drunken Donatists sung the composites of human wit. "Nor can I see," saith he, "what Christians can do more profitably and more holily than this, when they meet together, and are not reading, preaching, or praying."

Those Divina Cantica, no doubt, were principally the Psalms of David, in singing of which Christian people delighted, above all other exercises of devotion.

The manner of their singing, also, was like that in Ezra’s time, Ezra, iii. 11.; one beginning the hymns, and the rest answering the να δείξα σας, extremes, or last words of it, as the author of the Apostolical Constitutions tells us, which Eusebius calls the Ἀγωνιστικά τῆς θεμέλεως, the last part of the hymns, which, he expressly says, were sung by the whole congregation, who harkened in silence to him that sung the rest, till he came to the close, which they all repeated together. And when that manner of singing the psalms, which we now use in our Quires, was brought in by Flavianus, and Diodorus, who, at Antioch, divided the choir into two parts, (singing the Psalms of David, in wass, alternately, one verse by this half of the quire, and the next by the other), it thence spread itself, as it were, by a joint consent, all the world over. Thus Theodoret informs us in his Ecclesiastical History, Book ii. chap. 19.

By which means the people came to be so well acquainted with them, that (as the same Theodoret tells us in his preface to this book of Psalms) both in city and country this was the employment of Christian people. They that minded no other book of the scriptures, yet had this so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the high-ways, they were wont to recreate themselves with the singing of these holy songs.

But I must not enlarge any further on this subject, nor in this preface with the high commendations which the ancients give both of Psalmody, and of this book of Psalms; which St Basil (who alone would furnish me with the sense of all the rest, if it were fit to transcribe his preface to it) calls the "common treasure of all good precepts," (containing the perfections of all the rest of the scriptures), "the voice of the church," in which may be found Sermonia thesa, "a complete body of theology."

Which will make this paraphrase, I hope, the more acceptable; of which it is time now that I give an account.

II.

There being two ways of paraphrasing, one which keeps to the metaphors, and pursues them in more words of the like kind; another which puts those borrowed forms of speech into proper and common expressions; I have chosen the latter, and endeavoured, by giving a clear interpretation, and expressing, as well as I could, the true force and just value of every phrase, to make the original words plain and easy in our language: as may be seen particularly, xviii. 2. xix. 8. 9. In which endeavour it is likely I may sometimes meet with the censures of those who do not consider the import of the Hebrew words, but not be thought much faulty, I hope, by such as can and will consult them; for they will find I have carefully weighed them, and taken some pains rightly to expound them; not largely, nor making discourses upon them, but

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* Antiq. L. III. C. 1.
† Tom. II. p. 86.
§ Epist. exix. Cap. 16.
|| Lib. II. Cap. 57.
THE PREFACE.

in a few words representing the mind and spirit of the Psalmist in his own way, which is devotion. And where there are two senses of which a word is capable, they will find likewise that I have endeavoured to express them both, if the matter would bear it. As for example, (to name one place for all), in the 119th Psalm, ver. 126, where we read, "It is time for thee, O Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law:" I have expounded it thus: "It is time to work to the Lord, or for the Lord," &c. Because all the ancient interpreters, except one, have so understood them; yet I have not neglected the other sense, which we follow, but made them agree well together. I have preferred, indeed, the first interpretation, not only for the reason now named, but because the words run most currently so in the Hebrew; and the best of the Jews have expounded them in that manner. Maimonides, for instance, who says this was one argument that moved him to write his famous book, called Moreh Nevuchim: which some might account an audacious attempt, because never undertaken, he saith *, by any of their nation since this long captivity, (as he calls it), but he supported himself with this principle, that it is said concerning such sort of matters, "It is time to do something for the Lord; they having made void thy law." And in like manner David Gans, in his Chronology, says †, that R. Judah Hakodesh, observing their oral law, or traditional religion, in danger to be lost, set it down in writing, though there was a prohibition against it: for רמיה יָּאֵל the Rabbi relied upon this scripture, (thinking it would bear him out), "It is time to work to the Lord," &c. which he expounded to this sense. Now that the law by word of mouth is like to be forgotten and utterly lost, there must be something extraordinary done to uphold it; and so he wrote the Mneheh.

I have also sometimes followed Theodoret, in the explication of some phrases; which I think good to signify, that none may be too forward to censure that for which I have a good authority at least, if not a weighty reason. As for example, Psal. lxxxix. ver. 13. I have grounded my paraphrase upon his notion, That as the hand of God denotes the divine energy, so his right hand signifies his energy for good. And therefore, they then needing a double energy, the Psalmist remembers both his hand and his right hand; desiring to see their enemies destroyed, and themselves delivered.

And if the readers will please to take the pains to compare the text with the references I have made (and inclosed) in the Paraphrase to other scriptures, they will easily see, (especially if they have any understanding in the original language), that I have not followed my own fancy in my interpretation, but had good reason for expounding the text as I have done in such places; and that this Paraphrase may serve, in many places, instead of a larger commentary upon the words. As for example, Psal. cxlvii. 19. his words, I think, plainly relate to the ten words spoken on Mount Sinai, as I might have shown if I intended to write annotations.

Which if I had undertaken, it would not perhaps have been wholly a superfluous labour; but I might have produced something new, as I think I have done in this Paraphrase; else I should not have attempted it, especially after such an excellent person as Dr Hammond. For therein I have interpreted some phrases otherwise than they have been understood; of which I think good here to give one example. The Son of man, and the sons of men, are phrases which often occur, which I have good ground to think belong in scripture-language to princes, and sometimes the greatest of princes. So I have expounded that well-known place, Psal. lxxx. 17. "The man of thy right hand, the Son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself;" and Psal. iv. 2. "O ye sons of men," i.e. rulers of people; and viii. 3. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man," (i.e. the greatest of men), "that thou visitest him?" cxlvii. 3.: "Put not your confidence in princes, nor in the son of man," (how great a prince, that is, soever he may be, though of never such dignity and power), "in whom there is no help."

And thus the counsellors of Saul are called the sons of men, lviii. 1.; and so I understand those words in Isa. li. 12. "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die; and of the son of man; (that is a prince), "who shall be as grass?" where, upon the words that go before, "I am he that comforteth you," Theodoret hath this note: "I am he that cast Pharaoh and his army into the sea; he who killed many thousands of the Assyrians by one angel." From which I conclude, that he understood the following words thus, "Why dost thou then fear any man, though he be never so great a tyrant, and armed with never so much power?" as the king of Babylon then was, whom he calls an oppressor presently after, who carried them captives from their own land.

Thus, in the title of the 9th Psalm, the Septuagint for ἐλλαθιν read τῷ ἱστῷ; and so do Symmachus Aquila and Theodotion, as Theodoret there observes; the former of which makes it a triumphal song for the death of that son; which most interpreters, as I have observed, conclude to have been that great man Goliath. The original of which language, I conceive, is to be fetched from the common manner of speech among the Hebrews, who call the chief of any kind by the name of the whole kind. As they call man "creature," Mark, xvi. 15. because the prime creature here below: so a king, or eminent person, they call "the son of man," because the prime among the sons of men. Thus St Peter, i Pet. ii. 13. calls magistrates "human creatures," where the Syriac translates, "sons of men," i.e. great men, or governors. And so man is used, Gen. ix. 9. for a man in authority. But all this is to be understood of that expression, ben Adam: as for ben Esraib, Vol. III.

* Prefat. pag. penult. † Ad. Ann. 3978. ‡ Ben Adam and bene Isra.
which we also render son of man, (Psal. cxliv. 3), it hath another signification, importing the wretchedness of any man's condition. And if that had been the name whereby the angel salutes Ezekiel, it might have been to put him in mind of his mean condition, though conversing with heavenly ministers; but he constantly calling him ben Adam, I see no reason why we should not think it denotes him to be a great man; highly esteemed by God; and appointed by him to judge and pass sentence upon his people, Ezek. xx. 4. And in like manner, Daniel is called son of man, Dan. viii. 17. who in the next chapters hath the title of a "man greatly beloved," ix. 23. x. 11.

And by the way I may observe, that from hence we may learn what to understand by that title, which our blessed Saviour so often gives himself of, a <i>bēn</i> <i>Adam</i>, the Son of man, or rather that Son of man; that is, the Messiah, the Lord's anointed, that great prince God promised to bless them withal. It can have no other meaning in John, v. 22. 27. (where he saith, God hath committed all judgment unto him, and given him authority to execute it, because he is the Son, or that Son of man), than this, that he is that great person, whom God designed to be the Lord and Governor of all things. So he appeared to be, when he sent the Holy Ghost; which seems to be called "the coming of the Son of man," Matth. x. 23. Where he says, they shall not have gone over the cities of "Israel, till the Son of man come;" by the power, that is, of the Holy Ghost, to enable them, and give them authority, to go and preach him, in all other countries as well as there, to be the great Lord of all.

But instead of such annotations as these, which the world is already well furnished withal, (particularly by the learned Dr Hammond upon this book), I have only, in the argument to each psalm, given a brief account now and then of some difficulties; and both there, and in the Paraphrase itself, pointed to such parts of the history of David, or others, as I thought the psalms have a respect unto. Which I have followed so closely, as to wave other expositions, when I thought I saw clear warrant to accommodate them to that. For, in my judgement, (to use the words of that good man Musculus, upon the 132d Psalm, ver. 9), "It is the duty of every pious person, as much as he is able, to prefer that exposition, which is approved by most testimonies of the holy scriptures, before all others whatsoever, though in show and appearance never so plausible."

For this reason, I have forborne a great many mystical and allegorical senses of the words, and rather adhered to the literal meaning, though accounted trivial and vulgar by many men, who had rather indulge to their own fancies, than be at the pains of making a diligent inquiry after the truth. For, whatsoever is pretended, it is not the easiness and meanness of the literal sense which hath made it to be despised, and been the cause of allegorizing the scriptures; but the great difficulty and labour that is required to the finding of it out, in many places. St Hierom and St Austin confess as much, who spent their younger years in mystical interpretations, as more easy studies; but when they grew old, applied themselves to historical explanations. Which St Hierom (in his preface to the prophet Obadiah) confesses he did not understand, when he wrote upon that book in his youth; and, in plain terms, ingeniously acknowledges those mystical explications were the work <i>puerilis ingenii</i>, of his childish wit, at which he blushed and hanged down his head, even when others cried them up to the skies; but the historical explications, (which then he set out), the work <i>mature intellectus</i>, of his mature age; when he had at least profited thus far, as to know, with Socrates, that he was ignorant. In short, he begins that preface with the words of the apostle, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things:" and hopes this would excuse him for interpreting that prophet allegorically in the heat of his youth; whose history he did not know. St Austin acknowledges as much, in his first volume of Retractions, chap. xviii. which I will not transcribe, but only set down the words of Martin Bucer, one of the first reformers, upon the 6th of St Matthew; where he says, that "it would be worth a great deal to the church, if, forsaking allegories and other frivolous devices, which are not only empty, but derogate very much from the majesty of the doctrine of Christ, we would all simply and soberly prosecute that which our Lord intends to say to us."

This hath been my rule, though I have not so followed (I must add) the strict literal sense, as to make a mere Judicial Paraphrase, (which Theodoret complains, in his preface to this book, was the fault of some that went before him,) but have improved the words, in all places, to a sublimer sense, where I had any direction from our Saviour, or his apostles, to apply them to the things belonging to Christ's kingdom. But where I wanted their guidance, I have not taken upon me to do it, (unless it be very sparingly, where the church hath thought it probable there was something intended beyond the letter), because I did not know whether the Holy Ghost, which indited the words, had respect to these times, as well as to those histories, to which I thought I saw a clear warrant to apply them.

And where there is no title to the psalm, (which St Hierom, or one under his name, calls the key, to let us into the sense of it), it is not easy to tell to what history it relates: but must be acknowledged to be <i>ψυχων</i>, etc. (as Origen, upon the first Psalm *), speaks from some learned Hebrew), a work of very great labour, to find the keys which lie scattered up and down in several parts of the scripture: and then to fit them to the places which they are to open. In this I have taken some pains, as may be seen in the arguments to the several

* Philocalia. cap. 2.
THE PREFACE.

psalms; in some of which, if I differ from those that have gone before me, I hope none will be so perverse as to make it a fault: for, (as the true St Hierom speaks, in his preface to the Psalms, according to the Hebrew verity), since they are still desiring new pleasures, and the neighbouring sens cannot satisfy men's gluttony, "cur in solo studio scripturarum, veteri sapore contenti sunt?" Why, in the study of the scriptures alone, can they relish nothing that is new, but content themselves merely with that which tastes of antiquity? Which I do not speak, as he proceeds, to reflect upon my predecessors, or detract from their excellent labours, (to which I thankfully acknowledge I am exceedingly beholden), not only to give an account to the readers of what I have done; that they may not think I have only transcribed what I found before said in this argument, and brought no farther light to it.

Why, may some be forward to say, do you pretend, after so many monuments of learning, both ancient and modern, to bring forth any thing which hath not been said before, and said better? I answer, as Musculus doth in the like case, "If the treasure of the holy scriptures be such, that it can be drawn so dry by the diligent searches of pious and learned men, as nothing shall remain to exercise the studies of those that succeed them; if there be at any time such an effusion of God's Holy Spirit, that after that time it is in vain to labour in finding out its mind in the holy scriptures; if there have been in the church, after the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, men of such perfect accomplishments, that to them was imparted such an universal fulness of divine knowledge, as to make their writings absolutely complete, so that we need do nothing but night and day study them alone; then truly I refuse not the censure of folly, nay, of madness, for attempting any thing new in the holy scriptures, after such absolute writers. But if that most rich fountain of the divine oracles be altogether inexhaustible, and no age can be assigned, to which alone the grace of the Holy Spirit was confined, and there were never any doctors at any time in the church, after Christ, the apostles, and prophets, of such esteem, that nothing is wanting in their writings, nothing can be rightly added to them, nothing is in them, which may be justly taken away, or changed for the better; then I do not see why we may not profitably travel in the same way that others have done, with hopes of adding more light to that which they have left us."

It is better, indeed, if a man only consults his own worldly ease and tranquillity, not to trouble himself at all about such studies, but to get a reputation merely by censuring those that are thus employed. But if a man look upon himself as consecrated to the service of Christ, and seek not what he thinks will please himself, so much as what will please his Master, Christ, and from him alone expect his reward, he will not think fit to be discouraged in such endeavours, by the hatred or the unkind censures which they may procure him; nor, nor by the sense neither of his own infirmities, and the lapses he may have in such writings: Which all truly good men will pardon, when they see an honest diligence in us to do as well as we can; and when they remember that no one man can do all things, nor nothing so as to need no correction.

Submitting, therefore, this work, such as it is, to the correction and amendment of those that are better able, and shall hereafter labour in this argument, I commend it to the perusal of devout Christians, hoping that the light I have given to this admirable book is so clear, if not great, that they will, by God's blessing, receive no small benefit by it. For there is nothing which David, or any of the rest, say of themselves and their condition, but by an easy accommodation may be made to serve every one of our occasions, when we are in any strait, public or private, or when we have received any remarkable deliverance. Athanasius hath said much on this subject, which I must not transcribe, nor shew how they are fitted (as Gregory Nyssen observes) to all persons and ages, to all conditions of life, and all manner of employments, to the state both of sickness and of health, when we are upon the land or upon the water; so wonderful is their useful variety. But I shall conclude this preface, as Theodoret doth his Commentaries upon this book.

I beseech the readers, if I seem to have expounded it well and aptly, that they would reap the profit of it; and if I have not attained the secret mysteries of the Spirit, that they would not find fault too much; for what I could find I have freely propounded, and what I have learnt of those gone before, I endeavour to transmit to posterity; and I have taken the pains, of which others may receive the benefit without any labour. Whom I beseech and intreat to make some compensation for my pains with their prayers, by the help of which I may to words add deeds, and reap the blessedness which belongs to both. For "he that doth and teaches, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," Matth. v. 19.

And let us praise the Lord (as St Chrysostom also concludes) perpetually, as this book instructs us; let us never cease to give thanks in all things, both by our words and by our deeds. For this is our sacrifice, this is our oblation, this is the best liturgy, or divine service, resembling the angelical manner of living. If we continue thus singing hymns unto him, we shall finish this life inoffensively, and enjoy those good things also which are to come. Of which may we all be so happy as to be partakers, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; with whom, to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, dominion, and honour, now and for ever. Amen.
A PARAPHRASE ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

BOOK I.

PSALM I.

THE ARGUMENT.—The collector of these five books of Psalms, or David himself, (as Apollinaris and others think), prefaced to them, by a short discourse about the last end of man; just as the philosophers were wont to do in their books of morality, and as Christ himself doth in the beginning of his sermon on the Mount. The end of man is blessedness, and the way to it, observance of God’s law; which he lays down here as the foundation (so St Basil conceives it) of the whole ensuing work. So that we may bestow upon this psalm the title of MAKAPIEMOE, i. e. BLESSEDNESS, out of Athanasius his epistle to Marcellinus, and Theodoret’s preface to this psalm.

Ver. 1. BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.] Great is the happiness of that man, unspeakably great, who hath not trod in the steps of the ungodly, (who have no other rule of their actions but their own lusts and passions); or, if he hath at any time been seduced by them, timely retracted his folly, and did not persist, like those obdurate wretches, in evil courses; much less persevered so long, and proceeded so far in his impiety, as to resolve to be one of that pestilent company, who deride and scoff at all religion!

Ver. 2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.] But his pleasure is to do the will of God, by following his counsels which he hath given in his holy laws, with which he advises and consults continually, and with unwearied study endeavours to be thoroughly acquainted with them.

Ver. 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper.] You may behold an emblem of this man’s happiness in those trees which are planted by such trenches as derive their water from a perpetual fountain. As they are green and flourishing all the year, and never fail to reward the gardener’s pains, at the time he expects to receive their fruit; so shall this pious man be ever prosperous, and in the issue reap a plentiful fruit of his labours; for there are none of his enterprises but shall succeed according to his heart’s desire.

Ver. 4. The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.] O how miserably will those men be deceived, who hope to thrive as well, or better, by their impiety! It is too little to say, that they shall be like trees without any moisture; the light and useless chaff, which is blown away with the wind, is a farther resemblance of them; for so shall all their counsels, designs, and endeavours, to root themselves in the earth, be scattered and come to nothing.

Ver. 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.] Therefore let them not think to defend themselves when God comes to judge men according to their works; for whatsoever plea they make, or power they have, they shall certainly be overthrown. It is possible, for the present, they may seem to equal or overtop the prosperity of the righteous; but there will be a time when God will make a difference, and give the righteous a happiness, wherein they shall have no share at all.

Ver. 6. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.] For he approves and highly esteemeth the obedience of the righteous to his holy laws, and therefore will certainly reward it; but that lewd course of life which the wicked lead he utterly hates, and they shall infallibly perish in it.

PSALM II.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm (under the history of David, whom from a low and afflicted condition God raised to a throne, and notwithstanding all the opposition made against it, first by Saul, and then by others, settled him in it) contains a most illus-
trious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, whom God raised even from the dead, made King of glory, notwithstanding all that the Scribes and Pharisees, Herod, and other princes, could do to hinder it, enlarged his kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Ver. 1. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? What frenzy is this, which makes the Philistines, and other neighbouring nations, (2 Sam. v. 17. &c. viii. 1. &c.), as I foresee the Pharisees and their partakers will do hereafter, storm thus furiously, and bandy together with so much noise and tumult? Why do they contrive to hinder that which the power of God will irresistibly bring to pass?

Ver. 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against his Anointed, saying. Their kings and governors are risen up, and lay their heads together, to oppose the design of God, who hath anointed me king over his people: just as Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the rulers of Israel, (Acts, iv. 27.), will conspire against Christ, and seek to dethrone him, when he is made, by God the Father, King of all the world.

Ver. 3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. Let us not submit, say they, to this new king, who pretends to reign by divine authority; but resolutely deny to be bound to his obedience, and throw off the yoke which he and his ministers would impose upon us.

Ver. 4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. As if they were stronger than he, whose throne is in heaven: who, as he contains their vain attempts, so will expose them to the scorn and derision of all those who shall behold their folly.

Ver. 5. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Even then, when they think they have done their business, they shall find the tokens of the divine vengeance against them; and if they will not desist from their opposition to him, he will utterly confound them, with a destruction so terrible and remarkable, as if he had called to them from heaven, and said,

Ver. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. See how madly you set yourselves against my will; for in spite of all that you can do, I have anointed and set up David, who rules by my authority in the hill of Sion, where I have a peculiar residence: as in time to come, (let all his enemies do what they can to hinder it), I will anoint one of his posterity to sit upon the throne of glory at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Ver. 7. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee. Such I am sure is the decree of Heaven, which I here promulgate to all the world: for from a low and poor condition, the Lord hath raised me to the highest dignity. This very day, by his order, I begin to reign, and may call it the birth-day of my kingdom: which is but a slender type of a far more strange and greater exaltation of his Son Christ, whom he hath determined to raise again to life after he is dead and buried, (Acts, xiii. 33. Rom. i. 4.), and then to crown with glory and honour in the heavens.

Ver. 8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. If thou wilt not believe this royal edict, you shall shortly see not only this nation of the Jews, but the Philistines, the Edomites, Moabites, Syrians, and other remoter countries, as far as Eu- phrates, (whom God, according to his ancient grant, Exod. xiii. 31. Ezra, iv. 16. 20. hath at my request given unto me), subdue under my feet, (Psal. ix. ver. 6. &c. 2 Sam. viii.), as all the nations of the earth shall be under his Son Christ.

Ver. 9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. They shall never be able to stand before me, (much less before him): for he hath given me a sceptre so powerful, (and to him one infinitely more irresistible), that they who will not bow unto it, and be ruled by it, shall be broken in pieces as easily and irreparably, as an earthen pot is with a rod of iron.

Ver. 10. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth: And therefore, let all kings and governors of the earth be advised by me; take heed what you do, and understand your own interest so well as not to oppose the decree of Heaven; or if you have begun to set yourself against the Lord's Anointed, be not so vain as to continue in that folly, but repent, and correct your error.

Ver. 11. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. If you would be safe, surrender up yourselves to become his subjects, and be afraid to incur his displeasure by any disobedience. You ought indeed to rejoice, that you may be so happy, as to be under the government of so great and so gracious a Prince: but that very thing should make you the more fearful to offend his majesty.

Ver. 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him. To whom I counsel you to go and do your homage, and to pay him all the honour that is due to God's vicegerent; lest he grow angry at your obstinate refusal to submit unto him, and you perish in that rebellious course, when his wrath breaks out suddenly, like an unpenchable fire, against you. Blessed are all they that follow this advice, and fly to him as their mighty protector and deliverer.

PSALM III.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

THE ARGUMENT.—Apollonias calls this Apgis psal., a mournful or lamentable song. And so it is, it compared with the preceding; otherwise there are in it far greater expressions of faith, and triumphant confidence in God, than there are of trouble and dejection of spirit, though David's condition when he wrote it was very sad and dangerous. For the
title which St Hierom truly calls the key of the
psalm, (whereby we are let into the sense), in-
forms us, that it is a meditation composed in his
flight from Jerusalem, when his son Absalom con-
spired against him, and most of the kingdom fell
off from him, (1 Sam. xv. &c.); which after his
return thither he commanded to be sung in the
tabernacle, in commemoration of that disconsolate
condition.

And here I must note, once for all, that it cannot
be certainly known what is meant by the word Se-
lah, which we meet withal thrice in this short psalm.
The most probable opinion is, that it was a note
in music. In which David (as Theodoret observes
upon this word) being a very great master, he set
some of his psalms himself, to be sung to such in-
struments as he thought were most agreeable to
the notes. But that music being now lost, some intepreters have wholly omitted this word Selah, as
I shall also do.

Ver. 1. LORD, how are they increased that trouble
me? many are they that rise up against
me.] O Lord, who changest not, what an amazing
change is this! I who in a divine manner was set
by thee upon thy throne, and lately triumphed over so
many foreign countries, (Psalm ii. 6. 7. 8.) now see
great armies of my own subjects raised against me;
and conspiring with my son, not only to pull the
crown from my head, but to take away my life.

Ver. 2. Many there be which say of my soul, There
is no help for him in God. Selah.] The general cry
is, that I am lost, and that thou who wast wont to be
my helper, and in whom I always made my boast,
hast quite forsaken me, as my people have done uni-
versally.

Ver. 3. But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me:
my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.] But this (how
sad soever it be) shall never shake my confidence in
thee, O Lord, whom I still behold surrounding me
with almighty protection: and therefore I will
not cease to glory, and make my boast in thee; but
hope (though now I am in a sorrowful condition) that
thou wilt make me joyful again, and raise me out of
this dejected estate of my former dignity.

Ver. 4. I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and be
heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.] Why should I
doubt of it? when I never yet cried unto the Lord,
either in this or any former distress, but he sent me
relief from that place, where he having made his
special residence, would have us thither direct our
prayers.

Ver. 5. I laid me down and slept: I awaked, for the
LORD sustained me.] He hath already so quieted and
composed my mind, that in the midst of this dreadfu
danger I laid me down securely, and slept profound-
ly, and awaked, as I slept, without any fear, or any
disturbance: for the Lord supported and upheld my
spirit, in a firm confidence of his careful providence
over me.

Ver. 6. I will not be afraid of ten thousand of people,
that have set themselves against me round about.] And
therefore, were I beset with as many nations, as I see
men now encamp themselves on all sides against me,
I should not be at all daunted at it;

Ver. 7. Arise, O LORD, save me, O my God: for
thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone:
thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.] But only ad-
dress myself to thee, saying, Defer no longer, O Lord,
but let them see thou hast not forsaken me. De-
deliver me, O my God, from these rebellious subects,
whom I beseech thee to discomfit and put to shame,
as thou hast done many other powerful enemies, who
most impiously have sought with eager desire to de-
vour me.

Ver. 8. Salvation belongeth unto the LORD; thy bless-
ing is upon thy people. Selah.] Thou alone art the
author of all happiness, and therefore unto thee I
flee, to save and preserve me from this conspiracy:
not that I may live to be revenged, but to do good
unto thy people, whose prosperity I wish and will
seek, though never so ungrateful and undutiful to me
their sovereign.

PSALM IV.

To the chief musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm of
David.

THE ARGUMENT.—We can learn no more from this
title, but that David was the author of this Psalm;
and that he delivered it to the master of music in
the tabernacle, to be sung to the stringed instruments.
But when or upon what occasion he penned it, is not
certainly known, though the matter of it makes it
probable, it was in the same (or the like) distress
wherein he made the foregoing psalm.

Ver. 1. HEAR me when I call, O God of my
righteousness: Thou hast enlarged me
when I was in distress: have mercy upon me, and hear
my prayer.] O my God, the most righteous Judge,
who knowest the justice of my cause, and art the pro-
tector of oppressed innocency, vouchsafe to give me a
gracious answer, now that I cry unto thee for help
against my enemies. Thou hast heretofore made an
open way for my escape out of the sorest straits and
greatest dangers; which makes me hope thou wilt
still take pity upon me, and hear the humble petition
which I put up unto thee.

Ver. 2. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my
glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and
seek after lying? Selah.] I am confident my desire
is granted; and therefore do ye hearken also to me.
O ye rulers of the people, by whose authority such
multitudes are drawn into this conspiracy: cease to
defame my government, (1 Sam. xv. 3. &c.), and
break off your vain endeavours to dethrone me. Why
do you delight to weary yourselves in the pursuit of
such fallacious counsels, and to employ so much in-
dustry in inventing calumnies, and spreading lies, to
draw the people from me?

Ver. 3. But know that the LORD hath set apart him
that is godly for himself: The LORD will bear when I
call unto him.] Know that it is not in your power by all these arts to depose me; for I did not come to my kingdom by chance, nor by your choice, but by the special appointment of God; who, having so highly favoured me, that he hath selected me out of all other men, and in a wonderful manner advanced me to be his vicegerent; he will no doubt maintain me in my place, and graciously preserve me, when I implore his help from all the enemies that can assault me.

Ver. 4. Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selab.] Dread his displeasure, I beseech you, though you fear not my power; and let not your anger at me make you any longer offend him, by persisting in this rebellion, into which you have run rashly: but if you will debating the matter calmly within yourselves, and, when all the bustle and tumult of the day is over, ask yourselves at night what ground there is for it; I doubt not you will find reason to lay down your arms, and be quiet.

Ver. 5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.] As for you, my friends, that shew me still, though you are driven with me from God's holy place, yet fear nothing; but only take care to observe strictly all the rules of righteousness, which are the most acceptable sacrifices you can offer to the Lord, and then confide in him; and though your forces are few, doubt not of the victory.

Ver. 6. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? L O R D, let thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.] You are desirous, I know, to see peace and settlement restored; of which many are apt to despair, saying, Who shall make us so happy? But do thou, O Lord, look favourably upon us, and bless us, and then I am surer of it than if I saw the most powerful armies appear, with banners displayed for my succour.

Ver. 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.] The very thoughts of it, this small glimpse of thy love, hath already filled my heart with such joy, that it far exceeds all the pleasure my enemies can take in seeing their barns full of corn, and their presses overflow with wine.

Ver. 8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, L O R D, only makes me dwell in safety.] Nor can they take their rest more securely than I; for, though encompassed with these dangers, I no sooner lay me down, but I fall asleep; because when I have no other guard about me, thou, Lord, alone art a sufficient defence unto me.

P S A L M V.

To the chief musician upon N c h l o b. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm composed by David, (but whether when he was persecuted by Saul, or by Absalom, I cannot certainly determine), and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, after his troubles were over, to be sung in parts to the organ; in commemoration of that sad condition, and the devout confidence he placed in God, of deliverance out of it.

Ver. 1. G I V E ear to my words, O L O R D; consider my meditation.] Thou seest, O Lord, unto what grievous straits I am reduced: Let them move thee to grant me my request, and to have regard to the silent groans and sighs, whereby I call upon thee for relief.

Ver. 2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.] To thee I appeal as my sovereign Lord and supreme Judge; from whose almighty power I earnestly beg protection, and from whose justice I humbly implore the vindication of my innocence.

Ver. 3. My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O L O R D; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.] And thou wilt be as speedy, I hope, in thy help and succour, as I am early in my prayer: For the first thing I do is, to address myself to thee. I no sooner awake, but I dispose myself to wait on thee, (as an humble suitor at the gate of thy mercy), and expect what thou wilt be pleased to do for me.

Ver. 4. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.] Who wilt not fail, I am confident, to answer my expectations; for thou art a most righteous Judge, who art so far from approving this unjust persecution of me, (or rebellion against me), that thou abhorrest such wicked practices. They may prosper for a little time in these evil courses, but shall have no place in thy favour.

Ver. 5. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.] Thou wilt condemn them to suffer the punishment of their folly and madness; and banish those from thy presence, who in their blind rage have driven me from my habitation: for all such wicked doers are odious to thee.

Ver. 6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak lying: the L O R D will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.] Thou wilt utterly destroy those that abuse their tongues to tell lies, whereby they defame and calumniate my government: their bloody designs, which they seek to compass by fraud and treachery, make them abominable to the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 7. But as for me, I will come into thy house, in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.] But I, whom they have driven not only from my own house, but (which is far worse) from thine, hope, by thine infinite goodness towards me, to be restored again to go into thy courts; and there, with the humblest reverence, to worship thee, towards the place where thou hast set the monument of thy presence with us.

Ver. 8. Lead me, O L O R D, into thy righteousness, because of mine enemies: make the way straight before my face.] And in the mean time, thou wilt be my guide and conductor in the way of thy commandments, which are the rule of righteousness; that my ene-
mics, who seek for something to colour their hatred to me, may have nothing to object against me. They would gladly see me trip, and they watch for my halting: and therefore do thou make thy way so plain before me, and order my goings so steadfastly, that I may never stumble, much less fall, and give them any advantage over me.

Ver. 9. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth, their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre, they flatter with their tongue.] For with what triumph would they blaze abroad my real faults, who now stick not to tell all manner of lies of me? Their hearts are perpetually hatching the most malicious and mischievous stories, which they utter with open mouth, gaping for the destruction of the innocent: to whom when they speak fair, and put on a guise of friendship, it is with an intent to devour them.

Ver. 10. Destroy them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee.] O thou most righteous Judge, pronounce that sentence of condemnation against them which they deserve. Let their own devices, whereby they seek to ruin me, destroy themselves; and disperse them, because of their multiplied impieties. For it is thy cause more than mine that is now disputed, while they reject him whom thou hast appointed king of thy people.

Ver. 11. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.] This will excite all those who are faithful to thee, and confide in nothing but thy merciful protection, to rejoice and triumph perpetually in thy praise. They will be encouraged by thy wonderful goodness and power, appearing in my deliverance, to hope thou wilt protect and succour them also; and never fail to fill the hearts of all those that truly love thee with the highest joy in thee.

Ver. 12. For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous: with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.] For thou, Lord, who art faithful and true, hast engaged thyself, by thy gracious promise, to do good unto the righteous; whom thou loves, and delightest in, and therefore wilt crown with thy favour, and en-circle him as with an impenetrable shield, against all the darts of his enemies.

Psalm VI.

To the chief musician of Neginoth upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—When David laboured under some grievous disease, he made his complaint to God, and deprecated his displeasure according to the sense of this psalm: Which he composed, it is likely, after his recovery; and ordered the master of music in the tabernacle to cause it to be sung to the harp of eight strings. That seems to be the best interpretation of Sheminith, which the Chaldee follows; and it may be justified from what we read, 1 Chron. chap. xxv, ver. 22. Of Neginoth, see Psal. iv. By way of accommodation, the words of this psalm have been applied to the sickness of the mind; but upon the former account also, it may be called one of the penitential psalms.

Ver. 1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thy anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.] O Lord, who delightest in mercy, moderate, I beseech thee, thy sharp correction, and do not proceed to inflict upon me the severest marks of thy displeasure.

Ver. 2. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.] I am brought very low already, my strength faileth me, and every joint in my body trembles; and therefore now, O Lord, thy mercy will come very seasonably. Good Lord, from whom alone I expect a cure, let it be sufficient that I have suffered so much already, and vouchsafe to heal me.

Ver. 3. My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?] For this sore affliction, and the dread of thy further displeasure, have struck into my soul also an exceeding great consternation: and how long it will continue, thou, Lord, alone knowest.

Ver. 4. Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: Ob save me for thy mercies sake.] My enemies think thou hast quite forsaken me: convince them of their error, O Lord, by being reconciled, and restoring to me the kindness thou wast wont to shew me. Deliver me from this anguish and fear, and (though not for my merits, yet) for thy mercy save me from going down into the grave.

Ver. 5. For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?] For there I can have no opportunity to do thee service, the dead being utterly unable to commemorate thy wonderful works, and propagate the memory of them to posterity. As long as I live I will shew forth thy praise; but who can celebrate thy name, and instruct thy people, in the grave?

Ver. 6. I am weary with my groaning; all the night make me my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.] To that silent place I shall soon descend, unless thou makest haste to deliver me; for I am tired out with those pains under which I groan. The night, which is wont to quiet all men's grief, and lay their troubles asleep, is to me so restless and uneasy, that the incessant agonies I am in dissolve me into sweat; and I do nothing but pour out floods of tears.

Ver. 7. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.] Which have made such furrows in my face, that my countenance hath lost all its beauty, and looks like that of a consumptive man, who is dropping into his grave. I am worn away with the mere grief and indignation of seeing all mine enemies insulting over me, and with joy waiting for my death.

Ver. 8. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.] But why am I thus concerned at their behaviour, and
torment myself, as if my life depended on their pleasure; which is in the hand of God alone, who pities my mournful condition, and will grant me that which I have sought with so many tears? And therefore go your way, ye evil-doers, and stay no longer here expecting my death. Desist from all your wicked contrivances against me, and be not so vain as to hope to triumph over me.

Ver. 9. The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer.] The Lord hath not rejected me, as you imagine, but is graciously pleased both with my deprecation of his displeasure, and with my petitions to him for his favour.

Ver. 10. Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed; let them return, and be ashamed suddenly.] And therefore I tell my enemies once more, that they shall all be ashamed of their vain hopes to see me dead. I shall live to disappoint them, and make them terribly afraid; nay, they shall make a sudden retreat, and be confounded to see themselves so shamefully defeated.

PSALM VII.

Shiggaion of David, which be sung unto the Lord, concerning the words (or business) of Cush the Benjamite.

THE ARGUMENT.—An excellent psalm, composed by David to commemorate the loving-kindness of the Lord, upon occasion of some calumnies and false accusations, wherein Cush, one of the same tribe with Saul, and probably one of his courtiers or captains, if not one of his kinsmen, had charged David with some very great crime, of treason, it is likely, and conspiracy against Saul. Athanasius indeed, (as we find in some fragments of his upon the Psalms,) thinks that David made this psalm when Hushai (whom he takes for Cush) had defeated the good counsel of Ahithophel by a discourse he made, to shew it was not safe to set upon so warlike a prince as David, without a greater force than Absalom had at present; whereby he saved David from certain ruin. But I see nothing in the psalm to give a colour to this conjecture; for the words therein mentioned were against David, not in his favour. The name of Hushai, also, is otherwise written, and he is called an Archite, not a Benjamite; which St Basil (whose opinion this was) endeavours to solve, by saying he was called Benjemeni, because he managed his matters so dextrously, in overthrowing the counsel of Ahithophel. But that is only a piece of wit; and the conjecture of Valentinus Schindler seems to be more probable, that by Cush he secretly notes (by a change of letters) Saul himself, the son of Kish, who could no more utter his mind, full of hatred to David, than a man of Cush, or an Ethiopian, could his skin or complexion.

Ver. 1. O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me.] O Lord, who hast hitherto been my most gracious God, and defended my innocence against those who have falsely accused me, I ought not to doubt of thy continued care and love towards me; and therefore fly unto thee, with a humble confidence in thy almighty goodness, that thou wilt preserve and deliver me from this new persecution which is raised against me.

Ver. 2. Let be near my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces while there is none to deliver. For if thou dost not protect me, I am no more able to stand before Saul, than a lamb before a lion; so great is his power, and so implacable his rage, that if thou sufferest me to fall into his hands, there is no creature can rescue me, but he will infallibly destroy me.

Ver. 3. O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; And let him destroy me, O Lord, if I be guilty of that whereof I am accused. Thou art the most righteous Judge of all, and to thee I here again most solemnly appeal, as I have done before him, (1 Sam. xxiv. 12. 15,) desiring that thou wilt judge between us. If I have conspired against him, or had any design to do him hurt, (as he was made to believe, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9,) if any such thing hath so much as entered into my thoughts;

Ver. 4. If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy;) If I have either injured him when he was kind to me, or sought to be revenged of him since he has injured me: (No, I abhorred to take revenge, so far was I from seeking it when he fell into my hand, and spared him twice when it was in my power to have killed him, who causelessly endeavoured to kill me, 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi.)

Ver. 5. Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.] Then I beg no mercy; let him go on to be my enemy; let him pursue me till he apprehend me, and execute his desire upon me. I refuse not to die, nay, to be trod under foot like dirt, with the greatest contempt; and to be as much reproached when I am dead, as I have been honoured alive.

Ver. 6. Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies; and awake for me to the judgement that thou hast commanded.] But if I be innocent in this matter, (as thou, Lord, knowest I am,) then I beseech thee to shew thy displeasure at this unjust proceeding. Let my enemies know that thou art the sovereign Lord of all, by suppressing them, now that they rage thus furiously. Thou hast appointed judges upon earth to distribute justice, and relieve the oppressed; but hast reserved the supreme judgement to thyself, even over them as well as others; and therefore I beseech thee to take cognizance of my cause, and issue out thy orders speedily for my deliverance from this persecution.

Ver. 7. So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about; for their sakes, therefore, return thou on high.] Which will draw all the people to make their resort to thee, and wait upon thee, till thou dost them justice. For that reason ascend thy judgement-seat again, and, as thou hast done formerly, vin-
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dicate me from these calumnies, and assert my innocence.

Ver. 8. The LORD shall judge the people: Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.] The Sovereign of the world will not fail to dispense equal justice unto all, according to their works; of which I beseech thee, O Lord, to give an example in me, who desire no greater favour than to be disposed of according to my innocence in this matter. Thou hast designed, indeed, a kingdom for me; but let me lose it, if ever I entertain a disloyal thought against him who now enjoys it.

Ver. 9. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.] I leave it to thee to perform thy own purposes, who hast long borne with the wicked in their unjust proceedings, but wilt at last put a stop to them, and settle the righteous, whom they injuriously persecute from place to place, in a peaceable possession of what thou hast promised. For thou, Lord, discernest the most secret thoughts and desires of them both; and as thou canst not be deceived with specious shows, so thou wilt not be corrupted; either by fear or favour, to pronounce an unrighteous sentence.

Ver. 10. My defence is in God, which upholdeth the upright in heart.] That is my comfort, none but God; the Judge of all, can either absolve or condemn me; and he knows so well the sincerity of my heart, that I assure myself from him of protection and delivery.

Ver. 11. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.] For he is so just a Judge, that he will defend the cause of the righteous, and never be persuaded to take part with the wicked; with whom he is highly displeased all the time that he forsores to strike him, and cut him off in his evil courses.

Ver. 12. If he turn not, he will subvert his sword; he batt hath his bow, and made it ready.] And if he will not repent, as he is invited by that forbearance, he shall be punished at last with so much the greater severity, because he would take no warning, but went on confidently, notwithstanding the vengeance he was told was preparing for him:

Ver. 13. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordained his arrows against the persecutors.] Vengeance which will certainly come, though it stay long, and not fail to do execution; for it is decreed in heaven, (if they do not repent,) and will pierce through the very heart of Saul, and all the rest of my fierce and outrageous persecutors.

Ver. 14. Behold, be travail iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.] See here the folly of this calumniator, who wickedly plots my ruin, and hath formed most mischievous designs against my life, which shall all miscarry, and deceive his expectation.

Ver. 15. He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.] And he shall not escape so neither; for, beside the shame of not being able to compass his design, he shall suffer that himself which he laboured to do to me. Just as you see sometimes a man fall into the pit which was digged with his own hands; so shall he fall upon the sword which himself hath drawn, 1 Sam. xxxi. 6.

Ver. 16. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.] The mischief which, with so much pain, he contrived against me, shall be retorted on that head which projected it: All his violence and cruel persecutions, whereby he thought to oppress me, shall fall down (like a stone thrown into the air) upon himself; and crush him to pieces.

Ver. 17. I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness; and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.] Which shall afford matter of perpetual praise to me, who will most thankfully acknowledge not only the power, but the just judgment of God, and his faithfulness to his word. With the greatest delight and joy shall my songs celebrate the glorious majesty of the Lord, which far surmounts our highest thoughts and thanksgivings.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of David.

The ARGUMENT.—The Targum takes the word Gittith to denote, that this psalm was to be sung to a harp which David brought with him from Gath. Others think it to be only a note in music, or to have relation to the time of vintage. But Theodoret looking upon it (as indeed it seems to be) ydum tawwaw, a psalm of triumph to God, the author of some great victory he had gotten, I take it to have been composed by David, and delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle after he had overthrown that haughty insolent giant, Goliah of Gath. Which is very agreeable to the matter of the psalm, and a lively emblem of Christ's conquest over our great enemy the devil.

Ver. 1. O LORD our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.] O Lord, the Sovereign of the world, who art graciously pleased to own us in a peculiar manner to be thy subjects, who can behold the wonders of thy works, and the wisdom of thy providence, and not be astonished at the incomparable greatness and splendour of thy majesty? which all the earth proclaims with the highest praises; but cannot be contained within the spacious bounds of the heavens, whose glorious brightness it far surpasses.

Ver. 2. Out of the mouth of babies and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.] What an amazing wonder is it, that thou shouldst enable the weakest of men to do the greatest and most praiseworthy things! and particularly hast now assisted me (who in comparison of Goliah am but an infant) with power and strength to subdue that mighty giant! It is enough to confound all the enemies, and to stop
the mouths of the most pernicious opposers of thee, and of thy people: as the far more to be celebrated works of the Messiah and his disciples, when they shall, but speak the word, shall confound even the devil himself, that great enemy of thine, and tormentor of mankind;

Ver. 3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained.] Who are extremely stupid, if they do not most thankfully acknowledge thy singular love to them. For when I seriously look up to thy celestial habitation, and consider the vastness of that admirable structure, and behold also those lights which thou hast placed there in beautiful order;

Ver. 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?] I know not what to say, but am perfectly astonished to think, that thou, whose greatness I see so visibly in the heavens, shouldst descend so far as to shew such grace and favour as thou dost to this wretched creature man; particularly to me, who am the meanest of my brethren. Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst work such salvation by my hands? nay, what is the greatest prince in the world, that thou shouldst thus honour him? But that thou shouldst advance our mortal nature so highly in that Son of man, the Lord Christ, whom the world will vilify and despise, exceeds all wonder, and ought to be the master of our perpetual admiration.

Ver. 5. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.] Thou hast raised man to such a dignity, and honoured him so highly, (particularly me, whom thou hast used as thy minister to punish that insulting giant, who defied thy armies, 2 Sam; xvii.), that he is not much inferior to the celestial hosts: As shall be more clearly seen in thy Son Christ, whom thou hast determined to advance far above the highest angels in heaven, after he hath for a short space been much beneath them, by submitting himself to a poor condition in our flesh, that he might lay down his life for man, (Heb. xi. 6. 7. &c.).

Ver. 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.] Whose glory is great, even in the dominion thou hast given him over all thy creatures in this lower world: (though this be nothing comparable to the exaltation of the great Son of man; under whose feet thou hast put in subjection all creatures whatsoever, even those in the highest heaven); there is nothing here but he hath a power over it, and finds means to make it subject to his pleasure.

Ver. 7. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field.] Not only the beasts that are tame, such as sheep and oxen, but those that are wild, even tigers, bears, and lions.

Ver. 8. The fowl of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.] Yea, and the fowls of the air cannot fly so high, but he hath ways to reach them: nor can the fishes in lakes or rivers, or those in the deepest ocean, except themselves from his dominion.

Ver. 9. O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!] All which moves me again to cry out, and conclude as I began, in the highest admiration of thy most powerful wisdom and goodness, saying, O mighty Lord, our most gracious Governor, who can comprehend the excellent greatness of thy majesty? O how transcendent is thy loving-kindness, in all thou hast done, and wilt do for man! how loudly ought the whole world to sound forth thy praise!

PSALM IX.

To the chief musician upon Mutth-labben. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm which David composed and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, when he was in some great distress, (ver. 13.), wherein he commemorates God's former deliverance of him; both when he killed Goliath, and got frequent victories afterward over the Philistines, and other enemies of Israel, ver. 11, 15.

I mention Goliath, because, among the various opinions about Mutth-labben, I find none so probable as theirs, who think it hath some relation to him: to whom there are three ways of applying those Hebrew words, All of them, by Almuth; understand to be meant upon the death. And then Labben, somethink, signifies the son, that is, a great man, as I have expounded in my preface to this Work. Others render it the white; that is, an illustrious, noble person, or one famous in arms, as Goliath was. Others render it intermediate; which agrees also to that champion, who came out and stood between the two armies, and defied Israel, 1 Sam. xvii. 4. &c. Thus the Chaldee Paraphrase here interprets. But that this psalm was not made just after David's victory over him, with respect merely to his death, is apparent from his mention of Sion, ver. 11 14., which was not then in the hands of Israel. And therefore, he only calls to mind (as I said in the beginning) this deliverance, upon some fresh occasion he had to implore the mighty assistance of the divine power, which then first began to appear to him.

Ver. 1. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will shew forth all thy wonderful works.] I will acknowledge, O Lord of heaven and earth, thy omnipotent goodness, with the most devoted and entire affection to thee. Nor will I content myself to praise thee for this last victory alone, but on this occasion commemorate all the wonders thou hast formerly done for me.

Ver. 2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praises to thy name, O thou Most High!] The thoughts of which are so pleasing and delightful to me, that I cannot but be exceeding glad, and leap for joy, while I celebrate with my songs thy supreme majesty; whose power infinitely excels the united force of all creatures upon earth.
Ver. 3. When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall, and perish at thy presence.] It was thou who madest my enemies turn their backs, and seek for safety in flight, (1 Sam. xvii. 51.,) and the dread of thee so pursued them, that they stumbled, and fell down wounded, (ver. 52.,) and were destroyed, because they saw thee appear against them.

Ver. 4. For thou hast maintained my right, and my cause; thou sittest in the throne judging right.] For in that great controversy between us and the Philistines, (1 Sam. xvii. 9.,) wherein I stood up against Goliab, thou didst take my part, (as thou hast done since in many other battles,) asserting the cause which I defended, and openly giving judgement on my side.

Ver. 5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.] Thou hast given a terrible rebuke to the audacious insolence of those nations; thou hast cut off their daring champion, who so impiously defied thy armies, and cursed me by my gods: Thou hast put them to shame, and made their names infamous to all generations.

Ver. 6. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: And thou hast destroyed cities, their memorial is perished with them.] O thou insulting enemy! who in thy own thoughts hadst completely devoured us, where are the utter desolations thou threatenedst to our country? and the cities which thou intendedst to lay even with the ground? How vain were thy hopes of leaving no remembrance of them, but in their ruins?

Ver. 7. But the Lord shall endure for ever; he hath prepared his throne for judgment.] Such shall be the end of the rest of my enemies, who can never prevail against the Lord. For, though earthly thrones may tumble down, he and his throne cannot possibly be disturbed, but remain fixed for ever; and his justice is as immutable, which he will equally dispense to all.

Ver. 8. And be shall judge: the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness.] For his jurisdiction is not limited, nor can his justice be corrupted: but the whole world is under his government, and no wicked man is so powerful, that he should be able to escape his vengeance, which shall pursue every one of them, and render to them exactly according as they deserve.

Ver. 9. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.] And as he will punish the wicked, be their authority never so great; so he will preserve the righteous, be they never so helpless. They may safely fly unto him for sanctuary against the unjust persecutions of their mighty oppressors, and he will give them seasonable relief in all their distresses.

Ver. 10. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: For thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.] All they that are acquainted with thee, and with the merciful and just methods of thy providence, will consent to this; and, abhorring all undue ways of saving themselves in troublesome times, will heartily confide in thee: For it was never known, that thou, Lord, hast left any man destitute of thy help, who hath piously made his constant addresses to thee.

Ver. 11. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.] Let them join therefore their songs with mine, and praise the Lord, who dwells among us by his special presence in the sanctuary. Let us make all the world know what wonderful things he hath done for us, that they may also learn to trust in him:

Ver. 12. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgiveth not the cry of the humble.] Who, though he may seem to wink for a time at the cruelty of violent men, yet will call them at last to a strict account for all the innocent blood they have shed, and for their unjust and unmerciful usage of meek and humble persons; whose cry he never forgets, (though he doth not presently answer it,) but takes a fit time to be avenged of their oppressors.

Ver. 13. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, consider my trouble, which I suffer of them that hate me, thou that liest in wait from the gates of death.] In confidence of this, I cry unto thee now, O Lord, for my reasonable relief, in this necessitous condition to which my enemies have reduced me. O merciful God, who hast delivered me from the greatest dangers, from the lion and the bear, from Goliab, who thought to give my flesh to the birds and the beasts, (2 Sam. vii. 44.;) from Bats, and all others who were ready to swallow the up; cast a gracious eye upon my present distress, and bring me out of it:

Ver. 14. That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.] That I may go into thy sanctuary, (which now thou hast placed in Sion,) and there, in the most frequent assemblies of thy people, add this to all the rest of thy praises, that thou hast heard my cry. O how joyful shall I be, how shall I triumph, when I magnify thy power in my deliverance?

Ver. 15. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid, is their own foot taken.] Which the experience I have had of thy goodness makes me comfortably expect: for I have often seen all the designs and contrivances of the Philistines and other nations against thy people, to conclude in nothing but their own utter ruin; their engines recoil upon themselves, as Goliab was slain by his own sword.

Ver. 16. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is smitten in the work of his own hands. Higgin. Selab.] This is a thing notorious to all, and for which thou art renowned. By this thou convincest the minds that deny thy providence.

Nor is there anything more admirable, and worthy of our meditation, than this thy righteous judgement upon the ungodly; when they are entangled in their own devices, and, contrary to all expectation, bring upon themselves that destruction which they had prepared for others.

Ver. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.] This makes me con...
Psalm X.

Psalm X.

The Argument.—It is not known by whom, or on what occasion, this Psalm was composed: but it is a most lively description of the insolency of wicked atheistical men, when they have power, and are in authority; which they abuse to the oppression of the meeker or weaker sort, and make no conscience by what arts they bring their designs about. Against whom the Psalmist humbly beseeches the divine vengeance, and rests confident they shall be suppressed.

Ver. 1. Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?

It is strange, O Lord, to see thee, who hast done us the peculiar honour to say, we have thee nigh unto us on all occasions, (Deut. iv. 7,) now withdraw thyself to such a distance from us, that there is no sign of thy coming to our relief. It perplexes our thoughts, and we cannot find the reason of it, that now, in these grievous straits, which seem to us the fittest opportunity, thou dost not appear for our deliverance.

Ver. 2. The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

If our great affliction do not move thy pity towards us, yet the intolerable pride, and insulent rage of the wicked, we are prone to expect, should meet with a rebuke from thy just indignation. Especially since he oppresses the poor, who have no friend but thee alone; whose glory also it is to humble arrogant men, by making those very devices cast them down, whereby they thought to ruin others, and exalt themselves. O that we might see them fall in this remarkable manner!

Ver. 3. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.

For whilst the wicked prospers thus in all his designs, he is not only encouraged in those evil courses, but glories in them, and brags that he can do what he lists. Nay, it doth not suffice him to do evil himself, but he commends and praises the unjust extortioners and rapines of other violent men; whom he accounts happy, though the Lord abhors them.

Ver. 4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

But it is to no purpose to tell him how the Lord abhors them, for, scornfully rejecting all such good admonitions, he will not so much as inquire and consider whether there be a God or no; but rather boldly concludes, there is no God, or if there be, that he cares not what we do.

Ver. 5. His ways are always grievous: thy judgements are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

And therefore, though all his business be to molest and torment his neighbours, and he is always bringing forth some mischief or other, yet that thou wilt judge him for it, is the farthest thing from his thoughts. And as for those men that are his adversaries, he contents them all, and values them not a straw.

Ver. 6. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity.

He confidently promises himself that none shall be able to disturb him; and rests secure he shall always be thus prosperous; which makes him resolve he will never alter his wicked course of life, lest God or man do what they can against him.

Ver. 7. His mouth is full of cursing, and deceit, and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

Nor stick at anything that may serve his ends: for he makes no conscience to call for one curse after another upon himself, to confirm those oaths or promises which he never intends to keep; but by this impious means to deceive and cheat those that rely upon his word. He speaks very fair, but it is only to hide the mischievous wickedness which lurks in his heart.

Ver. 8. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

And if he cannot this way compass all his designs, he makes no scruple to rob and kill upon the high-way: near unto which he lurks, and in covert places, where nobody sees him, shoots at the innocent traveller; especially when he sees he is defenceless, and hath none to help him.

Ver. 9. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net.

He lies as close as a lion in his den; and is as cruel when he hath caught his prey. A fowler is not more cunning to draw the birds to his net, than he to get poor helpless men into his power, that he may devour them.

Ver. 10. He crawleth and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

For he can counter-
feit himself (if occasion serve) to be a harmless traveller; and look so humbly and innocently, that the poor man, on whom he intends to seize, suspecting no danger, will lie the more open to his sudden and violent assault.

Ver. 11. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, and he will never see it.] From which God himself, he thinks, will not protect him. They call him (saith he within his heart) the Omnipotent, and the poor commit themselves unto him: but what cares he for them? he regards them not, and will never call me to any account for what I have done against them.

Ver. 12. Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.] Confute these blasphemies, O Lord, and delay no longer, O thou omnipotent Judge of the world, to appear in just displeasure against them. Stretch forth thy hand to confound these violent oppressors, and to relieve all thy afflicted ser vant.

Ver. 13. Wherefore doth the wicked contend with God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.] What is it, but thy long-suffering, and bearing so much with them, that makes the wicked thus insolently despise thee? He concludes, thou wilt never punish him, because thou art so patient with him.

Ver. 14. Thou hast seen it, for thou beheldest mischief and spite, to require it with thy hand: the poor committe bethsime unto thee, thou art the helper of the father less.] I doubt not, indeed, that thou taketh notice of their villany, and thou wilt requite them in their kind, for all the mischief and vexation of which they have been the authors. The poor have reason to commend their cause to thee; and to expect that thou wilt do them right, who art the protector of the weak, and the friendless, who have nothing to rely upon but thy goodness.

Ver. 15. Break thou the arm of the wicked, and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.] But the wicked will never believe this, as long as they are able to do mischief; and therefore, I beseech thee to despoil them of all their power to hurt and oppress thy people. Be avenged on them for their wickedness, after which they fancy thou wilt not inquire, and let there be no footsteps of it remaining.

Ver. 16. The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen is peri shed out of his land.] Thou canst easily do it, being the same everlasting King, by whose authority and power the seven impious nations were expelled out of this land.

Ver. 17. LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.] And I believe thou wilt do it, O Lord, who hast so often since granted the desire of the afflicted. Thou wilt dispose their heart humbly to wait upon thee, and then vouchsafe them a favourable audience.

Ver. 18. To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.] When they pray thee to assert the right of the fatherless, and other poor helpless people, and to punish their insolent oppressors: that those sprites, sprung out of the earth, and who deserve to be tumbled down thither again, may be no longer terrible to them.

PSALM XI.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm, the title tells us, was composed by David: and very likely (as Theodoret and others conjecture) when Saul persecuted him; and some advised him to seek his safety in flight: or rather, when Saul began to have evil designs against him, and he was invited by some, who pretended friendship to him, to a place of safety in the mountainous country of Judaea. When he came to the crown, he delivered it to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung there in remembrance of what then passed between his friends, him, and God Almighty, in whom he placed his hope.

Ver. 1. IN the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?] It is not in fortresses or friends that I place my confidence, and hope for safety, but only in the Lord, who hath anointed me his King. On him I rely; and therefore do not put me in fear, and bid me fly away thus speedily, like a timorous bird before the fowler, to your place of security.

Ver. 2. For lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.] Behold, say you, the danger wherein thou art is no less imminent, than when a Fowler hath bent his bow, and fitted his arrow upon the string, and, lying close, hath the bird in his eye, whom he means to shoot: For just so have Saul and his wicked counsellors laid their plot on a sudden to destroy thee.

Ver. 3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righte ous do?] And if men have no regard to laws and public decrees, which are the foundation of human society, but will boldly violate all known and standing rules of justice and truth; what security can an honest man have? or what should he do, but make haste away from this court, where they act so arbitrarily, and are so perfidious?

Ver. 4. The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men.] My answer is, that the world is not governed by chance, nor can men carry things just as they please: but the Lord, into whose holy palace no unjust counsel can possibly enter, and whose throne is infinitely above that of the highest king on earth: he, I say, is the supreme and most righteous ruler of all affairs; and no mischief can be so secretly contrived, no wicked design so artificially dissembled, but it lies open before his eyes, and he sees through it: nor need he take any pains to discover it; for at the first glance, as we speak, he perfectly discerns how all men are inclined, and looks to the very bottom of their hearts.

Ver. 5. The LORD trieth the righteous, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.] And
he may think to try the fidelity of him whom he knows to be upright, by many adversities, that he may afterward give him the more illustrious testimonies of his approbation and love. But whatsoever success the wicked, and he that delights in doing mischief, may have for the present, he is most hateful to God; and he will, without fail, severely punish him, for abusing his power to oppression and violent dealing.

Ver. 6. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a terrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.] The wicked may think themselves very secure, because they are so cunning and so strong; but how can they defend themselves against the Lord, who hath innumerable ways to ensnare them when they least think of it? and can as unexpectedly overthrow all their forces, as when the heavens are most serene, a sudden storm of thunder and lightning, and tempestuous blasts, arises, and tears up the trees by the roots? Thus the Sodanites, thus the Egyptians perished; and such measure will the wise Dispenser of all punishments mete to these violent oppressors.

Ver. 7. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright.] For the Lord, who is just in his own nature, and in all his ways, loves none but those who are like himself; and therefore he will plague all injurious persons, but with special favour defend and reward all upright men, who steadfastly keep (notwithstanding all the injuries they receive) in the paths of righteousness.

P S A L M XII.

To the chief musician upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm was composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the 6th Psalm, upon the harp with eight strings. The occasion of it is not expressed; but it is a sad complaint of the corrupt manners of that age; (especially of the court of Saul, ver. 3,) in which it was hard to find an honest plain-dealing man, in whom one might confide. Some think it aims partly at Doeg, and such like courtiers; partly at the Ziphites, and such perfidious people in the country, who promising him their friendship, (as Theodoret understands it,) would have most basely betrayed him unto Saul, his declared enemy.

Ver. 1. Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.] Lord, be thou my safeguard, for there is no such thing as kindness and friendship to be found among men: I dare trust myself with none of them; for there is not so much as any truth and honesty left in the world.

Ver. 2. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak.] One neighbour cannot with safety be-

lieve another: they are all liars and dissemblers, pretending fair in words, but meaning quite otherwise.

Ver. 3. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaketh proud things.] This vice hath spread itself so universally among us, that it cannot be rooted up but only by the hand of Heaven: which will destroy these pestilent deceivers; who speak also big and blasphemous words, whereby they daunt those that are below them.

Ver. 4. Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?] We will have the better, say they, of all those that oppose us; and our tongues are the weapons whereby we will get the victory. They are our own; who shall hinder us from employing them to supplant whom we please? whether it be true or false which we say, what is that to any body; or who shall call us to an account for it?

Ver. 5. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.] That will the Lord; whom the sighs, and tears, and miserable groans of those poor wretches, who are oppressed by your calumnies, have moved to resolve to take a speedy vengeance on you. He hath absolutely determined to rescue and deliver them from your snares and fraudulent practices: you may puff and storm as much as you please, but shall not be able to hinder it.

Ver. 6. The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.] For the promises of God are not deceitful like yours, but sincere, and void of all guile: the purest silver, refined to the greatest perfection, is not more free from dross, than they are from all mixture of falsehood.

Ver. 7. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.] I am confident, O Lord, thou wilt perform them, and not suffer thy words to fail. Thou wilt ever preserve him, that confides in thee, from this perverse generation, how oft soever they renew their attempts against him.

Ver. 8. The wicked walk on every side, when the wise men are exalted.] Which will make the wicked not know which way to turn themselves, but be ready to burst with anger and vexation, when they see those poor men, whom they contemned and vilified, not only preserved, but exalted by thy favour to dignity and honour.

P S A L M XIII.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT—This psalm was composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle. It is not known to what time it relates, but by the matter of it we may understand he was in some great distress when he indited it, either by the persecution of Saul, or of Absalom. Theodoret thinks the latter, and gives this reason.
for it, That the trouble which Saul gave him was before his great sin, and so he was full of confidence; but that of Absalom was after it, which made him cry out in this doleful manner.

Ver. 1. How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? What a sad condition is this, O Lord; into which I am fallen, and in which thou seemest to neglect me! I have waited a long time for some glimpse of thy favour, but can see no sign of deliverance, nor tell how long thou intendest to delay it.

Ver. 2. How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? O how afflictive it is, that there is no end of my anxious thoughts! but I am always casting in my mind, with a heavy heart, where I shall shift for my life, and can think myself in no place secure. The power of my enemy is very great, and threatens, like a tempest hanging over my head, every moment to fall upon me. O when shall I see it dispersed?

Ver. 3. Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death. Thus I sigh perpetually to thee, O Lord, the omnipotent Ruler and just Judge of the world; beseeching thee to commiserate my affliction; and, as thou hast done often, to answer my prayer. Thou seest with what dangers I am encompassed, and how forlorn and dismal my condition is: endue me with wisdom and circumspection, that I may escape these dangers; and revive and cheer me under these sad afflications, lest my spirit sink within me, or the enemy destroy me.

Ver. 4. Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him: and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.] Let not him that persecutes me boast of his success, as he certainly will, unless thou affordest me thy conduct and comfort, which I humbly again implore, that they who join with him may not have the pleasure to see me fall, and insult over my misery.

Ver. 5. But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I am unworthy indeed of thy favour, but hope thou wilt magnify thine own mercy, in which I have placed an entire confidence, that I persuade myself I shall have the joy to see thee deliver me out of all these distresses.

Ver. 6. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.] Which shall be acknowledged with the most cheerful hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, who hath dealt so well with me, as to render to me, not according to my merits, but according to my hope and trust, of his inconceivable mercy.

P S A L M X I V.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—This psalm (which was composed, as the foregoing, by David, and delivered by him to the master of music in the tabernacle) may probably refer, though it be not in the title expressed, to the universal apostacy of the people, in the rebellion of Absalom, from the allegiance they owed to him, and from the duty they owed to God.

Ver. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God: they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.] Though the wicked are not yet so impudent as openly to deny God with their mouths, yet such is their abominable filthiness, so shameless are they in their wickedness, so universally depraved, that their secret thoughts surely are, God takes no notice what they do, or that he will not judge them for it.

Ver. 2. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.] But let them know, that he exactly observes them; and that all the ways of the sons of men are naked and bare before his eyes: though, alas! there is nothing now to be seen but ignorance and contempt of his majesty.

Ver. 3. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no not one.] The whole nation hath lost all sense of their duty; and, like a body without a spirit, is so rotten and putrified, that it is hard to find one that has any sense of goodness in him.

Ver. 4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.] Strange! that they should all be thus senseless, as not only to injure and oppress my poor innocent people, but to be cruel and void of all pity toward them, and to throw off likewise all religion!

Ver. 5. There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteious.] What a terror will it be to them, to see the divine vengeance seize on them when they think themselves most secure for he, who is the righteous Judge, will not desert those who are faithful to him, but graciously deliver them.

Ver. 6. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor: because the Lord is his refuge.] Your confusion, ye atheistical fools, will be the greater, because you mocked and jeered at that poor despicable party of men, who resolved to adhere to piety and virtuous loyalty, and to wait patiently upon God, and trust in him alone for safety.

Ver. 7. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.] Who is mighty to save, whatsoever you think, and resides by a special token of his presence in Mount Zion. O that it might please him to send us deliverance from thence, and to restore us again to the happy enjoyment of that place from whence we are banished! It would turn our sad lamentations into the most cheerful thanksgivings; and fill not only Judah, but all the tribes of Israel, with joy and gladness.

2 Sam. xix. 9. &c.
PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—This Psalm, in which he excites the people to the study of solid virtue, was composed by David, either when he brought the ark to Mount Zion, (2 Sam. vii,) or when he was restored thither again, (as he desired in the conclusion of the foregoing Psalm,) after the rebellion of Absalom, 2 Sam. xix. Then it was very seasonable to admonish them to live better, as became those who were under the government of God, (as Theodoret excellently speaks, and had received such a great deliverance from him.

Ver. 1. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Lord, what an happiness is it, that thou wilt he pleased to dwell among us in this mountain, wherein thou hast pitched thy tabernacle! But who shall have the honour of being admitted into thine society, and enjoy all the privileges of a true worshipper of thee?

Ver. 2. "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." I hear thee answer, (methinks,) as if a voice came from thy holy oracle, saying, Not all that are descended of Abraham, nor every one that offers me sacrifices, and observes my appointed rites; but he who completely endeavours to please me in all the parts of a holy life, exercising justice and mercy to his neighbours, as well as piety to me; and taking care he wrong not his neighbour in words, no more than in deeds.

Ver. 3. "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." He that doth not abuse his tongue to calumny and detraction, nor is any other way injurious to his neighbour, who neither reproaches his neighbour himself, nor lightly believes, increases, or spreads the reproaches which are begun by others.

Ver. 4. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord: he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." Who neyer courts men for their riches and power, if their wickedness makes them despicable; but honours those who are truly pious, though never so poor, and who hath such a respect to religion, that whatsoever he promises by oath he will perform, though he loses never so much by keeping his faith.

Ver. 5. "He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doth these things shall never be moved." He who orders his private affairs so exactly, that he makes no gain of the money he lends to his poor brethren, (Exod. xxii. 25, Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.) and behaves himself so well when he is in public office, that no gift can corrupt him to condemn the innocent, or absolve the guilty. He that lives after this manner, need never fear to fall from my favour.

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I could not see my way; he hath secretly inspired my mind with wise thoughts, and admonished me what course to take for my preservation.

Ver. 8. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. This hath ever been my practice, to conceive God always present to me; and since he is still nigh to support and defend me, the fiercest assaults of my enemies shall never be able to deject me from that dignity which he hath designed for me.

Ver. 9. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. In confidence of which I feel not only a perfect satisfaction, but joy and triumph of heart. My tongue cannot but boast of it; and be my condition never so weak and low, I shall rest in hope to be raised up again.

Ver. 10. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For thou wilt not suffer me to remain always in this forlorn condition, nor let him whom thou hast anointed to be king be destroyed by Saul; (much less let that great King perish, whom thou hast promised of my seed; but though they kill him and lay him in his grave, thou wilt take him from thence, and raise him from the dead, before his body be in the least corrupted."

Ver. 11. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Thou wilt shew me the way to escape out of all these dangers, (and do much more for the Messiah, who, being raised from the dead, shall live eternally;) and not only preserve my life, but satiate me with joy, when thy favour hath settled me on the throne, by that Almighty power which is able to dispense everlasting happiness; (and will certainly exalt the Messiah to reign at thy right hand in endless joy and pleasure, after all his grievous sufferings.)

PSALM XVII.

THE ARGUMENT.—A prayer of David; wherein he humbly represents to God his innocence in those things whereof he was accused, (of affecting the kingdom, I suppose, and seeking the life of Saul, 1 Sam. xxv. 9.) and therefore beseeches him to grant him deliverance from his persecutors and calumniators, (Saul, it is most likely, and those that set him on;) see Theodore.

Ver. 1. HEAR the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of my lips. I am oppressed, O Lord, with such false accusations, that I have no way but to appeal to thee, who art the righteous Judge of the world; beseeching thee to deal with me according to the justice of my cause. It is my most earnest request to thee, and I desire no favour of thee, if these lips have spoken any deceitful words against Saul, or do now dissemble with thy majesty;

Ver. 2. Let my sentence come forth from thy pres-
sence: let thine eyes behold the things that are equal. Who hast long suspended thy sentence; and let my enemies pursue me as if I was guilty; but I humbly intreat thee at last openly to sequester me, and to shew that thou regardest the greatness of no man's person, but only his uprightness and integrity.

Ver. 3. Thou hast proved mine heart, thou hast visited me in the night, thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Thou art privy to the inmost thoughts of my heart; in the greatest retirements thou seest what I design; and hast tried me also (as gold in the fire) by many afflictions, which thou didst never find to make me think of any unlawful courses for my preservation; but still I have been what I pretended, and my words and secret thoughts have always agreed together.

Ver. 4. Concerning the works of men, by the word of my lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. I know what men are apt to do in such circumstances; but the respect I bear to thy commandments hath preserved me from those murderous practices, which the violent man would have boldly attempted, (1 Sam. xxvi. 8.)

Ver. 5. Hold up my goings in thy paths; that my footsteps slip not. And I beseech thee still confirm me in this resolution, that no temptation may make me forsake that tract of virtue in which I have hitherto persisted.

Ver. 6. I have called upon thee, for thou wilt bear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. And in which I doubt not to be safe; for I have never cried unto thee, but thou hast granted my request, and wilt not now, I hope, refuse to condescend unto it, but admit of this appeal which I make to thee, and do me right.

Ver. 7. Shew thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them. Thy mercy will appear most wonderful in my preservation from this imminent danger wherein I am. Magnify it, therefore, O thou whose property it is to interpose thy mighty power for the deliverance of such as confide in nothing but thy omnipotent goodness, from those who rise up against them to destroy them.

Ver. 8. Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings. I commend myself to thy watchful providence; beseeching thee to defend me with the same care that we do the tender part in the midst of our eye. As a hen covers her chickens under her wings from the ravenous bird that hovers over them to devour them;

Ver. 9. From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about. So do thou, O Lord, protect me, (who fly unto thee for safety,) from the wicked that are about to seize on me and spoil me; from those deadly enemies, which have beset me round, with eager hopes and desires to destroy me.

Ver. 10. They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly. Who are so stuffed with worldly goods, and have thriven so long in their
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ungodly courses, that they are grown extremely proud of their power; and not only haughtily threaten my destruction, but presumptuously brag as if they had already accomplished their desire.

Ver. 11. They have now compassed us in our steps; they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.] And indeed they have now gotten me and my followers into a very great strait, (1 Sam. xiii. 26.), and which way soever we turn ourselves, we are in danger to fall into the hands of those who have steadfastly resolved our utter ruin.

Ver. 12. Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.] No lion can be more desirous to tear a lamb in pieces, than Saul is to make a prey of me. Like a young lion in his den, he watches when an opportunity will offer itself, that he may fall upon me, (1 Sam. xiii. 7. 8. xxiv. 2. &c.)

Ver. 13. Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down; deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword.] Delay no longer, therefore, O Lord, but speedily appear to defeat him. Throw him down to the ground when he thinks to fall upon me: and though thou hast suffered the wicked to wound me sorely, yet let him not kill me, who depended upon thy power, which is able to deliver me.

Ver. 14. From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy bounteous treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.] He hath many, I know, that join with him to destroy me; but they are only mortal men, O Lord, who can do nothing but what thou permittest them, for my correction; worldly men, who look no farther than this present life, and desire no other satisfaction, but to be very rich, to have a numerous posterity, and to leave them great estates when they can enjoy them no longer.

Ver. 15. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.] Which prosperity I do in nowise envy them, but think myself happy that I can approach into thy presence, and with a good conscience wait for thy favour: nothing doubting, but when thou shalt shew thyself in thy majesty and power, it will be abundantly to my satisfaction.

Psalms XVIII.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the band of all his enemies, and from the band of Saul: and he said,

The Argument.—A psalm composed by David, (whom the Lord, chose to serve him in governing the children of Israel), and delivered by him to the master of the music in the tabernacle, for a perpetual commemoration of God’s gracious care over him, and preservation of him, through the whole course of the long persecution, and opposition he met withal, before he could get the kingdom. For which singular providence he still gave particular thanks to God after every deliverance or victory which he vouchsafed him: but at last, (so great was his piety), he made one general acknowledgment of God’s goodness to him, when he was peaceably settled upon his throne, in delivering him from the Philistines, the Syrians, and other nations, who rose up against him, (and that in a miraculous manner, as he describes it, ver. 13. 14. &c. where Theodoret observes, that in his time God scattered the enemies of Christians by the like dreadful tempests); but especially from Saul, who (as he was the first, so) was the most violent, implacable, and dangerous of all his enemies.

The sense of the Psalm is this.

Ver. 1. I will love thee, O Lord my strength.] I love thee, O Lord, to whom I owe my safety and preferment, with the most passionate and ardent affection: and I will never cease to love thee, thus, as long as ever I live.

Ver. 2. The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust: my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.] For it was not the caves and lurking places, (1 Sam. xxvii. 5. xxviii. 23.), nor the fortresses and strongholds, (xxvii. 14. 19. 29.), the rocks and impregnable forts, (xxiv. 2.), the high mountains and steep hills to which I fled, (xxxv. 1.), that preserved me from my enemies; but the Lord Almighty, whom I made my refuge, and whom I acknowledge for my deliverer: to his gracious providence, and powerful protection, I ascribe my safety, and will never confess in any other security; he defended me in the most dangerous assaults of my enemies; he repelled all their forces, and placed me out of the reach of their violence.

Ver. 3. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies.] Prais’d, therefore, be the Lord, unto whom I humbly commended myself by prayer (as I mean to do always) in my distresses, and he delivered me from all my enemies.

Ver. 4. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.] When there appeared no way for my escape; but they thought that they had me as sure as a bird taken in a net; when whole troops of ungodly men poured in upon me, as a torrent that threatened to sweep me quite away;

Ver. 5. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snare of death prevented me.] When I had no more power over myself, than a dead man bound hand and foot in his grave; (so suddenly was I entangled in their deadly snares, 1 Sam. xxvi. 26.)

Ver. 6. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.] This was my belief in such grievous straits: I made my usual addresses to the Lord, and with great earnest-
Psalm 18

1. I called unto the Lord out of a weary place: O thou hearer of prayer, hear my prayer; considerest thou mercy! Do not despise me, because I am poor, for my soul is poor; O hear me, as my soul is afflicted.

2. The Lord will answer me; even the Lord is with me: I will not be moved, and I will not be afraid, because the Lord is my strength, and the Lord is my song, and my joy; I will extol him in the assembly of the people, and I will praise him in the multitude of the congregation.

3. The Lord delivers my soul: and in his truth doth he answer me; and the Lord also shall preserve me: I will praise him upon the high seat of justice, and I will extol him in the midst of the congregation of God.

4. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

5. The Lord will deliver me; and my enemies shall be subdued and overcome by him; and I will offer sacrifices of praise upon the altar of God, because God is my light and my salvation, and I have no fear of my enemies, for he is with me.

6. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

7. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

8. The Lord will deliver me; and my enemies shall be subdued and overcome by him; and I will offer sacrifices of praise upon the altar of God, because God is my light and my salvation, and I have no fear of my enemies, for he is with me.

9. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

10. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

11. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

12. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

13. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

14. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

15. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

16. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

17. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

18. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

19. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

20. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

21. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

22. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

23. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

24. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.

25. I will extol the name of the Lord with my mouth; and I will praise the Lord who hath done great things for me.

26. For he raiseth me up out of an asleep, and I will call upon the Lord; and my mercy shall be answered upon me: I will also speak of the mercies of the Lord from the day when I was afflicted, and I will sing praises of the name of the Lord, who hath done great things for me, who hath delivered me from my enemies.
and with the forward thou wilt shew thyself forward.

And keep thy promises faithfully with those whose piety is unfeigned, and who immovably keep their fidelity to thee. But if any will take crooked ways to obtain their ends, thou wilt ensnare them in their own devices; and by such means as they least think of, lead them to destruction.

Ver. 27. For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but will bring down high looks. For thou art wont to deliver those who are poor and miserable, when they humbly wait on thee; and to lay those low, who (proud of their power) insolently oppress them.

Ver. 28. For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. I myself am an instance of it, who owe all my prosperity and joy to thee; by whom (when my hopes were ready to expire, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) I was brought out of a calamitous estate into this splendid and royal greatness which now I enjoy.

Ver. 29. For by thee I have run through a troop: and by my God have I leaped over a wall. For the strongest and most numerous enemies were not able to stand before me: I easily scaled the highest walls, wherein they thought themselves most securely defended against me, 2 Sam. v. 7, 8.

Ver. 30. As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all that trust in him. God is not like to men, for he never deserts his servants (as men are wont to do those that depend upon them) in difficult and dangerous affairs: his promises are freer from deceit, than the most refined gold from dross; and none shall be able to hurt those that rely upon them.

Ver. 31. For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God? For who is there that can frustrate his intentions, or resist his will? what power is there above or equal to his whom we worship, that can injure those whom he will protect, or defend those whom he will destroy?

Ver. 32. It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. It was this mighty Lord that inspired me with courage, and removed all obstacles out of my way, to the completing my conquests, (2 Sam. v. 10.)

Ver. 33. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places. If swiftness was necessary, he made me as nimble as an hind, to pursue mine enemies even into those places which for their height and cragginess were thought inaccessible.

Ver. 34. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arm. If there was need of dexterity or strength, he bestowed it on me to such a degree, that I was able to wrest the strongest bow out of my enemy's hand, and break it in pieces.

Ver. 35. Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath held me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. If at any time I fell into the thickest troops of them, I was safely protected by thee, and delivered. Thy mighty power upheld me from being oppressed by their numbers; and by thy goodness, with a handful of men, I got great victories.

Ver. 36. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. Thou didst open a wide passage to me in my greatest straits, and in the most uneven and difficult ways I never stumbled:

Ver. 37. I have pursued mine enemies, and overtook them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. But having routed my enemies, I pursued them so closely, that I overtook them in their flight; and did not return to my camp till I had destroyed them.

Ver. 38. I have wounded them, that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. I gave them such a blow, that they were not able to renew the fight; but were so perfectly subdued, that they lay at my feet.

Ver. 39. For thou girdedst me with strength unto battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. Which is all to be ascribed to thy mighty power, O God, who gavest me both the courage to fight, and success in the encounter with such numerous enemies as hoped to destroy me.

Ver. 40. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. To thy praise I again mention it, (not to magnify my own prowess), that they who hated me, submitted their very necks to me, that I might kill them, or impose what yoke I pleased on them.

Ver. 41. They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not. They sought for help of their allies and confederates, but it was beyond their power to deliver them; for they were deserted by the Lord, who regarded not their cries unto him.

Ver. 42. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets. But left them to be beaten and dispersed by me, till they were as weak as the small dust, which is tossed up and down with every wind; and as contemptible as the dust in the street, which every body tramples under foot.

Ver. 43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the nations: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. Thus hast thou continued thy kindness to me, till thou seatest me on the throne, both of Israel and Judah; whose contentions are ceased, and both united in me, (2 Sam. v. 1.) And since that time, thou hast not only delivered me from those dangerous rebellions, (2 Sam. xviii.), and seditions motions, (2 Sam. xx.), which have been raised among my own people to dethrone me, but made foreign nations subject to me, and people whom I had no knowledge of, to become my tributaries.

Ver. 44. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me. The very report of me and of my victories, made some of them heartily submit themselves to me; and others dissemble their hostility, and offer me their service.

Ver. 45. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places. They trembled and fell, like withered leaves, at the sound of my name; and, distrusting their strong holds, came creeping out with fear, to surrender them into my hands.
Ver. 46. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.] Blessed be the Lord, (to whose eternal glory and honour I speak all this;) let him be everlasting praised, who hath preserved me in so many dangers; let him who not only preserved, but exalted me, be magnified and exalted with the highest praises.

Ver. 47. It is God that avenged me, and subdued the people under me.] For he is that mighty God (I can never say it often enough) who hath many and many a time executed vengeance for me on those who were injurious to me, and hath brought many nations under my empire.

Ver. 48. He delivered me from mine enemies; yea, thou liftst me up above those that rise up against me; thou hast delivered me from the violent man.] It is he to whom I owe my life, (which my enemies, if he had not rescued me, would have taken from me;) and, which is more, thou hast made me superior to them all, and set me on a throne, in spite of the fierce and violent persecution of Saul, from which thou didst mercifully deliver me.

Ver. 49. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.] And therefore I will every where make my thankfull acknowledgements unto thee, O Lord: those strange nations shall know that I ascribe my victories unto thee; in honour of whose great name, I will sing this perpetual song.

Ver. 50. Great deliverance giveth to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.] The Lord hath granted wonderful and manifold deliverances to me, who reign not by usurpation, but by his special appointment; and the same mercy, by which alone I was advanced to this dignity, shall be continued to me, and to my posterity, till the coming of that great King whose kingdom shall have no end.

PSALM XIX.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David, (and delivered by him to the master of the music in the tabernacle,) declaring that no man can be ignorant of God, who would consider his admirable works; much less could the Jews, whom he had instructed by his law; and therefore justly expected their greater care not withoutfully to offend him.

Ver. 1. THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.] There is no part of this great fabric of the world, which doth not direct us to a most mighty Being, by whom it was made; but above all the rest, the heavens, which are so vastly extended, and wherein we see so many glorious bodies, proclaim aloud to all mankind, the immense greatness, and power, and wisdom, and goodness of God, which shine most brightly there.

Ver. 2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.] By their settled and orderly revolution the day and the night are made; from whose constant succession, and commodious variations, there issues forth (as water from a fountain) perpetual instruction, and matter of praise and thanks to his most wise goodness.

Ver. 3. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.] They cannot speak, indeed, as we can do, nor do we hear any words they utter: and yet, without these, they are understood by all nations; even by the most barbarous, who understand not a word of any other language.

Ver. 4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; They all read here, as in a book, the wonderful art and skill of that Almighty Being, who framed this regular structure; though they be never so remote, they hear them preach (as the apostles hereafter shall preach more fully) how great and how good he is: especially if they hearken to that universal minister of his, the sun, which hath its habitation fixed for it here;

Ver. 5. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.] And comes forth every morning decked with such a radiant light, that no bridegroom looks so cheerfully, or is so adorn'd on his marriage-day. Its swiftness, also, is as admirable as its beauty, for the mightiest champion can but weakly imitate it, in the speediness, evenness, and unweariedness of its course.

Ver. 6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.] It runs from the east to the west every day; and, in its yearly revolution, visits the southern and northern parts: so that all the earth feels the benefit of its quickening heat.

Ver. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.] Thus is God visible to all the world in the face of the heavens; but to us he is conspicuous in a more excellent manner, by the revelation he hath made of himself in the law of Moses; which is a more perfect light to guide us, than the sun itself; restoring and comforting the drooping souls, more than the sun cheers our bodily spirits. For it is a sure testimony of God's will, and of his love, and preserves ignorant souls from being seduced to worship the sun as a god: for it makes them, at the first word, so wise, as to understand that the Lord created the heavens as well as the earth.

Ver. 8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.] And from thence delivered to us a complete rule of life for all sorts of men among us; who see with great joy all officers and rulers, both sacred and civil, directed how to manage all for the public good; and every private man taught to keep himself pure from all manner of wickedness; it being as clear as the sun, what he ought to do, and what to avoid.

Ver. 9. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgements of the Lord are true, and righteous.
altogether.] The true worship of God is unalterably settled; (Deut. xii. 32.) free from all profane mixtures of superstition: and all our transactions with men are prescribed to be in perfect truth and righteousness.

Ver. 10. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. We are happier in this, than in all the gold and precious treasures which are brought from other countries, or in the most delicious pleasures which he hath provided for us in our own.

Ver. 11. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.] [I say nothing but what I have tried: for by following the admonitions of thy holy laws, both in my private and public capacity, thy servant is become thus illustrious: and in their observance there is not only much satisfaction at present, but a far greater reward in the conclusion.

Ver. 12. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.] All our unhappiness is, that we do not observe them so strictly as we ought. They are a perfect rule; but our obedience, alas! is so exceedingly imperfect, that we cannot so much as number our wanderings from it: many of which we never observed; and therefore are so far from merit- ing any reward for obedience, that I must humbly beg thy pardon for the demerits of my negligence;

Ver. 13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.] And the assistance of thy grace likewise (without which, I shall still farther swerve from thy law) to preserve me from all wilful sins against thee. I am devoted to thy service, O Lord; therefore I beseech thee so to strengthen my will to please thee, that no temptation may prevail with me to consent deliberately to offend thee. Then shall I (notwithstanding my infirmities and ignorances) be accounted upright before thee, and be free from a great deal of guilt, which otherwise, by manifold transgressions, I shall draw upon me.

Ver. 14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord; my strength, and my Redeemer.] And I shall have the confidence also then to address myself unto thee, both openly and in secret, with hopes that all my sacrifices (offered from a heart that sincerely studies to be obedient to thee) shall be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, to whom I fly for safety and deliverance, in all the assaults which the enemies either of my body or my soul make upon me.

PSALM XX.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm composed by David, (and by him delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle); wherein the people are taught to pray for his success in some great expedition; it is probable, (from ver. 7.), against the Ammonites and Syrians, who came with great numbers of horsemen and chariots to fight with him; 2 Sam. x. 6. 8. 1 Chron. xix. 7.

Ver. 1. THE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.] The Lord, who never fails those that seek him, hear thy prayer, when the enemy distresseth thee in the day of battle; (2 Sam. x. 8.) the mighty God, who hath made a gracious covenant with Jacob and his posterity, protect thee, and make thee victorious.

Ver. 2. Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.] O God, who hast pitched thy tabernacle among us, and dwellest in Mount Sion by a visible token of thy presence, succour our sovereign in the time of need, and support him in all assaults of such numerous enemies as are combined against him;

Ver. 3. Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah.] Shew, by some signal token from heaven, that thou art pleased with all his oblations and burnt sacrifices, whereby he made his supplication to thee, for thy blessing on him in this undertaking.

Ver. 4. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfilling all thy counsel.] Make him as prosperous as he himself wishes; and enable him to accomplish whatsoever he designs.

Ver. 5. We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: The Lord fulfill all thy petitions.] In confidence of thy help, we will shout when we set upon our enemies; in thy power and might we will advance courageously against them! for the Lord will not fail to grant the petitions of our sovereign, whose cause is so just, and who hath been so insolently treated by them; (2 Sam. x. 3. 4.)

Ver. 6. Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand.] This is the assured hope of every soul of us; we are as certain as if he had already obtained it, that the Lord will make him victorious; for he reigns by his special appointment, who, as his infinitely excels in strength, and commands all the hosts of heaven, so will declare the exceeding greatness of his power, in giving him an illustrious deliverance.

Ver. 7. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.] We are not daunted at the vast numbers of our confederate enemies, some of which boast of their chariots, others of their horses; but to all these we oppose the mighty power of the Lord, who hath heretofore done such great things for us.

Ver. 8. They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen and stand upright.] And we triumph beforehand, saying, They are thrown down from their chariots, and fallen from their horses, wherein they trusted; but we, whom they despised, are erect and stand immovable, merely by our confidence in the Lord.

Ver. 9. Save, LORD; let the King hear us when
PSALM XXI.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—Theodoret truly observes, that in this psalm, as well as in the former, David (who was the author of it, and delivered it to the master of the music in the tabernacle) speaks in the person of the people, whom he instructs how to give God thanks, (not for Hezekiah's recovery from his great sickness, and the lengthening of his days, as Theodoret takes it, but) for granting him those victories which they prayed for in the psalm foregoing. And it is generally looked upon as describing, under that figure, the exaltation, glory, and majesty of Christ, which he obtained by his bloody death and passion. Many of the Hebrews themselves apply it to the Messiah, so that it may be called a psalm of triumph, after the victories which David got over his enemies; which were a type of Christ's victory over death, and of the triumph that ensued. And truly there are some things in it which are more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David, as ver. 4, 5, 6.

Ver. 1. The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD, and in thy salvation, how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast heard the prayers of thy people, O Lord, when they cried unto thee, saying, Lord, save the king, (xx. 9,) who will never cease, therefore, to thank thee, with the greatest joy and gladness, for that extraordinary strength and courage, whereby thou didst endure him. Q how much beyond all his expression is his joy and thankfulness, for thy wonderful deliverance of him!

Ver. 2. Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. Thou hast granted all that his heart desired, (xx. 4,) as well as that he openly requested, with his lips:

Ver. 3. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou sittest a crown of pure gold on his head. Yea, more than his heart desired; for when he thought of no such thing, thou wast graciously pleased to anoint him to a kingdom; in which having settled him, thou hast added a new glory to him, and set an illustrious crown upon his head, 1 Chron. xx. 2.

Ver. 4. He asked of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. He desired only to escape with his life, when he was encompassed with inevitable dangers; and thou, moreover, didst promise to prolong his days, (1 Sam. vii. 12,) and to continue the crown to his posterity for many generations, (2 Sam. vii. 16, 19,) as thou wilt do to his Son Christ for ever and ever.

Ver. 5. His glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. Great is the fame, also, which he hath won by the many victories thou hast given him, (2 Sam. vii. 9.) All nations honour him, (as they shall much more do the Messiah), and reverence that royal majesty to which thou hast exalted him, (1 Chron. xiv. 21.)

Ver. 6. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever; thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance. And, which is a far greater glory, thou hast not only bestowed extraordinary benefits upon himself, but made him a blessing to future generations, whom thou wilt bless for his sake, (1 Kings, vii. 55, 56,) By which special favour and token of thy love to him, thou hast raised him to the highest pitch of joy as well as of greatness.

Ver. 7. For the king trusted in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High, he shall not be moved. Which shall never cease to cheer and refresh his spirit, because he confides in him who never fails to perform his promises; through his kindness, who is superior to all, the throne of David shall stand fast, though all the power on earth shall combine to overturn it.

Ver. 8. Thou shalt find out all thine enemies, thy right-hand shall find out those that hate thee. They are thy enemies, O Most High! as well as his, who endeavour to disturb him; and they shall never escape thy vengeance; whereassoever they skulk or fly for safety, thy vengeance shall pursue them, and punish their spiteful opposition to thee.

Ver. 9. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger; the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Woe be to them, when the time comes wherein thou wilt call them to an account for their hatred to thee. They shall be as certainly perish, as if they were cast into a fiery oven; the Lord, who is justly incensed against them, shall utterly consume them with a sharp and unavoidable destruction.

Ver. 10. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. They shall be so far from finding any favour, that thou shalt quite extinguish their families, and wholly abolish such a wicked generation.

Ver. 11. For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform. Who intended to destroy thy anointed, and root out thy religion. Their design was so mischievous, and therefore they deserve to be thus punished, though they were not able to effect it.

Ver. 12. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them. It may most justly provoke thee to set thyself against them; and as their aim, and the bent of their heart, was to throw down him whom thou hast advanced, so to make them the mark of thy highest displeasure, till they fall down wounded, and rise no more.

Ver. 13. Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength; so will we sing and praise thy power. Whereby all good men shall be excited to exalt thy power; and therefore shew, the greatness of it, O
Psalm XXII.

To the chief musician upon Aijeleth Sabah. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm composed by David, (and directed to the master of music in the tabernacle), wherein, under his own person, (who was persecuted as a hind is by the hunters, early in the morning, ver. 16.), he makes a large description of the sufferings of Christ, and, in conclusion, of his exaltation, and the propagation of his kingdom to the utmost ends of the earth. Some of which things are delivered in such expressions, that they are more literally fulfilled in our Saviour, than ever they were in David, to whom they belong but in a metaphorical sense. I shall note the particulars in their proper places, underneath the paraphrase, which I would not too much enlarge or interrupt, by inserting them here.

Ver. 1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, my most gracious God, whose power no creature can resist, how strange doth it seem, that I, who have been thy care so long, am now left without any visible means of escaping those that seek my life; and that the tenderest crashes which I pour out of a heart laden with sorrow and grief, are far from prevailing for any relief! Matth. xxvii. 46.

Ver. 2. O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night-season, and am not silent. O my God, (for so I will still call thee, even in the greatest distresses), there is no day, no night passes, wherein I do not, with incessant cries, most unfortunately call upon thee, but can obtain no rest from my persecutions.

Ver. 3. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Yet thou art he that hatest all those who unjustly persecute thy servant, and keepest thy word most faithfully with them that depend upon thee; as appears by the many deliverances thou hast sent them from thy holy place, where they celebrate thy name with their perpetual praises.

Ver. 4. Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They that are gone before us have left us many remembrances of thy mercy to those that piously relied on thee; in all their straits they applied themselves unto thee, as their only deliverer; and by thy help they escaped the greatest dangers.

Ver. 5. They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. Their fervent prayers prevailed with thee, (though mine

N can now obtain no audience); they were confident thou wouldest preserve them in safety, and their hope did not make them ashamed.

Ver. 6. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.] Whereas I, who have waited on thee also after their example, am so disappointed in my expectation, that my adversaries are ready to tread me under their feet: so weak I am, and thereby so contemptible, that not only the great men, but the baser sort and dregs of the people, publicly reproach and despise me.

Ver. 7. All they that see me laugh at me; they show out the lip, they shake the head, saying. All that see the straits to which I am reduced openly deride me; they make mouths at me, and, in a scornful manner, shake their heads, and jest upon me, saying,

(* This was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Saviour Christ, Matth. xxvii. 39-41.)

Ver. 8. He trusted on the LORD, that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. This is he that talked so much of the favour of God to him, and depended upon him that he would deliver him; let us see now what he will do for him: let him deliver him out of our hands, and shew thereby that he is so dear, as he pretends, unto him.

Ver. 9. But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. This insolent language is very grievous to my soul, but it shall not cast me into utter despair of thy mercy: I will rather continue to wait upon thee, who, without my knowledge, and when I could not call upon thee, didst grant me a greater deliverance than this which I now ask of thee: for thou broughtest me out of my mother's womb, and then providest nourishment for me, tookest a singular care of me while I hung upon her breasts.

Ver. 10. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly. In my infancy thou didst preserve me from all the mischiefs to which that weak estate is incident, and ever since hast been my most gracious protector; for, from my first coming into the world till this moment, I have had nothing to trust unto but only thy good providence, which all along declared (though I was the youngest of my brethren) what a large share I had in thy loving-kindness.

Ver. 11. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. And shall I think thou wilt now forsake me when I call upon thee, and acknowledge thy former care, and hope for thy future? Go on, O God, to conclude as thou hast begun, and continue to do me good. And now that there is an appearance of the sorest distress, and I am no more able to help myself than when I was an infant, and have less help and succour from others, be thou pleased to exert thy power, as thou hast ever done, for my deliverance.

Ver. 12. Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. It must be thy

* Hind of the morning.
work alone; for my enemies are not only very numerous, but so mighty and formidable in their power, so insolent also and furious, and have inclosed and hemmed me in so strictly, that it is impossible without thy miraculous providence to escape them.

Ver. 13. They gape upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.] A hungry lion is not more fierce nor more dreadful, when he is ready to seize on his trembling prey, than these my persecutors; whom I hear roaring and thundering out their threats, and see coming with open mouth to fall upon me, greedily desiring and aiming to devour me.

Ver. 14. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.] Which have struck me with such consternation, that I am as weak as water; my bones are so loosened, that they are not able to support my body; my heart fails me, and my spirit dissolves and faints away, as wax melts before the fire.

Ver. 15. My strength is dried up like a potsherd: and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.] Fear, sadness, and sorrow, have quite dried up my vital moisture: I have scarce strength enough left to complain, but am just upon the point to expire, and to be laid in my grave.

Ver. 16. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.] For that malicious company which have combined together to persecute me, are as greedily and as cruelly as the hungry dogs who have hunted down a hind, (see the title,) and are all gathered about her to tear her in pieces: they use me most shamefully, as well as cruelly, and have bored through my hands and my feet.

(* There is nothing like this in the history of David; of whom it can be only spoken poetically by an hyperbolic.)

Ver. 17. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.] Grief and sorrow have so consumed my flesh, that my bones stick out through my skin, and may be distinctly numbered: and they that behold my misery are so far from having compassion on me, that they feed their eyes, and are exceedingly satisfied with this lamentable sight.

Ver. 18. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.] They make themselves sure I shall never recover; no more than the poor hinde, whose skin the hunters have divided, or cast lots to whose share it should fall. For so have they parted my upper garments among them, and cast lots who shall have my inner t.

(† This also was more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David, in whose story we find nothing like it; and therefore it can signify nothing more, (if applied to him,) than that they looked upon him as utterly undone, and rived his house, and despised him of all, when he fled from Saul: 1 Sam. xix.)

Ver. 19. But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me.] Once more, therefore, I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to interpose by thy power, in this grievous strait, for my deliverance: it is easy for thee to affect it, who art all-mighty, and I depend merely on thy aid; which I in-
treat thee to send speedily for my relief, or else it will come too late.

Ver. 20. Deliver my soul from the sword: my darling from the power of the dog.] Rescue my life from the sword which the enemy hath drawn to dispatch me: it is all I have left, and it is left without all defense but thine, who, I hope, wilt preserve it from the power of him that with the rage and fury of a dog maliciously persecutes me.

Ver. 21. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.] Thou hast done as great things heretofore, and sent me relief when the fiercest and strongest enemies were pushing at me, and insulting over me; which makes me presume of thy favour now in this sore exigence, when the most violent men are ready to fall upon me, and tear me in pieces, if thou dost not save me.

Ver. 22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.] Save me, O Lord, and it will redound to thy praise, and not merely to my own satisfaction: For I will tell all my brethren how good and gracious thou art, and publicly proclaim the greatness of thy power, and wisdom, and justice, (as well as of thy love,) in the midst of thy faithful people.

(‡ This David did in the 18th Psalm; and this our Saviour did by his apostles, Heb. ii. 12. who preached his resurrection, &c. everywhere, to the praise and glory of God's grace, Eph. i. 6.)

Ver. 23. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.] I will call upon him all the devout worshippers of the Lord, to join with me in praising and giving thanks unto him, (x Chron. xvi.,) Let the whole posterity of Jacob (and whatsoever hath any thing of his spirit in him) set forth the glory of his most excellent perfections, which shine in his marvelous works: let them all, I say, whom he hath chosen to be his peculiar people, most humbly worship and adore his majesty, and learn to give him faithful obedience.

(All that follows is as applicable to Christ as to David; and some passages more fulfilled in him.)

Ver. 24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he bid his face from him; but when he was cried unto him, he heard.] For that poor despicable person, (whom men contemned and scorned, ver. 6.) he hath not disdained to look graciously upon in his lowest and vilest condition. But though he seemed to neglect him for a time, hath seasonably appeared in his favour, and granted the earnest prayers which he put up unto him in his distress.

Ver. 25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.] Which shall be openly acknowledged when I return to thy house with the heartiest praises to thee, from whom I am sensible I receive all the blessings I enjoy. And as I have been forward, in my trouble, to vow thee many sacrifices, if thou wouldst restore me; so I will certainly offer them in the presence of those that devoutly worship the Divine Majesty.
Ver. 26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek them; your heart shall live for ever. I will invite also those poor people who were partakers with me in my sufferings, to come and feast with me on that plentiful provision I will make for them; and thereby encourage all those that seek the Lord sincerely, and depend upon him, to hope that they shall also praise him. Let me assure all such faithful souls, your hearts shall be always full of comfort and joy, which nothing shall be able to take away from you.

Ver. 27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. Nor shall the fame of thy wonderful works, O Lord, be confined within the narrow bounds of this one country, but spread itself to the farthest parts of the earth; where they shall, with thankful commemorations of thy goodness, universally prostrate themselves before thee, and become thy subjects.

Ver. 28. For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and he is the governor among the nations. For the Lord is the Sovereign of the whole world; and therefore, as all nations are under his dominion, so they shall all submit unto his government.

Ver. 29. All they that be fat upon earth, shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust, shall bow before him, and none can keep alive his own soul. All they that are rich and powerful shall partake of his altar, and humbly worship him that bestows such benefits upon them: and so shall all the poor and miserable also think themselves happy in his service. For he is the protector of them all; and the greatest, as well as the meanest, must acknowledge, that of him alone cometh their salvation.

(As they that eat of the sacrifices did, 1 Cor. x. 18.)

Ver. 30. A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. Their posterity likewise shall devote themselves unto him, and propagate his religion unto future generations, whom the Lord shall adopt into his family.

Ver. 31. They shall come, and declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that be hath done this. They shall join themselves to the society of his people, and publish to those that shall succeed them, the loving-kindness and faithfulness of the Lord in this wonderful deliverance, which he alone hath wrought for me.

PSALM XXIII.

A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm seems to have been composed by David, after God had brought him out of that great distress of which he complained in the foregoing, and settled him in a prosperous condition; wherein he was confident God would continue him.

Ver. 1. THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. There is no shepherd exercises a more tender and constant care over his flock, than the Lord doth over me; and therefore I am confident I shall not want any thing that is necessary, either for my sustenance, or for my defence against those who would bereave me of my happiness.

Ver. 2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. For as a good shepherd leads his sheep in the violent heat to shady places, where they may lie down and feed, (not in parched, but) in fresh and green pastures; and in the evening leads them, (not to muddy and troubled waters, but) to pure and quiet streams: so hath he already made a fair and plentiful provision for me; which I enjoy in peace without any disturbance.

Ver. 3. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name’s sake. And lest I should lose so great a happiness, his goodness is pleased, (for to nothing else can I ascribe it,) both to direct and guide me in the right course of pious living, and to reduce me when I go astray; just as a shepherd brings back his wandering sheep from those craggy, untrodden paths wherein they would lose themselves, and leads them into plain and easy ways, wherein they find rest and safety.

Ver. 4. Thou shinest through the valley of the shadow of death; I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Which makes me resolve to take a good courage, though I should fall again into the most dismal dangers, (as a poor sheep sometimes doth into a deep pit;) it shall not terrify me, when I remember that thou art present with me, to protect and defend me: thy royal power, and pastoral care, shall be my support and comfort.

Ver. 5. Thou preparest a table before me in presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. But (such is thy extraordinary kindness to me) thou hast not merely provided food, but a feast for me; a most sumptuous feast, which, with great care and order, thou hast set before me, to the astonishment of my enemies, who with shame and grief behold me, whom they lately despised, rejoicing in thy royal bounty towards me, which entertain me even with superfluity of all good things.

Ver. 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. And therefore I am bold to hope, that the same bounteous goodness and tender mercy which hath, without my desert, done all this for me, and pursues me as zealously with its favour, as my enemies do with their malice, will still most graciously attend me to the end of my days, and settle me in a quiet enjoyment of his house, (as well as my own,) where I will never cease to praise his wonderful love towards me, and to give him thanks for all the benefits he hath bestowed upon his unworthy servant.

PSALM XXIV.

A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—As the foregoing psalm seems to have been composed by David presently after his
Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. What a favour is this, that the divine Majesty will vouchsafe to take up his special residence here amongst us! when the whole earth is his, and all the creatures wherewith it is filled; this great world, and all the people that inhabit it.

Ver. 2. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. For by his almighty power it was formed, and therefore he hath a just propriety in it. He hath settled it also so firmly, that though the seas and the rivers beat against it, they cannot overthrow it; but together with it, make a convenient dwelling for those that live in every part of it.

Ver. 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? And, blessed be God, we dwell in that part of the earth, where he himself hath fixed his royal palace. (For this is the mountain that he hath chosen, and separated from all other, to be the place of his special presence.) But who is worthy to appear before him? Who may hope to be admitted to a gracious audience with him?

Ver. 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. Not every one that lives in this happy country, (though chosen to be his peculiar people), but he that carefully keeps his commands in thought, and deed, and word: He, I say, who not only preserves his hands from pure murder and theft, and such like injurious actions, but his heart also from so much as designing them; who uses no lies, much less false oaths, to deceive his neighbour, and enrich himself; but religiously observes all his promises, especially those that are made in God's presence, though it be to his own detriment.

Ver. 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the worshipper, and he alone, who shall receive a blessing, not only from the priest, (when he comes out of the sanctuary), but from the Lord himself, who will faithfully keep his promises with them, and amply reward them who are thus faithful to him.

Ver. 6. This is the generation of them that seek him; that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah. This is the genuine people of God, whose prayers are like to prevail with him. Such should all those proselytes be, who seek the favour of being received into your communion, O ye children of Jacob!

Ver. 7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. And let all those who thus follow the Lord, (not merely with their bodies, but with their hearts), in this solemn entrance he now makes into the holy place, join with me and say, Be ye open, O ye gates of the sanctuary; stand wide open, ye durable doors, and the King of incomparable majesty will enter, and, by the special token of his presence, dwell among us.

Ver. 8. Who is this King of glory? the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. And if any ask who this King is, whose majesty we proclaim to be so transcendent; let them know, it is the Lord, who made and governs the world; that most mighty and invincible Lord, by whose presence with me, I have been victorious in so many battles.

Ver. 9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Therefore make no delay, O ye gates of the [heavenly] sanctuary; be ye open, wide open, O ye doors, which never shall decay; and the King of incomparable majesty, as I said, shall enter, and fix his seat in his holy place.

Ver. 10. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, be is the King of glory. Selah. And if you ask again (as there is reason) with greater admiration, Who is this, the King of incomparable majesty? know that the Lord of the sun, moon, and stars, yea, of all the angelical powers, he is the King, whose transcendent majesty is come to make his residence here.
PSALM XXV.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—This psalm seems to have been penned by David after the commission of some great sin, (ver. 1.), and in some great distress, wherein he had fallen, (ver. 15, 16.), probably after the matter of Uriah, and when Absalom rebelled against him. Which brought to mind all the offences of his youth, (ver. 7.), and made him an earnest supplicant for the pardon of them, and for deliverance from his enemies. He began to make this petition with an extraordinary art; but the method is presently disturbed, by the absurdity of his desires, and his passionate sorrow, which would not let him follow exactly the order of the letters of the alphabet, in the beginning of every verse, as he first designed.

Ver. 1. UNTO thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.] O Lord, my constant and only refuge in all my troubles, I look up unto thee in this distress; most humbly waiting on thee, and hoping in thee, that thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 2. O my God, I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me.] Thou knowest, O my God, that I place no confidence in any thing but thine almighty goodness, upon which I profess entirely to depend: and therefore do not fail to relieve me, lest I hang down my head in confusion of face, and my enemies insult over me, when they see me disappointed of the help which I have so often declared I expect from thee.

Ver. 3. Yes, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.] Yes, for their sakes, who, by my example, wait upon thee, do not deny me: let not those who take my part, and place the same confidence in thee that I do, be disappointed of their hopes; but let them be utterly defeated, who, against all law and all obligations, have broke their faith with me, and without any provocation vainly labour to destroy me.

Ver. 4. Show me thy ways, O LORD: teach me thy paths.] It is hard to know what to do in these difficult times, especially in this great agitation of thoughts, wherein my troubled mind is tossed up and down: therefore do thou be pleased, O Lord, to show me the course thou wouldest have me take, and govern my actions so, that they may be pleasing unto thee.

Ver. 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day.] I have as much need of thy guidance, as a little child hath of its parents; and I cry as earnestly to thee, that thou wilt direct me in every step: and especially that thou wilt preserve me as faithful to thee, as I doubt not thou wilt be to me: for thou art the Author of all the deliverances I have received; and on thee I have, with a constant and perseverant hope, depended in all my trials:

Ver. 6. Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies, and thy loving-kindnesses: for they have been ever of old.] Who art ready to help the miserable, when they humbly seek thee, that all ages have left us remembrances of thy most compassionate bounty towards them. And therefore I beseech thee to do to me as thou hast ever done: I beg no new thing of thee, but implore that clemency and mercy, which thou never yet deniedst to any pious supplicant.

Ver. 7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy, remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O LORD.] I am a sinner indeed, and began to be so very early; for in my youth I childishly and foolishly went astray from thee, and since that time have committed much more grievous offences. But thy goodness is so great, that thou art not wont to punish us according to our deserts, but to pardon us according to thy tender mercies: to which I now betake myself, beseeching thee not to consider the greatness of my sins, but only the largeness and freeness of thy mercy, which gives me hope thou wilt be graciously reconciled to me.

Ver. 8. Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.] For such is the loving-kindness of the Lord, such is his love to rectitude and holiness, that he will rather choose to reduce sinners, and instruct them in the way of virtue, than destroy them because they have wandered from it;

Ver. 9. The meek will he guide in judgement: and the meek will he teach his way.] If they repent, that is, and, being troubled for what they have done amiss, meekly submit to his will and pleasure, he will sweetly direct them to discern what is acceptable to him. Such humble souls will be apt to learn, and therefore he will not fail to teach them the way to recover his favour.

Ver. 10. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.] And when they carefully observe the covenant wherein they stand engaged to him, (by obeying his laws, which testify what his will and pleasure is), he will order and dispose all things for their good, and faithfully perform the promises he hath made to such dutiful servants.

Ver. 11. For thy name sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity: for it is great.] I beseech thee, therefore, again, by this mercy and faithfulness of thine, which shall be always celebrated and praised by me, to grant me a gracious pardon: for which I am the more earnest, because my sin is so foul, so heinous, and such a multiplied wickedness, that I can have no rest till thou art reconciled to me:

Ver. 12. What man is he that feareth the LORD? he shall be teach in the way that he shall choose.] Which if thou wilt be, O, how happy shall I think myself! for he that fears to offend thy majesty, (as I in all reason ought hereafter to do, both because I on no other terms expect thy merciful pardon, and have felt also the sad burden of being a sinner), him will the Lord instruct, and lead into those ways which are conformable to his blessed will, and which will prove most grateful to him that walks in them.
Ver. 13. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.] He shall be at ease within himself, or rather filled with joy, and all manner of satisfaction: none of the blessings of this life shall be wanting to him, and he shall leave them as an inheritance to his posterity after him.

Ver. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will show them his covenant.] Or if he fall into any straits and difficulties, the greatest comfort of all is, that the Lord is present to them that fear to do any thing displeasing to him, (though it were to deliver themselves from danger,) to counsel, and secretly suggest good advice unto them: for he hath engaged himself to shew them what is best for their safety and preservation.

Ver. 15. Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.] In confidence of which, my mind is fixed in a constant dependance upon the Lord: I expect no help from any one else, but on him will I patiently wait, for I believe he will wind me out of these perplexities, and deliver me from the snares which my enemies have laid for me.

Ver. 16. Turn thou unto me, and have mercy upon me: for I am desolate and afflicted.] Behold, O Lord, how entirely I trust in thee: I have a respect to my faith, and hope, and patience, and take pity upon me, now that thou seest I am in a manner forsaken by all, and reduced from the estate of a king to the condition of a beggar.

Ver. 17. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.] Great are the oppressions that lie upon my heart, and they are still growing into new cares, and fears, and vexations: O deliver me out of such grievous straits, which press so sore upon me.

Ver. 18. Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sins.] Have compassion upon the miserable and toilsome life which I lead, and remove all my sins out of thy sight, which I know are the cause of it.

Ver. 19. Consider mine enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with cruel hatred.] Discountenance my enemies; who (as they are very numerous, so) bear an implacable hatred to me; which disposes them to do me all the mischief imaginable, though I have not been in the least injurious to them.

Ver. 20. O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.] O preserve me from falling into their hands, for they seek my life, and rescue me from the danger I am now in of losing it: and let not (again most humbly beseech thee) the trust and confidence which I repose in thee, be turned into shame and confusion, as it will be if thou dost not deliver me.

Ver. 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me: for I wait on thee.] I have grievously offended thy majesty, it is true, and I have sorrowfully bewailed it: but as for them that rise up against me, they have so little reason to accuse me, that I desire thee to deal with me according to my uprightness and integrity in all my administrations: let my innocence be my guard, and my honest dealing my protection; for I depend on nothing but thy favour in such courses.

Ver. 22. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.] Nor do I plead my own private cause alone, but beseech thee to have mercy upon the whole nation, who are lamentably distracted by these divisions; and to restore them to peace and quietness, by delivering me from this rebellion that is raised against me.

PSALM XXVI.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—In this psalm David asserts that uprightness and integrity, to which he pretended in the 21st verse of the foregoing psalm; and appeals to God as the judge of his sincerity, who was privy to his most secret intentions. But it seems to relate to former times, when he was persecuted by Saul, and looked upon as a public enemy, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9. Thus Theodoret understands it: and thinks he was now among the Philistines, or in some other strange country, into which he was some time forced by that persecution.

Ver. 1. Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord, therefore I shall not slide.] I am accused of grievous crimes by those that persecute me, but am not afraid to appeal to thee, O Lord, as the judge of that matter: nothing doubting but thou wilt acquit me, and punish my false accusers and persecutors.

For thou knowest I kept a good conscience when I was at court, (1 Sam. xix. 4;) and since I have been banished thence, have taken no wicked course to deliver myself, (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 12,) but entirely depended upon thee alone for safety: in which resolution nothing shall shake me.

Ver. 2. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.] Thou seest into the secret thoughts of my mind, and inclinations of my will: if I have not sufficiently approved myself to have not so much as designed any such evil as I am charged withal, go on, good Lord, to make a further search; and if thou wilt still expose to the fiery trial of sorer afflictions, I hope it will only still discover more of my integrity.

Ver. 3. For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.] For I trust to nothing but thy loving-kindness, which is the pattern I have set before my eyes to imitate: I ever designed good, not hurt, to them; and have ever kept my faith, and punctually performed my promises to them; after the example of thy truth, by which I have squared all my actions.

Ver. 4. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.] I never loved the company of false and treacherous persons; nor have had any thing to do with those, who under specious shows cover ungodly designs.

Ver. 5. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers: and will not sit with the wicked.] No, I perfectly
hated their meetings, where they laid their heads together to contrive some evil thing or other; I never did, nor ever will, sit in consultation with those unquiet and turbulent spirits, who are restlessly hatching mischief.

Ver. 6. I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD.] I never satisfied myself with the mere ceremony of washing my hands, before I went to offer thee any sacrifice; but sincerely endeavoured, O Lord, to keep myself free from all impurity, (as by that token I testified), and so presented myself with due reverence at thy altar.

Ver. 7. That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.] Not merely to pray to thee, when I was in any distress; but to praise thee also, and to give thee thanks; proclaiming to all thy people those stupendous things which thy admirable goodness hath done for me.

Ver. 8. LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.] And thou knowest, O Lord, with what affection I attended upon this employment; and how glad I was to go into thy tabernacle, (which thou hast been pleased to make the place where thy glory dwells among us), to offer those devout sacrifices unto thee.

Ver. 9. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:] And therefore, I hope, thou wilt not let me suffer with those, from whose society I have always separated myself: O let me not perish, as if I was a murderer.

Ver. 10. In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes:] Or a companion of those that live by rapine and spoil of others, (1 Sam. xxv. 15. 16.), or obtain their ends by bribery and corruption of justice.

Ver. 11. But for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.] For I am none of that number; but have always preserved, and still continue an upright endeavour to keep myself pure in all things: therefore I beseech thee to deliver me, now that they seek to destroy me as an evil-doer, and show that thou judgest otherwise of me.

Ver. 12. My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregation will I bless the LORD.] Why should I doubt of it, when, notwithstanding all the assaults of mine enemies, I stand firm and unshaken? Surely the time will come when I shall publicly praise the Lord, my protector and deliverer, in the assemblies of his people, from whence this unjust persecution hath driven me, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

PSALM XXVI.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm composed by David, when he was, or had been lately, in some great distress. It is not easy to resolve, whether it were when he was persecuted by Saul before he was crowned: (as the LXX. now say, though Theodoret could find no such thing in the Hexapla); or when he was forced to fly from Absalom; or, as some of the Jews think, (which seems most probable, because it agrees very well with several passages in the psalm), when, in fight with the Philistines, he had engaged himself so far among the enemies, that he was in danger of being killed by a giant, if Abishai had not seasonably stept in and relieved him. This was in his declining years, when the same courage remained, but not the same strength, which he had in his youth. And therefore the people came and swore to him, saying, "Thou shalt go out no more with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel," 2 Sam. xxi. 17.

Ver. 1. THE LORD is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?] The Lord still bears a favour to me, and fills me by his wonderful preservation of me. What enemy, then, is so terrible, that I should not dare to engage him? He defends my life in the most dangerous assaults; of whom, then, though he be never so great a giant, should I stand in fear?

Ver. 2. When the wicked, even mine enemies, and my foes, came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.] When malicious men, full of hatred and rage, made their approaches so near me, that they hoped, like so many savage beasts, to tear me in pieces and devour me, they quite missed their aim, and fell down dead at my feet.

Ver. 3. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.] And therefore, though I should see myself besieged with a great army of enemies, it shall not dismay me; though I were to fight a battle with the most numerous forces, I shall not, after such a demonstration of God's love and careful providence over me, despair of victory.

Ver. 4. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.] Not that I am greedy of glory and fame by such marvellous successes; no, I can stay at home, as my people desire me, (2 Sam. xxi. 17.), and give God thanks for what he hath done for me. Nothing in the world agrees so much with my desires; this is the only thing I have sought, (even by my wars), and will still make the end of all my endeavours, that I may perpetually attend upon the service of God in the holy assemblies, and enjoy the sweet pleasure the Lord is pleased there to impart to his people, and receive directions from him, when I wait upon him every morning in his tabernacle.

Ver. 5. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me up upon a rock.] For there I shall think myself as secure in troublesome times, as if I was environed with the strongest bulwarks, or lay obscured in the most secret hiding-places; the most impregnable rock I should not take to be a place of greater safety.
Ver. 6. And now shall mine hand be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifice of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. And now have I felt the happy fruit of my love towards it; for the Lord hath given me a glorious victory, and made me triumph over all my enemies on every side. For which cause I will go thither, and offer sacrifices of thanksgiving with the highest expressions of joy; I will compose songs of praise, and therein set forth the power and loving-kindness of the Lord.

Ver. 7. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice; have mercy also upon me, and answer me.] On whom I still depend for my future preservation; beseeching thee, O Lord, to give me a gracious audience; whenever I address myself unto thee, shew then the kindness thou hast for me, by granting my request.

Ver. 8. When thou doest good to me, then shalt thou set me on thy high places of salvation. Thy name, O Lord, wilt I seek.] Which I do not presume to offer to thee without thy invitation, but have still thy own words in my mind, whereby thou exhortest us to come unto thee, saying, Seek ye my face, to which my heart answers, Behold, O Lord, in obedience to thy command, and by thy gracious motion, I will never cease to seek it.

Ver. 9. Be gracious unto me, O Lord, for I am oppressed. My soul and heart are full of trouble; thy salvation is my desire; and I seek thee in my trouble. Be not far from me; I am small and feeble; [for others have said unto me, Depart from me; who will hearken unto me?]]

Ver. 10. And when I call, thou shalt answer me; thou wilt say, This is comforter.] When I am tormented, and when I am accursed; I call, and thou shalt answer me, and thou wilt say, This is comforter.

Ver. 11. The Lord is the strength of my肉, and he shall be my refuge in the day of evil; and he shall be my saviour, and thou shalt be my trust; and my hope shall be in him.]

Ver. 12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies, for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.] Let not those have their will of me, who love to trouble me, and give me perpetual disturbance; as too many still do, notwithstanding all the wonderful things thou hast wrought for me. They cease not to calumniate and defame my government; and he that headeth them, and sets them on, speaks of open force and violence, if he had opportunity.

Ver. 13. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.] Good God! how had it been possible for me to support myself under so many troubles and fears, which follow one upon another, if I had not firmly trusted in thee, that, notwithstanding the restless malice of my enemies, I shall enjoy thee in a prosperous and happy condition, even here in this present life.

Ver. 14. Wait upon the Lord; Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.] And let me admonish thee, whatsoever thou art that shalt hereafter fall into any such straits, to learn, by my example, not to be impatient, nor despond; presently, much less despair of relief, if the Lord do not send it just when thou expectest it; but wait upon him still with a steadfast hope, and fortify thyself with a strong faith in him. Let not thy heart fail thee in the greatest danger; but, as I said, wait upon the Lord, and confidently expect, that in his good time he will relieve thee.

Psalm XXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—Theodoret thinks this psalm was composed by David during Saul's persecution, when he was betrayed by those whom he took for friends, or not for his enemies, such as Doeg, the Ziphites, and many others. But the matter of this psalm inclines me to consider it as a meditation, on some such occasion as moved him to pen the foregoing. For he blesses God, in the latter part of it, (ver. 7. 8.), for the victories he had got over his enemies, and for the peace he enjoyed; and yet complains, in the beginning of it, of some men who molested him, and sought an occasion to do him mischief. See 2 Sam. xxii. 18—20, where we read of three battles between his forces and the Philistines, after that mentioned in the argument of Psalm xxvii., when, it is likely, some of his own subjects took an opportunity to give him some disturbance.

Ver. 1. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my Rock, be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.] O Lord, to whom alone I beseech myself for safety, and under whose protection nothing can hurt me, I make my most earnest prayer unto thee, that thou wilt defend me. Do not deny me, I most humbly beseech thee, lest, while I am so importunate with thee, and confide so entirely in thee, and yet thou takest no notice of me, I look like one that is abandoned by thee to destruction.

Ver. 2. Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee; when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.] Grant my desires, therefore, when with ardent affection I seek thy favour, and, renouncing all dependence on human success, implore thy help, which thou art wont to send from thy holy place.
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Ver. 3. Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their heart.] Let not that destruction seize on me, which is the portion of the wicked, nor suffer me to be involved in the same punishment with those pernicious wretches, who make no conscience what villainies they commit, and yet pretend the greatest friendship to their neighbours, when they design and are contriving their ruin.

Ver. 4. Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours; give them after the work of their hands, render to them their desert.] It is fit that they suffer as they have done, and reap the fruit of their manifold wickedness; dispense a reward to them according to their works, and deal with them (which is the measure whereby I desire thou wilt proceed with me) as they have dealt with others.

Ver. 5. Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.] I know thou wilt, because they regard not the wonderful things thou hast done for me, and by me; particularly that great work (which is to be ascribed to thy power alone) of making me their king; thou wilt utterly overturn them without any hope of their being raised up again.

Ver. 6. Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.] And I ought never to forget (that which they neglect) the singular providence of the Lord over me; whom I therefore bless and praise, because he heard my prayer when I was in distress, and desire all ages may ever praise him.

Ver. 7. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my song will I praise him.] The Lord is to me instead of a fortress and shield, when my enemies assault me; I heartily confided in him, that he would defend me, and behold, he sent seasonable succour to me, (2 Sam. xxi. 17;) which fills my heart with such exceeding joy, that (as I cannot express it, so) I am not able to contain myself, but I must compose a hymn in his praise, and say,

Ver. 8. The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.] It is the Lord that gives courage and strength to those that are on my side; he is the fortress that preserves in safety him whom he hath appointed to be the king of his people.

Ver. 9. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever.] Whose good and happiness I seek, beseeching thee, O Lord, to preserve thy people, and to pour down thy blessings upon those whom thou hast appropriated to thyself out of all other nations; take care of them, as a shepherd doth of his flock, and make them victorious over all their enemies, both now and in all future generations.

PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—This Psalm seems to have been composed by David after some extraordinary great thunder, lightning, and rain; whereby (it is probable) God had so discomfited his enemies, and put their forces into such disorder, that he easily got the victory over them. Whereupon he exalts them in this Psalm to submit to that glorious majesty, from whom that thunder came, and who can so easily strike a sudden terror into the hearts of his stoutest and most resolved opposers. Theodoret applies it to the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, in Hezekiah’s time; for which I see no foundation, nor for the title which is now in the LXX. (but Theodoret could not find in the Hexap. plus, which makes the occasion of it to be, David’s bringing the ark to the place he had prepared for it.

Ver. 1. Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.] O ye princes and rulers of the world, who so readily receive the lowest prostrations from your subjects, give unto the Lord of all, that honour which he justly expects from you; acknowledge his supreme power, which you have so lately felt, and submit to his authority.

Ver. 2. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.] Do him honour suitable to the excellence of his majesty; and, as a sign you have him in great veneration, come and cast down yourselves before him in the sanctuary, where he hath fixed his glorious residence among us.

Ver. 3. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters.] Whose voice was it but his, which you heard in the clouds? (whether the voice of no earthly monarch can reach); from thence his glorious majesty thunders, and makes not only the earth, but the great ocean, tremble at that token of his presence.

Ver. 4. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.] You think there is great power in your words; but, as they can be heard but a little way, so they are of little force, in comparison with this mighty voice, wherein the Lord expresses how potent he is, and strikes a dread and horror into all that hear it.

Ver. 5. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.] It makes the strongest trees of the forest quake, nay, breaks them into shivers; the cedars, as hard and tall as they are, even the cedars of Libanus, which are famed for their durableness and goodly bulk, are thrown down and shattered by it.

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Ver. 6. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.] It lifts them up into the air when it hath torn them in pieces, and makes the mountains themselves leap like the young creatures which live upon them.  
Ver. 7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.] Flashes of fire break out together with it, and, cutting their way through the clouds, are scattered, with a wonderful swiftness, into all quarters.  
Ver. 8. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.] The force of it is felt in the most desert places, even in that vast and horrid wilderness of Kadesh, which, by overthrowing trees and rocks, it renders still more horrid.  
Ver. 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests; and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.] It opens the wombs of hinds, which otherwise bring forth with the greatest difficulty; and it lays bare the covers of the wild beasts in the forest, whom it frightens into their dens; while his temple remains unshaken by these tempestuous blasts, and all his pious worshippers there securely sing the praises of his glorious majesty and power, saying,  
Ver. 10. The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.] The Lord is the great King, who governs even the clouds, and orders the thunder-showers to do what execution he pleases. When all other monarchs fail, the Lord still remains the same throughout all generations; and the thunder doth not more easily tear the trees and rocks, than he can break in pieces the proudest princes, who ought therefore to tremble before him, and to dread his judgements.  
Ver. 11. The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.] But as for all those that are sincerely devoted to his service, though never so weak and feeble, the Lord will be their support; they may depend upon his power to defend them in the greatest dangers, and against the mightiest enemies; the Lord will not only preserve them from evil, but bless and prosper them with all manner of happiness.

P S A L M XXX.  
A Psalm and Song, at the dedication of the House of David.  

The Argument.—The title of this psalm differs from all the foregoing, it being the first that is called a Psalm and Song, or a Psalm-Song; as others, we shall see in due place, are called a Song and Psalm, or a Song-Psalm; the difference of which it is hard to find out, (See Arg. of Psalm lxvii.) But here the words may be otherwise construed, for they run currently enough in the Hebrew; thus, A Psalm, A Song of Dedication of the House made by David, who would not eat in his house, till he had first, in a solemn manner, addressed himself to God at his entrance into it; either after it was newly built, (2 Sam. v. 11.), or (which agrees best with a great part of the psalm) when he returned to it again, after he had been driven from it by the rebellion of Absalom, who defiled it, (2 Sam. xvi. 11.) Then he gave God thanks for his being restored to a peaceable possession of his palace; and made a feast for his friends, (as the manner was, at their coming to dwell in a new-built house), with extraordinary piety and devotion, acknowledging God's goodness, who had graciously reinstated him in his throne. The Thalmudists generally understand by the house here mentioned, the house of the sanctuary, (see Mr Selden, l. iii. de Synedr. Cap. 13.) but I see no ground for it; for David did not build God a house, nor do the words of the psalm (as Theodozet observes) agree to that matter.

Ver. 1. I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.] O Lord, to whose powerful providence I ascribe my late wonderful deliverance, I will give thee the highest praises, and never cease to magnify thy name, who hast drawn me up out of that depth of misery into which I was plunged, and filled me with that joy, which my enemies hoped to have had in my destruction.  
Ver. 2. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast hearkened to me.] O Lord, my gracious God, I was in a most forlorn and languishing condition, like a sick man who cannot help himself; but I addressed myself in earnest prayer to thee, and thou hast restored me to my former estate again.  
Ver. 3. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave; thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.] Which mercy is the more to be admired, because there seemed to be no more hope of my restoration, than there is of the resurrection of a dead man out of his grave; or, at best, of a sick man's recovery, that is just at the point of death.  
Ver. 4. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.] Join with me, then, all ye that are sensible of the divine benefits, in this duty of praise to him, who hath called me from death unto life again; give thanks together with me, (for my single praises and thanksgivings are not sufficient), and gratefully commemorate his power, and goodness, and wisdom, and truth, which he hath shewn in my restitution.  
Ver. 5. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour it pleaseth him toDeletes] Wherein you may see his clemency towards his faithful servants, whom he may correct very sharply for a little time, but is soon reconciled, and then extends his favour to them without any end; and sends them deliverance so unexpectedly, and suddenly, as well as seasonably, that where nothing but lamentations were heard over night, there nothing but shouts of joy are heard in the morning.  
Ver. 6. And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.] Yet that must not make them secure, nor confident in any thing but his goodness alone. For
Psalm XXXI.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle; wherein he describes his confidence in God, notwithstanding a grievous strait wherein he was; when (as I understand it) after his escape from Keilah, Saul, with three battalions, (as we now speak) pursued him so close in the wilderness of Maon, that without an extraordinary providence of God over him, he had certainly fallen into his hands. To that strange deliverance, and not that from Absalom, (to which Theodoret refers it), it is the more probable he hath respect in this psalm, (in the latter of which it is thankfully commemorated), because the haste, which the Psalmist here saith (ver. 22.) he made in that sore distress, is expressed by the very same word, (and used no where else in any other part of David's history), when the great fright he was in, and his sudden speedy flight from one place to another, is described, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26.

Psalm XXXI.

Ver. 1. IN thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Thou seest, O Lord, that in all these persecutions which I endure, I have no confidence in any thing, but only thy power and goodness; which if they should fail me, I should be lamentably ashamed: prevent that confusion, O Lord, and magnify thy own mercy and fidelity, by preserving me in, and delivering me out of these dangers, which now encompass me.

Ver. 2. Bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. Graciously incline to favour my request, now that I am so sorely pressed by my enemies, that they are ready to seize on me; haste my relief, for it is not this rock or strong hold wherein I am, (1 Sam. xxiii. 25.), that can protect me, but only thou, O Lord, to whom I resort as a more sure defence, than the most impregnable fortress in the world.

Ver. 3. For thou art my rock and my fortress: therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. For so I have hitherto found thee in all my distresses, and therefore I still flee to thee for safety; beseeching thee to glorify thyself (I have no other argument whereby to move thee) in leading me out of this strait, and guiding my steps so, that I may not fall into the hands of my enemies;

Ver. 4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Who have now so circumvented me, and, by the secret treachery of the Ziphites, brought me into such perplexities, (1 Sam. xxiii. 19. 20. 26.), that I am undone unless thou extricate me: as I hope thou wilt; for I profess again, that I depend on thee alone for help and deliverance.

Ver. 5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. Unto thy care and custody I commit myself, and deposit my very life with thee*: who hast so often rescued me, when I was like to lose it; and wilt still, I doubt not, shew thyself my most gracious God, as well as powerful Lord, who never deceivest those that rely upon thy faithful word.

(*) Our Saviour used these words in a more proper and literal sense than they can be applied to David.

Ver. 6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord. There is nothing else that I rely upon; for I never inquired of diviners, wizards, soothsayers, or fortune-tellers; nor consulted...
with necromancers, (or any other of those vanities whereby the Gentile world is cheated), which way I should flee, or how I should provide for my safety: no, I have hated all such practices, and those that observe them; confiding entirely in the Lord, and his directions.

Ver. 7. I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble, thou hast known my soul in adversities.] In whose merciful providence over me I will be glad and rejoice, even when I am in straits: for it is most delightful to remember how thou hast taken care of me in my afflictions; and never neglected, but still owned me, and provided for my security, in the greatest distresses.

Ver. 8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.] And very lately didst not suffer me to be shut up in Keilah, (1 Sam. xxiii. 7.), whose inhabitants would have delivered me into the hands of Saul: but admonished me by thy oracles, at which only I inquired, (1 Sam. xxiii. 9. &c.), to depart thence, where I was in danger to be inclosed; and gavest me a larger compass to seek the means of my preservation.

Ver. 9. Have mercy upon me, O LORD: for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.] Go on, good Lord, to perfect thy mercy to me; and now that I am fallen into a new difficulty, and closely begirt on every side by my enemy, take some pity upon me, and speedily deliver me: for the continual anguish and vexation which these returning dangers give me, together with the hunger and thirst which at present sorely pinch me, have in a manner quite dissipated me.

Ver. 10. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.] I cannot subsist long, unless thou relievest me: for I am wasted away with sorrow and sighing; the punishments of my sins are so heavy, and I am so weak, that I cannot support myself under their burdens.

Ver. 11. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without, fled from me.] My enemies also mock at my confidence in thee, now that they have thus distressed me: and my neighbours, who have been witnesses of my integrity in all my actions, are too prone to join with them in those reproaches: and, which is still sadder, my familiar friends are afraid to be seen in my company, or to send me the least relief: they dare not entertain me into their houses; for when they have met me in the highway, they fled, and would not come nigh me.

Ver. 12. I am forgotten, as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.] They look upon me as a man utterly lost; and so never think of me, no more than if I were in my grave: they despise of my restitution, and despise me as much as an earthen vessel when it is broken in pieces; which no body minds, because it cannot be repaired.

Ver. 13. For I have heard the slander of many; fear was on every side, while they took counsel together against me; they devised to take away my life.] The calumnies and slanders, also, whereby the greatest persons defame me, are come to my ears. They say I am a sedious fellow; that the life of the king cannot be in safety till I be destroyed: and so they have held consultation together against me; wherein they have debated nothing else, but how to find a way to take away my life.

Ver. 14. But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God.] But how great soever their cunning and their power be, and how dejecting soever my fears, I do not quite despond; but still repose a sure confidence in thee, O Lord, saying, Thou art a judge of my innocence; thou art my defender and protector, who hast hitherto always done me right.

Ver. 15. My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.] It is not in their power to dispose of my life at their pleasure, no more than it is in mine to appoint the time of my deliverance, which I leave to thy wisdom, O Lord, to whom it belongs; only beseeching thee, at present, to rescue me from falling into the hands of my enemies, and at last, when thou judgest it most fit, to free me from their persecution.

Ver. 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me for thy mercies sake.] Disperse these black clouds of affliction, which have so long kept me in such a mournful condition, that my enemies fancy thou hast abandoned me: and shew the favour thou bearest to me, who am faithfully devoted to thy service; and therefore, though I am unworthy of it, yet hope thou wilt magnify thy own mercy in delivering me from these dangers, and making me as happy as now I am miserable.

Ver. 17. Let me not be ashamed, O LORD, for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.] Let not thy humble supplicant, O Lord, who testifieth by his daily prayers that he wholly depends upon thy favour, be shameful disapponted in his expectation of relief from thee: but let the wicked be confounded, to see all their contrivances against me come to nothing; let them be laid in their graves, and give me no farther disturbance.

Ver. 18. Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.] Stop the mouths of those bold calumniators, who insolently threaten utter ruin to the innocent; whom they charge with the most grievous crimes, and detest all that he can say or do in his own defence.

Ver. 19. O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!] O what a comfort is it, when they thus insult, to think of thy kind intentions towards those that fear to offend thee, though for the present they are most miserably abused! how great are the blessings thou hast treasured up in store, (as shall in time appear openly before all the world), and prepared for those that religiously avoid all unjust ways of preserving themselves, and trust to thee alone.

Ver. 20. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy
Psalm XXXII.

A Psalm of David. Maschil.

The Argument.—A Psalm composed by David, when the calamities into which he fell by his son’s rebellion, taught him how evil and bitter a thing it was to offend God, and how infinitely he was beholden to him, that he was so merciful as not to take such a vengeance on him as his sins deserve. There are those who think it was intended for public use, upon the great day of expiation, when the whole nation made a general confession of their sins; and called Maschil, either because it contains an excellent instruction, (as that word signifies,) concerning the means to obtain true blessedness; or because it was set to the tune of a song, in vulgar use in those days, which began with the word Maschil. This is the more probable of the two, because there are twelve psalms besides this that have the same title, to all of which the former reason cannot be applied.

Ver. 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.] Happy is that man, thrice happy, to whom God will be pleased, out of his own free grace and mercy, (for no man can merit such a favour by any services that we can do him,) to remit not only his common errors and weaknesses, but also his grosser sins, whether committed against the divine majesty, or against his neighbour.

Ver. 2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.] It is impossible to express the happiness of that man to whom the Lord will be so gracious, as not to exact the punishment due to his former offences, for which he is most heartily afflicted, (for to none else this happiness belongs;) and doth not only seem by his sorrowful confessions to hate and abhor them, but is unfeignedly resolved to forsake them.

Ver. 3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old; through my roaring all the day long.] He that hath felt the smart of them as I have done, will be sensible what a pleasure it is to be eased of such a sting. For when I seriously reflected upon the grievous sin I had committed, but not bewailed it as I ought, it filled me with such anguish and horror, that I lost all appetite to my meat, and pined away till I was not able to go or stand; but lay roaring perpetually (like a lion that hath received a deadly wound) under the miserable torture of my mind.

Ver. 4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.] So heavy was the sense of thy displeasure, wherewith I was struck, that I could find no means to throw it off, either by business or diversions in the day; nor would it suffer me to take my rest in the night, but still pressed down my spirit, and scorched me so vehemently with its raging heat, that my body (which heretofore was fat and fresh) was consumed and parched like the grass of the earth in the midst of the driest summer.

Ver. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity hast thou not hid: I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.] But at last I thought myself of that remedy which I had too long neglected, and humbled myself before thee in a sorrowful confession of all my sins, both great and small: I laid open all those wounds which were so full of anguish, and acknowledged I deserved to be still far more miserable; I resolved I would never hereafter palliate or excuse my sins, but ingenuously charge myself home with them, and condemn myself before thee for them. And straightway thou (who sawest the sincerity of my repentance) was pleased to grant me a gracious pardon, and to release...
me from all my pain; though my guilt, which was the cause of it, was exceeding great.

Ver. 6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him.] Which should encourage every one that hath any sense of God, and of the blessedness of being in his favour, and the misery of lying under his displeasure, to apply himself speedily to him, by unfeigned repentance, as soon as ever he hath offended him: for that is the surest time of finding mercy with him, and the way of preventing those great calamities, which otherwise may overtake him, when the Lord sends a deluge of miseries, as he did in the days of Noah, upon the world of the ungodly.

Ver. 7. Thou art my biding-place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.] Then he may say, Thou, Lord, art my refuge, to whom I fly for safety; and I trust that thou wilt preserve me (though I have been a grievous sinner) from those distresses which surround me; and thereby give abundant cause to me, and all that are about me, to bless and praise thee for thy merciful deliverance of me.

Ver. 8. I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.] Hearken therefore unto me, whosoever thou art; who hast any care of thy salvation; and I will bestow some good advice upon thee, and direct thee into the wisest and safest course of life: trust thyself with me to be thy guide, and I, from my own experience, will give thee faithful counsel, and take care thou do not go amiss.

Ver. 9. Be ye not at the horse, or at the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.] God hath engendered you with reason, both to tell you what you ought to do, and to check you when you do not as you ought; and hath made you capable also of receiving good admonitions from others: do not therefore follow your own unbridled lusts and appetites, much less be refractory and untractable, when God would reduce you from the error of your ways; as if you were not men, but headstrong horses and mules, who can by no means be curbed, nor made to come near thee, that thou mayest manage them at thy pleasure.

Ver. 10. Many sorrow shall be to the wicked: but be that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.] Let such ungovernable, obdurate sinners, expect to be handled like those brutes, for they shall receive many and grievous strokes, which shall make their hearts to ache. But he that entirely commits himself to the Lord, to be ruled and disposed of according to his will, shall be not only secured by his good providence, but enriched with abundance of his blessings.

Ver. 11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.] And therefore, whatsoever your present troubles may be, let your heart be glad, O ye that are obediently led and governed by him: rejoice in the confidence you ought to have of his favour towards you: triumph in his loving-kindness, all ye that sincerely study to do his will; and shout for joy, as if you were already victorious over all your enemies.

PSALM XXXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.—It is not recorded by whom this psalm was composed, nor upon what occasion. But there is little question it was a pious meditation of David, (of whose spirit it savours,) and, as we may guess, upon occasion of some special benefit received from God, (though not particularly mentioned;) which makes him call it, ver. 3, a new song: (Of which see more, Psal. cxlix.) Wherein he desires all the faithful to join with him in joyful praises of the Lord; considering his excellent nature, and his admirable works, both of creation and providence; especially over good men, who piously trust in him, and expect all good from him; and therefore ought to think themselves blessed that they have relation to him.

Ver. 1. REJOICE in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.] Bless the Lord with joyful hearts, triumph in his praise, all ye that are just and good: for nothing is more becoming them that sincerely do the will of God, than to praise him, from whom they have received, and hope for so many benefits; and nothing is more desired, than to have your hearts perpetually filled with delightful thoughts of him.

Ver. 2. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings.] Exult, therefore, his glorious perfections in psalms and hymns, composed in praise of him: and let all the instruments of music accompany the voices, to express and excite your joy in him.

Ver. 3. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.] Let not the ancient songs of praise suffice you, but indite a new hymn, to testify your singular love and gratitude to him: employ your best skill to make the sweetest music; and sing as cheerfully as you are wont to do at your most solemn feasts.

Ver. 4. For the word of the Lord is right: and all his works are done in truth.] For the Lord hath graciously revealed his will unto you, and shewn you the right way, in which if you walk, you cannot miss of being happy: and whatsoever he doth, hath the same scope with what he saith; for in all that befalls you, he faithfully designs your good.

Ver. 5. He loveth righteousness and judgement: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.] Let this, therefore, be part of your song, The Lord governs the world with perfect justice and equity; these He loves, and in these He delights: his goodness and mercy also are so conspicuous, that we can look nowhere, but we see innumerable proofs of his bounty towards us, which spreads itself over the face of the whole earth.
Ver. 6. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. And who can doubt of the greatness of his power, when he beholdeth the spacious heavens, with the sun, moon, and all the stars, which are placed there like an army in excellent order; and considers, that all these he made with the same ease that we speak a word, only by commanding them to be?

Ver. 7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: be layeth up the depth in store-houses. Nay, the earth itself declaras how mighty he is: for when it lay covered with the waters, being far heavier than they, he commanded it to appear, (Gen. i. 9. 10.) and cutting a deep channel for them, he laid them up there as in cellars, where they swell and rise up in round heaps, higher than the shore, but cannot overflow the earth.

Ver. 8. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Let all mankind, therefore, in whatsoever part of the world they dwell, dread this Almighty Lord: let them not dare to disobey him, who thus tamed even the raging sea.

Ver. 9. For he spake, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast. For as then he did but signify his pleasure, and the thing was done, and remained fixed and firm according to his appointment; so, whatsoever he will have now to be done, (whether for a blessing on those that submit to him, or a punishment of the disobedient,) it shall certainly come to pass; and none can resist or alter his orders.

Ver. 10. The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. Let men lay their designs never so deep; let whole nations combine together, and in their gravest assemblies consult how to compass their ends; the Lord (such is his wisdom, as well as his power) easily disappoints them all, and makes the most like contrivances which oppose his will, to be in vain, and without success.

Ver. 11. The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Whereas, that which he resolves none can defeat, but shall certainly obtain its effect. One generation passes away, and another comes in its stead; but his purposes are still immovably the same, and can no more in future ages, than now, be overthrown.

Ver. 12. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance. Most happy, then, is that nation which worships this Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth: unspeakably happy are they who live under the care of so just, so good, so powerful, and wise a Being, and are so highly in his favour, that he hath chosen them (though all mankind be his) to be a peculiar people to himself; among whom, in a special manner, he will reside, and hath engaged himself, by a gracious covenant, to do them good.

Ver. 13. The LORD looketh from heaven; be beholdeth all the sons of men. How careful ought they to be to please him, and approve their very hearts unto him! For though he be in heaven, as the place of his most special and most glorious presence, yet there is not a man upon earth but he sees and observes him.

Ver. 14. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. They are all exposed to his view; and from hence he takes a strict and exact account, not only of all their open actions, but of their most secret designs and contrivances.

Ver. 15. He fashioneth their hearts alike: be considereth all their works. For they are every one of them, without exception, his creatures: and as he is equally the Former of them all, so he formed their souls, as well as their bodies; and, therefore, must needs see into their very hearts, and be perfectly acquainted with every one of their thoughts.

Ver. 16. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. And to him a king is no more than another man; but if he sees that he regards not his majesty, nor depends upon him, he will make him find, that it is not in the power of the greatest army he can raise to secure and defend him; nor shall the mightiest and most valiant man in that army be able to deliver so much as himself, though he hath a giant-like strength.

Ver. 17. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall be delivery any by his great strength. Though he should be mounted upon the stoutest horse, (which is a most warlike creature,) he will but deceive himself, if he rely either upon his courage, or his strength, or his agility, or his swiftness, for preservation.

Ver. 18. Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy. It is the Lord only from whom comes salvation; and he hath regard to none but those that fear to offend his majesty, and, placing their confidence and hope in his love, more than all human force, look up to him for safety. Over such he will watch with a very careful providence;

Ver. 19. To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. To rescue them when they are in danger by the sword or the plague, and to supply their necessities in time of scarcity and dearth.

Ver. 20. Our soul waiteth for the LORD; be our help and our shield. What shall we do, therefore, in all straits, but desire him to take care of us? for this is our peculiar privilege, that we may confidently expect and wait for his seasonable relief, who is our only helper and defender.

Ver. 21. For our heart shall rejoice in him; because we have trusted in his holy name. For we may be sure he will not fail our expectations, but at last fill our hearts with joy, as a reward of the pious trust we have reposed in him, whose unsplotted purity and faithfulness shall be ever famed.

Ver. 22. Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee. O Lord, thou seest we depend upon thee alone, and have placed all our hope, all our comfort and contentment, in thy care and good providence over us: let us prosper accordingly; deal with us according as we trust in thee, and
not in any strength, wisdom, or contrivance of our own.

**PSALM XXXIV.**

*A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and departed.*

The Argument.—The title tells us this psalm was penned by David, after the escape he made from Achish, king of Gath, (in which country all their kings were called by the common name of Abimelech, i.e. my father the king; as in Egypt anciently they were all called Pharaoh, and afterwards Polommy), who he was afraid would seize on him, when he heard it commonly reported that he was the person that killed Goliath, and pretended to the sovereignty over all those countries, (1 Sam. xxi. 11.) And therefore he put on the behaviour of a man beside himself, hoping, that when Achish saw this, he would despise him; and looking upon him as an useless man, that could do neither good nor harm, think fit to thrust him out of his court, where he had been entertained, and send him packing from thence. And accordingly it succeeded, (1 Sam. xxi. 14. 15.) But though he was preserved by this artifice, the deliverance notwithstanding is piously ascribed unto God's great mercy, who prospered the device: To whom therefore he would have all pious men commit themselves, and depend upon his favour in well-doing; which he declares is the sure course to be happy. The psalm is curiously composed, according to the number and order of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, in the beginning of every verse; which shews it was contrived when he reflected upon his escape, in some place of safety.

Ver. 1. *I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*] I will never forget how gracious the Lord hath been to me in this remarkable deliverance; but, whatsoever my condition be, will still have my mind and my mouth perpetually filled with his praise.  

Ver. 2. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.* This shall be my glory, in this I will think myself happy, that the Lord is with me, wheresoever I am, to guide and defend me; and I will let all those that humbly depend on him know what he hath done for me, that they may likewise joyfully hope for his mercy. 

Ver. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.*] Oh that they would all join with me in declaring the greatness of his goodness in this miraculous providence over me! Let them with the same devout affection extol him in all his glorious attributes, who hath given me such a deliverance, and them such hope in the greatest danger.  

Ver. 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*] I was sore afraid (1 Sam. xxi. 12.) when I found they had discovered me in the court of Achish who I was; and many a sad thought and dreadful apprehension began then to trouble my mind; but, committing myself to thee by hearty prayer, and desiring thee to be my guide and my protector, thou wast pleased presently to rid me of them, by inclining his heart to look upon me as I appeared, and to make no stricter inquiry after me. 

Ver. 5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed.*] From which all pious men should take courage in all their straits, and when their hearts are ready to sink, look up unto God; who will revive and comfort them, and never suffer them to be ashamed of the hope they repose in him.  

Ver. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*] Let them fix their eyes on me, and excite one another to a cheerful dependance on him, saying, Behold that man: he was in a miserably poor condition, destitute of all human help; but, commending himself to the Lord by earnest prayer, the Lord took care of him, and delivered him out of all his distresses.  

Ver. 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*] Why should we then despair of his mercy, who sends an invisible host (as appeared to Elisha) to guard those who fear nothing so much as to offend his majesty, and to preserve them as securely, as if they were surrounded with an invincible army, from all the assaults of their enemies?  

Ver. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*] Oh that men would not be so negligent, but seriously consider this, and make a trial, by steadfast fidelity to God in all their troubles, how gracious and kind he is! They shall soon find, that there is no man so happy as he that piously confides in him.  

Ver. 9. *O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him.*] Continue, therefore, O ye devout worshippers of the Lord! (whatev- er other men do), to fear nothing, but lest you should be false to him. Never betake yourselves to any sinful ways to provide for your safety, or to supply any of your necessities; but religiously observe his commands, and you shall never be reduced to such straits, as to be utterly destitute of what is needful for your preservation.  

Ver. 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*] The young lions, (an emblem of those that seek to enrich themselves by rapine or by injurious practices), who are most ravenous in their appetites, as well as swift to pursue, and bold to seize, and strong to tear in pieces their prey, are many times disappointed, and cannot meet with satisfaction to their hungry desires; but they that seek their food from the Lord in pious and honest ways, shall certainly be blessed with every thing that is good for them.  

Ver. 11. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*] Come hither then, all ye that are disposed to learn, and hearken to the instruction which, out of a most tender affection to
Psalm XXXIV.

Psalm XXXV.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—This psalm, we are sufficiently informed by the matter of it, was penned by David, when he was fiercely persecuted by Saul: Whose forces, which were unjustly raised against him, he beseeches the Lord to dissipate; and especially to stop the mouth of his false accusers, (such as Doeg, and the Ziphites), of whom he most heavily complains in the middle of the psalm, vowing to God that he would be ever mindful of the benefit, and never cease to give him thanks and praise for his loving-kindness, if he would be pleased to confound them, and deliver him.

There may seem to be here, as in other psalms, such horrid imprecations against his enemies, as do not become the mouth of a good man. But they must be considered as an appeal to God in a particular case, for justice against those whom no court on earth could or would punish: Which made it fit, he thought, to desire the divine majesty to execute the judgement he had enacted in his law against obstinate and incurable offenders, who else would escape the hand of justice; whereby also others would be hardened in their wickedness.

Besides, the words may be interpreted not as a prayer, but as a prediction; and rendered not, let them be, but they shall be, &c.

P. V. PLEAD my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; fight them that fight against me.] Take my part, O Lord, and maintain my cause, against those that contend with me, and have raised a war against me; for I am not able to defend myself, and have none else to appear for me.

V. 2. Take bold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.] Be thou my protector, and preserve me under the shield of thy almighty providence I oppose thyself unto them, and keep off all the assaults of my enemies.
Ver. 3. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Strike through them, as well as defend me; let them run upon the spear and the sword, if they continue to pursue me; and confirm my soul in this belief, that thou wilt at last deliver me from this persecution.

Ver. 4. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul; let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. Disappoint them [or, they shall be disappointed] of their hope, which they have to destroy me; and make them blush to see all their warlike preparation against me come to nothing: let them all be put to flight, and make a confused retreat with shame and dishonour, who design my ruin.

Ver. 5. Let them be as chaff before the wind; and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let them be dispersed [or, they shall be dispersed, and so of the rest] as the chaff, when it is blown about by a mighty wind; and let the invisible powers, which thou usest as ministers of thy displeasure, (especially when thy ministers on earth do not their duty), drive them forward, and thrust them on in that disorder.

Ver. 6. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them. Let them not know where they are in their flight, but wander, as men in the dark, up and down in slipperiness and dangerous ways; and there let the ministers of thy vengeance still pursue them, and press them on with restless fears, till they tumble headlong into destruction.

Ver. 7. For without cause have they bid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul. For though I have done them no wrong, nor given them any provocation, they hunt and pursue me as if I were some wild beast; and by treachery, as well as open force, endeavour to take away my life.

Ver. 8. Let destruction come upon him at unawares, and let his net that he hath bid, catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall. Let him, whose hatred hath armed so many against me, (and, when I suspected no danger, sought my ruin, 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11, xix. 10), meet with unexpected destruction: let him be caught in his own wiles, and according to the rules of thy righteous judgment, suffer that himself which he thought to do to me.

Ver. 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation. Then shall my soul conceive the highest joy in the love the Lord bears to me, and in his care over me: to him will I give thanks, as the author of my deliverance, and rejoice in what he hath done for me.

Ver. 12. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him; yea, the poor and the needy, from him that spoileth him. The joy shall spread all over me, and from the inmost sense of my heart, with all the power and strength I have, both of body and soul, I will burst forth in thy praise, and say, Lord, who is comparable to thee, in mercy, and wisdom, and power? who-rescuest the poor helpless man, in wonderful ways, from him whom he cannot resist; the man who is miserably in want, and hath none to relieve him, from him who by violence and oppression hath undone him.

Ver. 11. False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. For which they have no pretence at all, but what is founded on calumnies and lies, forged by men of no conscience; who have accused me of the highest crime, and laid to my charge such things as never entered into my mind, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9.

Ver. 12. They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul. And (which adds to the sharpness of my persecution) they are men whom I have obliged; who are so detestably ungrateful, as, for all the good I did them when I was in power, to make me no other requital, but to endeavour to deprive me of my life.

Ver. 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned unto my own bosom. Oh, how unlike is this to the kindness that I shewed to them in their troubles! When they were sick, for instance, I sympathized most heartily with them; and testified my unfeigned grief and sorrow for them, by putting on sackcloth; in which I humbled myself before God, with prayer and fasting, for their recovery: which I often repeated; and in such an affectionate manner poured out my soul to God on their behalf, in my most secret retirements, that I wished myself no better, than I desired God to do for them.

Ver. 14. Behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I boxed down bravely, as one that mourneth for his mother. I walked mournfully; and went to visit them with the same diligence as if I had been in danger to lose a friend or brother: I could not have looked more dejectedly, if I had bewailed the death of the dearest mother.

Ver. 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the objects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not. But these very men (such was their inhumanity) could not dissemble the joy they conceived, when the news was brought of any evil that befell me; but ran to tell one another, and assembled themselves together, that they might publicly testify how glad they were to hear it. The very scum of the people, who were so vile that I did not so much as know there were such men in the world, met together, by their example, to revile me; and there was no end of their reproaches.

Ver. 16. With hypocritical mockers in psalms: they gnashed upon me with their teeth. They joined themselves to the profane flatterers and trencher-buffoons; who, maintaining themselves by saying anything which they think will please their lords and masters, made me the subject of their abusive jests, ridiculous sayings and scoffs, in their table-talk; which they accompanied with such rage, as if they could have eaten me up.

Ver. 19. Lord! how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destruction, my darling from the lions.
Lord! thou seest all this, I know very well; but how long wilt thou bear with it, and be a spectator only? Be pleased at length to vindicate my innocence, and deliver me (who am desolate, and have none to relieve me, but thee alone) from those that have already despoiled me of my goods and good name; and now seek, like so many rapacious lions, to devour me, and take away my life.

Ver. 18. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation; I will praise thee among many people. I will ever preserve a grateful remembrance of it, if thou wilt vouchsafe this mercy to me; it shall be acknowledged with the most hearty thanks before all thy people, as soon as thou shalt restore me to thy tabernacle; in the most frequent assemblies, when the whole nation meets at their solemn feasts, I will celebrate thy power and goodness with my praises.

Ver. 19. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me; neither let them wink with the eye, that hate me without a cause. Let not those, therefore, that unjustly persecute me, have the pleasure of getting any advantage of me; let them no longer make signs one to another with their eyes and their heads, as if they had done their business, and should satisfy their causeless hatred of me.

Ver. 20. For they speak not peace, but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land. For they are men of a turbulent spirit, that give not their sovereign peaceable counsels, but devise false stories, to incense him against those that would gladly serve God quietly under his government, without doing the least harm to any body.

Ver. 21. Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aba, aba, our eye hath seen it. Nor are they content to do this secretly; but now they bawl against me with open mouth, and boldly accuse me as a traitor, rejoicing at any colour they can meet withal for their calumnies; and saying, So, so, we have found him out; his reasonable practices are discovered; we ourselves are eye-witnesses of it.

Ver. 22. This thou hast seen, O Lord, keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me. But thou knowest me better than they, O Lord; to whom I appeal as a witness of the wrong they do me; beseeching thee to declare my innocence, by affording me thy help, and delivering me from their hands, now that they hope to seize on me.

Ver. 23. Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgement; even unto my cause, my God, and my Lord. Thou hast seemed hitherto to neglect me, though I have so often made my appeal to thee; but I beseech thee at length, O my God and my Lord, who art the only judge that can give me relief, the only sovereign that can protect an unjust subject, to take cognizance of my cause, and pass sentence on me according to my doings.

Ver. 24. Judge me, O Lord, my God, according to thy righteousness, and let them rejoice over me. I desire only that thou wilt do me right; and not that thou shouldst, in favour of me, forbear to condemn and punish me, if I be guilty of what they accuse me. Deal with me according to thy unspotted justice, O Lord, (whom the fear of none can overawe); my God, who art a judge whom none can corrupt; and then I know they shall never have the better of me.

Ver. 25. Let them not say in their heart, Ab, s; would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Prevent so great a mischief, O Lord, lest they should applaud themselves in their wickedness. Let them have no occasion to think within themselves they shall prevail; saying to their souls, So, now all goes well; cheer up, we shall have our desires: much less let them prevail so far, that they should triumph in my ruin, and say, We have obtained our end, we have utterly destroyed him.

Ver. 26. Let them be ashamed, and brought to confusion together, that rejoice at mine hurt; let them be shamed with shame and dishonour, that magnify themselves against me. Let them all be shamefully disappointed; and as they have combined together insolently to deside and mock me, so let them who rejoice at my present forlorn condition look upon one another with amazement and confusion. Let them not only be put to the blush, but perfectly confounded, and never be able to lift up their heads again, who proudly trample me, and seek to raise themselves upon my ruin.

Ver. 27. Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause; yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. And thereby fill all their hearts with joy, and their mouths with the voice of triumph, who, believing my innocence, have wished well to me; and let them see me so victorious, that this may be their perpetual song, The Lord be exalted with the highest praises, who favoured his servant David so much, that he delivered him out of all his troubles, and settled him in peace and prosperity.

Ver. 28. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long. As for my tongue, that sure shall never rest; but be declaring thy justice, and goodness, and fidelity to me: on which I shall ever think, and be giving thee the praise which is due unto them perpetually.

Psalm XXXVI.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord.

The Argument.—This Psalm, composed by David, and delivered by him to the chief master of music in the tabernacle, seems to have been penned, as the forerunner and many others were, during the persecution he suffered from Saul. It is hard to say what part of that time it peculiarly belongs. The most probable opinion is, that it hath respect to the beginning of it: when Saul had a jealousy of him, and a hatred to him; but hid it secretly in his heart, and counterfeited friendship to him, and desire of his alliance, (as you read 1 Sam. xviii.) and yet could not carry the matter so cunningly, and so wholly suppress and conceal his in...
tentions to destroy him, but that they broke out in some fits, (as you find there, ver. 11, and in the next chapter, ver. 10); and by the very preference he gave him, made it plainly appear he designed his ruin. This treachery David here describes, (without naming Saul, to whom he preserved a due reverence); and opposes thereto the fidelity and goodness of God, who rules the whole world, and takes care of beasts as well as men; and therefore would not, he hoped, desert him, nor any else that depend on him, and are his faithful servants; as he, in a special manner, professed himself, and was obliged to be.

Ver. 1. The transgression of the wicked saith within in my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.] The wicked may use many arts to disguise and cloak his evil intentions; but his actions, directly contrary to all the laws of humanity, as well as the law of God, discover what he is, and make me resolve not to trust him; because, without all doubt, he hath no regard to God, nor will be restrained by the fear of him from doing me still more mischief.

Ver. 2. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.] Though he flatter and soothe up himself in his own conceit, imagining he carries things so cunningly and smoothly, that none can accuse him; yet at length his iniquity shall be found out, and make him odious to all the world.

Ver. 3. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.] When he pretends great kindness to me, and professes I am dear to him, his meaning is to do me mischief, and to cheat and ensnare me into danger. He was once a better man, and better affected towards me; but now his passions have so blinded his judgement, and perverted his will, that he knows not what belongs to justice and equity, much less to goodness and charity.

Ver. 4. He deviseth mischief upon his bed, he setteth himself in a way that is not good: he abhorreth not evil.] For whatsoever he may say in public of his affection to me, when he is retired, he is contriving how to ruin me. He muses of nothing else when he lies down to sleep, and when he awakes; and is not transported merely by a sudden fit of jealousy and anger against me, but hath set himself (with an obstinate resolution to persist in it) in a course so void of all piety, justice, or charity, that there is no wickedness, though never so abominable, at which he sticks, to compass his design to destroy me.

Ver. 5. Thy mercy (O Lord) is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.] My comfort is, that his hatred and falsehood cannot be so great, but thy goodness and loving-kindness, O Lord, and thy faithfulness to thy word, are infinitely greater: on these I rely, which I know will not desecrate me, being no less conspicuous and constant (as well as unmeasurable) than the heavens.

Ver. 6. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgements are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.] Thy justice also, in the administrations of all affairs, appears as visibly, and is as unmoveable, as the highest mountains, which the greatest power on earth cannot shake, nor make to bend to their inclinations. The deepest plots they can lay are shallow, and easily disappointed by them, whose orders and decrees shall be executed and brought to pass, by ways and means that we cannot fathom; and therefore I will trust in thee, O Lord, whose careful providence extends not only to men, but to beasts also, which have no sense of their.

Ver. 7. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.] For if thou hast such care of their well-being, O Lord, thy loving-kindness, sure, and tender mercy, is incomparably greater to those that know thee, and depend upon thee. It is impossible to express the value of it; and to know how rich, how safe and secure they are, who in all troubles and dangers can confide in thee for thy powerful protection.

Ver. 8. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the favour of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.] They shall not only be well contented in that condition wherein they are, but have abundant satisfaction in thy love to them, and at length bring the sacrifice of thanksgiving, for thy merciful preservation of them, and feast with thee in thy house; where thou shalt pour into them the sweetest joys, and give them an earnest of the greatest plenty of all divine blessings, that shall continually flow in upon them.

Ver. 9. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.] For thou art the spring from whence all our happiness comes, which thou art able to communicate for ever: and if thou wilt be favourable to us, nothing shall hinder our joy; but we shall think ourselves happy in the most disconsolate condition.

Ver. 10. O continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness unto the upright in heart.] Vouchsafe then, O most gracious God! to extend thy loving-kindness (which is so precious that it excels all worldly things) not only unto me, but unto all that obediently acknowledge their dependence on thee: never withdraw thy favour from them, but perform thy promises to thy faithful servants, and defend them from all the mischievous devices of their enemies to destroy them.

Ver. 11. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the heel of the wicked remove me.] Make me an example of it; and, whatsoever is secretly designed and plotted against me, let not my proud enemy prevail, and tread me under his feet; let not all the power of the wicked that may join with him be able to subvert me.

Ver. 12. There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.] In this attempt I am confident they shall fail; I plainly see them baffled in this wicked design. It is as certain as if I already beheld it with my eyes, that where they thought to overthrow me, they shall fall
Psalm XXXVII

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—In this psalm (which is composed so artificially, that the order of the letters of the alphabet is observed, in the first letter of every other verse) David seems to intend to prevent the scandal which some might take when they saw the wicked in prosperity, and the godly under affliction, (as they did sometimes); quite contrary to the law, which promised all good things to those that kept it, and threatened all evil to those that broke it. He bids them be patient and stay a while; and they should see both verified. For the prosperity of the wicked shall be short; (as the over and over again bids them consider); and the just, if they would but wait a while, should see themselves not only delivered out of trouble, but made very flourishing. And therefore he advises, in the first place, that no man by any means suffer himself to be tempted, by the splendid condition of the wicked, to imitate them in their ungodly course; but to stick close to the principles of piety and virtue, trusting in God, and committing himself to him, who will give great satisfaction to such honest men in what they have at present, though never so little; and at last put them in possession of all that their hearts can desire. And to preserve themselves in this pious temper; he shews nothing could be more available that meekness and humility, (which procures us, as Theodoret here notes, abundance of good things); and to reflect on the lamentable end of the proud and haughty, who take unjust courses, (as was apparent in what befell Saul and Abulom), and such like persons, which sufficiently admonishes all men to bear their present troubles decently and well; and not to envy the prosperous successes of the wicked, nor to call them blessed, but rather account them unhappy and miserable.

The son of Syrach seems to have summed up this psalm in those few words, Ecclus. i. 23. &c. "A patient man will bear for a time, and afterwards joy shall spring up unto him. For the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and faith and meekness are his delight."

Ver. 1. FRET not thyself because of evil-doers; neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. Let it not vex thee to see the evil-doers in great prosperity; nor be provoked thereby either to accuse God's providence, or to think the worse of virtue; or to imitate them in their wickedness, or to wish thyself to be what they are.

Ver. 2. For they shall be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. For this prosperity, which thou art apt to look upon with admiration, envy, or anger, is so far from lasting always, that it is but of short continuance: they shall be cut down on a sudden, as the grass is by the hand of the mower, when it is most flourishing; or they shall fade away as the green herb doth, which in a little time withers, and of itself fails to decay.

Ver. 3. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. If thou wouldst have a firm and stable happiness, confide in God, and not in riches, shouldst thou have them in the greatest abundance, doing all the good that thou art able in that condition wherein his providence hath placed thee; so shalt thou be settled in the good land God hath given us, (when the wicked are cut off from it), and shalt enjoy securely all those blessings which he, according to his faithful promise, will provide for thee.

Ver. 4. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Be not discouraged, therefore, nor too much dejected, if thou art for the present afflicted; but rest contented with what thou hast; or rather, solace thyself in the Lord, and take a greater delight in his promises than the wicked can do in their present possessions; and, commending thyself unto him by constant prayer, be confident he will answer thee according to thy heart's desire.

Ver. 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. When thou hast any difficult business in hand, and art doubtful of the success; or when thou knowest not what course to take, for the accomplishing of thy honest designs; leave all to the Lord, and trust to him in pious and upright courses, that he will direct and assist thee, and bring things to a good issue.

Ver. 6. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noon-day. And if thou shouldst be accused as a man of evil designs, let not that trouble thee neither; for though thy name be obscured for a time by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds; yet as that scattereth them all at last, so shall thy integrity appear, and shine as bright as the sun at noon-day.

Ver. 7. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. And in the mean time, rest satisfied in this, that the Lord knows thy innocency; and do not murmur and complain if he do not presently vindicate it; but think it becomes thee to wait upon him, with humble submission to his will, and to stay as long as he pleases. And be sure thou beest not so impatient, as to be irritated by the thriving wickedness of the ungodly, and the strange success they have in their dishonest contrivances to do as they do; and to follow them in their calamities, fraud, injustice, and oppression, or any such like courses, whereby they craftily compass all their designs.

Ver. 8. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. If thou perceivest thy indignation begin to arise, to see such vile people so successful, suppress it presently; let it not vex-
and afflict thee, much less boil up to wrath and furious displeasure; or if on a sudden thou art surprised with such a passion, take care, however, that it proceed no further; and by no means be so incensed (I must repeat that caution, it is so weighty) as to follow their example in evil-doing.

Ver. 9. For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. [For how prosperous soever it may prove in the beginning, the end, assuredly, shall be lamentable. And let these evil-doers expect also to meet with an unmitigated, and to be cut off by the hand of justice, in a remarkable manner, from the land of the living; when they that follow my advice, and wait patiently till the Lord will do them right, shall possess those good things that he hath promised, in this land which he hath given them for their inheritance.

Ver. 10. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. [And do not think he says too long before he doth it; but if that thought come into thy mind, resolve to expect yet a while longer; and still believe that, after a very short time, the wicked, who seem to stand so fast, shall be utterly destroyed. When thou hast made a strict search after him, thou shalt find nothing of him remaining in the place where thou sawest him so flourishing.

Ver. 11. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. [Whereas they that meekly submit to their present afflictions, and patiently wait upon God till he be pleased to relieve them, shall be settled at last in their possessions, and lead a most pleasant life, in the greatest plenty of all manner of good things; in the enjoyment of which nothing shall disturb them.

Ver. 12. The wicked plotteth against the just; and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. [The wicked, indeed, hope to hinder this; being so furiously enraged at the just, that he is always contriving some mischief against him.

Ver. 13. The Lord shall laugh at him, for he thinketh that his day is coming. [But all his plots and crafty devices are ridiculous in the eyes of the Lord, who sees the day of his ruin approaching; which will inevitably seize on him, before his designs can take effect.

Ver. 14. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and bent their bow to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as he of upright conversation. [He hath numerous partakers, indeed, who have added open force to their secret practices, and armed themselves in a warlike manner for the just man's utter destruction; which they hope may be the more easily compassed, because he is destitute of human help, and will not take any crooked ways for his own preservation.

Ver. 15. The sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bones shall be broken. [But all these endeavours also shall prove in vain; and which is more, they shall not only miss their aim, but their sword, as we say, shall cut their own throat; and the evil they intended against the just shall fall upon themselves.

Ver. 16. A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. [And as there is more satisfaction in the little pittance a righteous man hath, than in all the abundance which the greatest potentates have gotten by extortion, oppression, and violence; so that small power he hath shall be of more force to protect and preserve him, than all the multitudes which attend upon those violent men to guard them.

Ver. 17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken; but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. [For the Lord is against the wicked; and, be their power never so great, which they have to oppress and destroy the righteous, he will break it in pieces; but good men will he support, be they never so weak; and both maintain them in what they enjoy, and increase their stock, notwithstanding all that their enemies can do against them.

Ver. 18. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever. [He may seem to neglect them; but there is no day passes wherein he doth not take care of them, and exercise a most gracious providence over them; observing not only all their afflictions, but their patience under them, which shall be rewarded with the blessings he hath promised to them, and to their children after them.

Ver. 19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time; and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. [In calamitous times, when God punishes the world by war or pestilence, they shall not be ashamed of the hope they have placed in God, that he will preserve them; when a famine comes, and pinches others, they shall be sure to have enough.

Ver. 20. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be at the fat of lambs, they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. [But the wicked shall perish in those evil days; for the Lord looks upon them as his enemies, who, when they grow rich and great, are but fattened up as beasts for the slaughter, and on a sudden melt away, as fast as the fat of lambs, that is burnt upon the altar: just so shall the divine vengeance seize on them, when they are in the fullness of their prosperity; and, like that fat, they shall vanish into smoke, and come to nothing.

Ver. 21. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. [You see a man now perhaps grow rich by wicked arts; but he shall in time be reduced to such straits as shall put him to double shame; first of borrowing, and then of not being able to pay at his day; when the righteous shall be so far from borrowing of any, that he shall be able to lend; nay, to exercise mercy, and give freely to him that needeth.

Ver. 22. For such as be blessed of him, shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him, shall be cut off. [For upon these God hath entailed a blessing; by his gracious promises, (which shall certainly be fulfilled,) that they and theirs shall enjoy the good things of the land, and against the other he hath denounced a
Psal. XXXVII.

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Ver. 23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.] Let a man but take care that his ways be pleasing to the Lord, by doing what he approves, and he will prosper him in all his undertakings, and guide his counsels and actions so, that he shall meet with good success.

Ver. 24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.] Or if he fall sometime of his end, he shall not be undone; the Lord still supports him by his power, that he be not discouraged; and relieves him by his good providence, that he be not utterly ruined.

Ver. 25. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.] I say nothing but what I can confirm by my own long observation; when I was young I began to take notice of it, and I continued so to do, till now that I am grown old: and I cannot remember that in all my life I ever saw a truly pious, just, and charitable man, left destitute of necessary things, or his children after him reduced to such poverty, that they were constrained to beg from door to door.

Ver. 26. He is ever merciful, and lendeth: and his seed is blessed.] No, he rather hath not only enough to supply his own wants, but to spare also for the relief of others; to whom he freely gives, or at least lends; and is so unwarried in these acts of charity, that God rewards it with blessings upon his posterity.

Ver. 27. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.] Take my advice, therefore, if thou wouldst be happy; never do any evil, though it be to gain the greatest advantage this world can afford, but constantly employ thyself in good works, especially in works of mercy; though thereby thou mayest seem to impoverish thyself for the present, be assured this is the way to live a long and prosperous life in great tranquillity and peace.

Ver. 28. For the LORDloveth judgement, and forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved for ever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.] For the Lord loveth that which is just and right, and upon that account will not forsake those that are merciful, but be very merciful to them, and continue his mercy to their children after them, when the posterity of injurious and hard-hearted men shall be destroyed.

Ver. 29. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.] Such wretches may flourish for a time; but they shall be settled and fixed in the land of promise, and leave it as an inheritance to those that succeed them, are only (as I have often said) the godly, just, and merciful men.

Ver. 30. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom; and his tongue talketh of judgement.] Who do good not only to men's bodies, but to their souls also; imparting to them (especially to their own children) such precepts of virtuous wisdom, as teach them how to behave themselves aright in every action of their life, and naturally tend to make them prosperous.

Ver. 31. The law of his God is in his heart: none of his steps shall slide.] As appears by this righteous man himself, who, making the law of God (which he hath continually before his eyes) the rule of his life, proceeds steadily to the obtaining of his end, and happily finishes his course without falling into those misciefs, into which wickedness leads those who have no regard unto that rule.

Ver. 32. The wicked waiteth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.] His greatest danger is from such lawless men, who (as I have said before) watch for an opportunity, and leave no means unattempted, (though it be by falsehood and treachery), not only to give him trouble and disturbance, but to take away his life.

Ver. 33. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.] But the Lord will not let them have power to do what they design. He will rescue him from their violence. Or, if they seek to undo him, in a form of law, by false accusations before the public judges, he will find means to clear his innocency, and reverse even the sentence they have pronounced against him.

Ver. 34. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt inherit it.] Therefore, if I should study never so long, I can give a good man no better advice than I did at first: Hope in God, (when any of these troubles happen), and patiently wait for his mercy, in a steadfast observance of all his commands. Be not moved by any misciefs that men can threaten, to go out of that way into which thou art directed by God's laws, but believe that he will at last, if thou perseverest in it, advance thee to the possession of all the blessings it promiseth; and thou shalt see those that thought to depress thee, utterly destroyed.

Ver. 35. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree.] There want not public examples of this in our own days. For I myself have seen the wicked (such as Saul, Doeg, and Ahithophel) in such power, that he was in no fear that any body could hurt him, but, quite contrary, struck terror into all: his offspring was numerous, his possessions large, his revenue exceeding great; being like a tree never yet transplanted, that hath taken root, and sucked abundance of the earth, and spreads juice out of its branches every way.

Ver. 36. Yet be not thou afraid of their terror, neither be thou dismayed.] Yet be not afraid of their terror, and so be not lifted up so as to disdain them; nor be thou dismayed, that they may do more mischief to thee than thou art able to do to them.

Ver. 37. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.] Do you mark, then, and make it your own observance, as I have made it mine, and you will find there is this great difference between him that makes the laws of God, the rule of his life, and those that transgress...
them; that though they may meet with some troubles for a time, yet if they do not make him forsake his integrity, nor in any thing swerve from his duty, he shall in the issue be very prosperous and happy.

Ver. 98. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the other shall be utterly destroyed; none of them shall escape by any of their cunning tricks and devices, for shall all alike perish; though for the present they may thrive in their wickedness, yet in the conclusion they shall be cut off, both root and branch.

Ver. 99. But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD; he is their strength in the time of trouble. For the Lord, whom none can resist, undertakes to be the defender, deliverer, and benefactor of just and good men; they may solely depend on him for power and strength to support and protect them, whenever they fall into any distress.

Ver. 40. And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him. He will not fail to help them during their troubles, and at last to deliver them out of them; the wicked shall not be able to hinder it, but he will deliver them from all their secret plots, or open attempts to destroy them; he will therefore deliver them, because they entirely rely on him for safety, and will not take any other course but such as he allows, to save themselves from danger.

PSALM XXXVIII.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

The Argument.—This psalm was composed by David, either during his affliction, to desire God graciously to remember him, (as the title of it is,) and send him deliverance; or afterwards, to put himself in remembrance of the means he made when he was in that sad condition, and how earnest he then was with God, to pardon all the sins which had brought him into it, and to release him out of it; and what hope and confidence he then had in God; which might encourage him and all others to place the like humble trust in his goodness for the time to come.

What the affliction was, it is not so certain as it may seem at first sight. It is generally thought he was sick, and that of some noisome, ulcerous disease, as, in the beginning of the psalm, several expressions, if they be taken literally, plainly enough denote. But he presently falling into a doleful complaint of the malignity of his enemies, and the coldness of his friends' affection towards him, as it is thought not improperly by others, that he describes: the cruel condition he was in, (under the persecution of Saul,) by the languishing of a sick man under some dangerous disease. And thus Theodoret understands it; only he supposes that he reflects upon the disastrous things he suffered after he came to the crown, by the murder of his son Amnon, the rebellion of Absalom, the falseness of Ahitophel, the abusive reproaches of Shimei, and all the other afflictions mentioned in his history, which were sent by God upon him for the cure of his sins. And this sense we must follow, or else say, he was at the very same time sick of a grievous disease, when he laboured under one of those persecutions. And since the psalm will be of larger use, if we so interpret it, I shall follow that conjecture; so I call it, because we do not read of any sickness David had, nor are we certain what the particular sin was which he bewails in so sad a manner, that it hath made this be called one of the penitential psalms, beginning just as the first of them doth, Psalm vi.

Ver. 1. O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. O Lord, I am sorely afflicted, and it is but just I should be. Yet let me prevail, with thee for so much mercy, as not to proceed to any further severity; or if thou dost, yet still to mitigate it with some favour, that I may not suffer in the utmost extremity.

Ver. 2. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand preserveth me sore. For beside the trouble which my enemies give me without the gains I already endure in my body are exceeding sharp, and touch me to the very quick: thou hast inflicted on me a heavy punishment, which presses me down to the ground.

Ver. 3. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger: neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. There is no part of my body but feels the sad effects of thy displeasure, which my sins have so provoked, that I am in perpetual pain, without any intermission.

Ver. 4. For mine iniquities have gone over my head: as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. They have brought a great number of evils upon me, which like a deluge have overwhelmed me, and lie upon me as an intolerable burden, under which I am ready to sink, unless thou support me.

Ver. 5. My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness. I am full of ulcers, and they are full of putrid matter, which grows noisome and offensive to me; as a just reward of my folly, whereby to satisfy my unreasonable desires. I have inconsiderately offended thee, (2 Sam. xiv. 2. 3. 4.)

Ver. 6. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly: I go mourning all the day long. I am not able to go upright, being bowed crooked; beyond measure; the posture of a mourner, who goes, or rather creeps softly, and bowed down, is mine continually.

Ver. 7. For my limbs are part with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. Fie the boils break out in the parts about my joints, and though there be so many of them, that one would think all the ill humours were run thicker, yet in the rest of my body, as I said before, there is no part but is out of order.

Ver. 8. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disgustfulness of my heart. I am exceedingly weak, and worn away with pain and grief;
wherewith my heart is so perpetually tormented, that I roar, rather than sigh, and groan and cry under the apparent anguish of it.

Ver. 9. **LORD, all my desire is before thee: and my groaning is not hid from thee.** But why do I complain in this manner, and make such a particular enumeration of my sufferings? thou, Lord, understandest what I want, and what I would have: though I should say never a word, all my miseries, and the sighs they have cost me, are not unknown to thee.

Ver. 10. **My heart panteth, my strength faileth me:** as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. Thou seest the great agitation of my mind, which wanders up and down in restless thought, but all to no purpose; for my strength hath forsaken me; the light of my eyes is so weak, that I can scarce make any use of them.

Ver. 11. **My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore:** and my kinmen stand afar off. And if I could, I should see none of those whom one would expect, in such a condition, to come and comfort me, a Sam. xv. 31. For I am deserted by those who professed great love to me; yes, they with whom I contracted a friendship and intimate familiarity, neglect me; and such whom nature hath inclined to pity and relieve me, keep at a distance; and give me no assistance in my affliction.

Ver. 12. They also that seek after my life, lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt, speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. Meanwhile my enemies are very busy, and employ all their ability to find a way how to make an end of this miserable life of mine: they discourse of nothing else, but what mischief they may do me; and what they cannot do by force, they are continually consorting how to compass by fraud and deceit.

Ver. 13. **But I, as a deaf man, heard not:** and I was as a dumb man, that opened not his mouth. I waited not information how they calumniated me; but was so oppressed with the weight of my other afflictions, and of those sins which have brought them upon me, that I took no notice of it; but lay as if I were deaf, and heard not what they said: as dumb, and could not make an answer.

Ver. 14. **Then was I as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproves.** I was as silent, I say, as if I knew nothing of their false accusations, or as if I were not able to confute them.

Ver. 15. **For in thee, O LORD, do I hope:** thou wilt bear, O LORD my God. For, notwithstanding all my sins, and thy sore displeasure which I feel against them, I have a good hope in thee, O Lord, that thou wilt avenge my cause. I leave them, therefore, to thee, O Lord, who art the righteous Judge; and as thou hast in justice afflicted me, so wilt thou, I doubt not, make them know that they have wrongfully oppressed me.

Ver. 16. **For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me:** when my feet slip: they magnify themselves against me. I still conclude with myself, that as bad as I am, and as slow as thou hast laid me, thou wilt not think fit to let them insult over me, and brag that they have got the better of me.

Ver. 17. **For I am ready to halt,** and my sorrow is continually before me. As they are in danger now to do; for I am so weak every way, that I am ready to fall; and have nothing but a sad prospect of ruin before mine eyes.

Ver. 18. **For I will declare mine iniquity:** I will be sorry for my sin. I know, and confess, that I have deserved it by my iniquity: which, when I consider, (and nothing else), I have reason to fear the worst that they can do unto me.

Ver. 19. **But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong:** and they that hate me wrongfully, are multiplied. And what cannot they do, who, while I lie in this weak and miserable condition, are flourishing and prosperous, strong, and mighty; and by false rumours make me still more odious to the multitude, and increase their forces against me?

Ver. 20. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that is good. With which are joined even those whom I have highly obliged; who do not think it bad enough not to be my friends, but are become my adversaries: for no other reason that I can find, but because I make a conscience of what I do, and faithfully study, andearnestly seek, the good of all this kingdom.

Ver. 21. **Forsake me not,** O LORD: O my God, be not far from me. I humbly, therefore, beseech myself to thee, O Lord, beseeching thee, that thou wilt not desert me as they have done. O my God, who hast been very gracious to me on sundry occasions, and seem that I still depend entirely upon thee, let not my sins make thee to abandon me.

Ver. 22. **Make haste to help me,** O LORD my salvation. But rather let my misery, and the imminent danger I am in, move thee speedily to relieve me. Deter no longer, O Lord, whose property it is to deliver those who have none to help them, and trust in thee alone, as I now do, for safety and preservation.

**PSALM XXXIX.**

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

**The Argument.** It is thought by some, that this psalm (which David delivered afterwards to Jeduthun, an excellent musician, and governor of the music in the tabernacle, &c. 1 Chron. xxxi.) was made upon the same occasion with the foregoing. And so in part it was, for, though there is little reason to think that he was still sick when he composed it, as they imagine); yet his enemies, it is manifest, pressed him sorely. And the consideration of the flourishing condition wherein they were, though evil, wicked, whilst he, a pious servant of God, was lamentably afflicted, put him into some commotion, notwithstanding his resolution to the contrary, till the thoughts of the shortness of man's life, and consequently of his sufferings, and how
easy it was for God to cut off his enemies, composed his spirit again, and made him patient and contented with his present condition.

So that this psalm seems to be rather of the same kind with the 37th and 38th. Only there David gives counsel to others, after God had delivered him from many persecutions, to be patient by his example; but here he himself puts the counsel in practice, (perhaps when the rebellion of Absalom renewed his trouble, which is the opinion of Theodoret); though he shews it is very difficult on some occasions, not to be very much disturbed at wicked men's prosperity, and good men's affliction, especially when it comes to be a man's own case under some grievous calamity.

Ver. 1. I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. It is a very great provocation to anger and discontent, to see the wicked still continue prosperous, and to hear how they abuse and calumniate me. But I resolved with myself not to be vexed at it, but rather to take care, as I have exhorted others, (Psal. xiii.), to be more indifferent in all my actions, and especially to watch over my tongue, and to lay the strictest restraint upon it, that no unbecoming complaint, no irreverent discourse about God's providence, nor, no any intemperate speeches against my adversaries, should proceed out of my mouth, 2 Sam. xvi. 8. 13.

Ver. 2. I was dumb with silence; I held my peace, even from good, and my sorrow was stirred. And this purpose I kept for some time so steadfastly, that I spake not a word, either good or bad, but remained like a dumb man in perfect silence; being so afraid of breaking out into impatient language against my unjust accusers, that I would not so much as vindicate myself, and clear my innocence. Though the truth is, while I thus denied all vent to my inward grief, (which I could not quite suppress), it was the more increased.

Ver. 3. My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue. For though I said nothing, yet I could not chuse but have many sad thoughts of the injuries I suffered; and musing long upon them, and upon the impunity of those that committed them, my sorrow grew so great at last, that it could no longer be pent up, but, burning like a fire with vehement heat in my breast, it broke forth into such expressions as these.

Ver. 4. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what is; that I may know how frail I am. Lord, I do not murmur nor repine at my sufferings; but that I may be able to bear them still patiently, make me sensible, I humbly beseech thee, how short this frail life is, and how soon it will have an end; that, duly considering this, I may be the less concerned about the miseries I endure, which will end together with it.

Ver. 5. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. And it is strange I should forget it, seeing it is so apparent thou hast circumscribed my days within a very narrow compass; and that, compared with thy eternal duration, they are but nothing. Besides, there is no man so strong, so firm, but he may die in an instant, (as my enemies may do), in the height of his prosperity, and most flourishing condition; and for he never so settled, as he thinks, in his greatness, it is certain he is mere emptiness and vanity.

Ver. 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: be heazteth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. What an imaginary thing, then, is the life of man! who promises himself mighty matters, but hath no more than the image and shadow of them in his brain; for on a sudden he himself vanishes, and is gone; yet for these he makes a lamentable bustle and stir, whereby, if he get any thing, alas! it is to very small purpose; for after all the pains he hath taken to heap up wealth, he hath no certainty whether he shall live to enjoy it; no, nor whether his son or his kindred (for perhaps a stranger, nay, his enemy) shall possess it.

Ver. 7. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. And therefore I am resolved, O Lord, with thy gracious assistance, not to trouble myself so much as I have done about these vain and uncertain things: for what is there even in a kingdom, that I should desire and expect it impatiently, which may so soon be lost again? I have done with all these empty hopes, and content myself with this alone; that thou wilt not forsake me, but be my gracious God, and chuse what is best for me.

Ver. 8. Deliver me from all my transgressions, make not me the reproach of the foolish. And, first, I hope thou wilt forgive me all those sins, which have justly deserved these heavy punishments; and then shew me so much favour, that wicked men, who are so foolish, that they understand not thy meaning in these afflictions which have befallen me, but imagine thou hast cast me off, may not make me their laughing-stock, nor mock at my reliance on thee, and patient submission to thee.

Ver. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth: because thou didst it. For I did not complain, but silently endured their insolent and scurrilous language, together with all my other sufferings; reverencing thy justice, by whom every thing is ordered, (2 Sam. xvi. 10); and this they interpreted to be yielding the cause, and justifying their proceedings against me.

Ver. 10. Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. May it please thee, therefore, who hast inflicted sore judgments on me, at length to remove them; put a speedy end to them, (if thou intendest to confute their foolish reproaches); because I cannot long subsist under such a burden, as hath already taken away all my strength from me.

Ver. 11. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah. And indeed, who is able to contend with thee, if thou wilt.
Psalm XL.

not graciously remit the punishment we deserve; for when thou chastest man, (in any of those ways whereby thou hast threatened to rebuke his extravagance;) his wealth, his power, and whatsoever else he hath that is valuable, moulders away like a garment that is moth-eaten; and it is no wonder, for the greatest of men, as well as the meanest, are but mere vanity.

Ver. 12. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*

But let even this move thee, O Lord, to grant my petition, which I make for pardon and release from this chastisement, because I am so frail (as all my forefathers were); and our time here is so very short, that I am more like a stranger and sojourner in this country, than an inhabitant, or lord of it, (as I lately thought myself;) therefore grant my earnest request; and when I say 'nothing' but diligently submit to thy correction, let my tears speak for me, and prevail with thee for some mercy.

Ver. 13. *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

Forbear me, I beseech thee, and do not proceed thus to afflict me; but repair the decays that are in my strength, and let the very few days I have to live be more peaceable; that free, from the disturbance my enemies give me, I may do thee some small service before I leave the world, and have nothing to do in it any more.

Psalm XL.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—A psalm of David, directed to the chief master of music, for the use of the tabernacle. Wherein he thankfully acknowledges God's goodness to him, in delivering him from some great danger, (it is not certain what; but may be applied either to the distress he was reduced into by his enemies, as we read in the psalm foregoing; or to the sickness God had inflicted on him; or to both, mentioned, Psal. xxxviii.) And then declares his resolution to serve God faithfully and cheerfully, in such words as may be better applied to Christ's readiness to do the will of God, though it were by dying for us.

But it seems this deliverance was not so complete, but that still he was infested with many enemies; and therefore, in the latter part of this psalm, he commends himself still to God's merciful providence; beseeching him to finish what he had begun, by continuing to be his deliverer.

Ver. 1. *Waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* It is good, I see, to persevere in prayer, and with constancy and patience to wait upon the Lord; for though he hath made me expect very long, yet at last he hath been graciously pleased to condescend unto me, and to grant my desire.

Ver. 2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.* For when I was in the greatest distress, and no more able to help myself, than a man who is fallen into a very deep pit, where he sticks fast also in the stiffest clay; he not only delivered me from that present danger, which was very dreadful, but brought me into a place of safety, and withal confirmed me in it, that I might not fall again into the like extremity;

Ver. 3. *And he put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.* But have liberty in quiet and peace to meditate his praises, and to indite a new song in honour of our God; who hath to all other benefits added this late wonderful preservation: which shall excite many others, when they duly consider it, to join together with me in his worship and service; and patiently to depend upon him, and hope in his mercy, as I have done.

Ver. 4. *Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust; and respecteth not the proud, not such as turn aside to lies.* And happy is that man, notwithstanding all the troubles he may endure, who reposes his confidence in the Lord alone; and neither envies the success of insolent and deceitful men, nor is tempted thereby to imitate them in their pride and in their perfidiousness.

Ver. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.* Many are the benefits, O mighty Lord, and my most gracious God, which thou hast bestowed upon such faithful servants; for whom thou hast done wonders, and still designest great and many kindnesses, which cannot be comprehended, much less expressed by our weakness. Whencesoever I attempt to make thee some acknowledgment for such inestimable favours, I find it is beyond my power, so much as to tell the number of them.

Ver. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.* There are no peace-offerings, (whereby we are wont to testify our thankfulness for thy mercies), nor any oblations which attend upon them, that are worthy to be presented unto thee; or are a fit expression of our gratitude for so many and so great benefits as I have received from thee. A ready and constant obedience to thee in thy faithful service, is far more acceptable; to which as I am by nature tied, and thou hast by thy mercies strongly engaged me, so I do freely consent, and cheerfully devote myself, (as the Lord Christ hereafter will do entirely): if I should add all other kinds of sacrifice, whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, I see of how little value they are of thee.

Ver. 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.* And therefore, when I thought what thou mightest justly expect from me, after this great deliverance, immediately I said, (as if I had
heard thee calling upon me, to do thee some extraordinary service: Behold I come to make an offering of myself unto thee, (as the Lord Christ will do, even of his very blood). For so the book of the law requires; (wherein this sacrifice of Christ is more plainly described).

Ver. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yes, thy law is within my heart.] That I should do what is pleasing and acceptable to thee, O my God, (as the Lord Christ will do more perfectly), though it be never so difficult and troublesome to me: and so I will most gladly, with all my soul; for there thy law is written, and not only in my book, (Deut. xvi. 18, 19).)

Ver. 9. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.] And as an earnest of it, I have already proclaimed to all thy people, in their full assemblies, what great obligations I have unto thee: behold, O Lord, I appeal to thee, who cannot be deceived, how forward I have been to offer thee, on all occasions, this public sacrifice of praise, for all thy benefits bestowed upon me.

Ver. 10. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.] I have not thought it sufficient to meditate alone by myself upon thy loving-kindness, which hath mightily affected my heart; but I have made known to others how faithfully thou hast performed thy promises in the wonderful deliverance thou hast lately given me: This singular kindness and fidelity I have openly published to all thy people, in their most frequent assemblies, at the solemn festivals.

Ver. 11. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.] Be thou pleased, O mighty Lord, as readily, openly, and abundantly, to express thy tender mercy towards me: let that loving-kindness and faithfulness, which I have so much magnified, be ever seen in my continued preservation and deliverance from all future dangers.

Ver. 12. For innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me.] For I am not yet so completely happy, but I see mine enemies are so busy in contriving more mischief against me, that dangers without number surround me. And indeed my sins are so many, that it is but just I should feel the fruit of them in multiplied punishments, which have suddenly seized on me, and grown to such a number, that as I may sooner tell how many hairs I have on my head, than how many troubles I suffer, so am I ready to faint under the burden of them.

Ver. 13. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.] Till I think of thee, O Lord, who, I hope, will be still pleased to deliver me; yes, thou hast been so very good to me, that I take the humble boldness to beseech thee, O Lord, to deliver me speedily.

Ver. 14. Let them be ashamed and confounded together, that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward, and put to shame, that wish me evil.] Let them all be made most shamefully disappointed, that resolutely endeavour to take away my life; defeat them, and put them to flight, with open disgrace, whoever they be that study to do me any mischief.

Ver. 15. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame, that say unto me, Aba, aba.] Let utter desolation be the recompense of all their shameful deeds, whereby they thought to have exposed me to shame, when they insulted over me, and made a mock, both of my affliction, and of my truth in thee.

Ver. 16. Let all those that seek after thee rejoice and be glad in thee, let such as love thy salvation, say continually, The Lord be magnified.] But let all those that depend on thee alone, and seek for safety by no other means but those which thou allowest, have perpetual cause to rejoice in thee exceedingly; let such as expect and delight to see thee appear for the deliverance of thy people, never cease to say, The Lord be praised; let the glory of his wonderful works be everywhere where published and extolled.

Ver. 17. But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying. O my God.] As for myself, this is my never-failing comfort, that though I am stript of all, and quite destitute of human help, yet the Lord takes care of me, and consults my good: and it is sufficient that thou, Lord, art my God, on whom I depend for relief and deliverance; O delay not to send it to me.

**PSALM XLII.**

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

**THE ARGUMENT.—** Though some will have this psalm to have been composed by David, and delivered to the chief master of music, only upon occasion of that great strait, in which he was brought by the rebellion of his son Absalom; yet it is the more common opinion, and seems more probable, that he had been also lately very sick. And then finding, by sad experience, what an aggravation it was of his affliction, to see his enemies so barbarous as to rejoice at it, and wish his death; nay, his friends, especially some one particular friend, (who was a type of this traitor Judas), not only to take no pity on him, but prove false and perfidious to him; he, in the first place, highly commends and blesses that temper of mind, which inclines men to be pitiful and compassionate to those that are sick, and cherishes such persons that they shall feel the happy fruits of it; and then complains most heavily of their inhumanity, who insulted over him in his calamity, and with reproachful words, and vile calumnies, exasperated the grief of his mind. On which he hoped God, who loves merciful men,
would take compassion, and put him into a condition to chastise their insolence.

Ver. 1. **Blessed is he that considereth the poor;** the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. [Happy is that tender-hearted man, who, prudently considering it may be his own condition, doth not despise, but visit the sick, especially such as are poor, and takes care to comfort and relieve them. Tho God will require his kindess, and send him the like succour and relief when he falls into any danger.

Ver. 2. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed on the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. [In sickly times, or other public calamity, the Lord will preserve his life; and more than that, will make him live in prosperity upon the earth; which when the envy and hatred of his enemies endeavour to destroy, the Lord will disappoint them, and not suffer them to have their will on him.

Ver. 3. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. [Or if any sickness (as no man can expect always to be in health) bring him into such a languishing condition, that he cannot help himself, the Lord will support him, and give him patience; then thou wilt remarkably requite his officious care about the sick, (whose bed he was wont to turn and smooth for his softer reposse,) by giving him ease and refreshment during his weakness, till thou change it again into health and strength.

Ver. 4. I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. [In confidence of this, I myself, when I was sick, addressed my prayer unto the Lord, and implored his mercy, saying, Take pity upon me, (who have not been negligent in this duty, Psal. xxix. 13. 14; and do not deal in strict justice with me; but though I have been a grievous offender, and do deserve a heavier stroke, graciously pardon all that I have done amiss, and restore me again to my former health.

Ver. 5. Mine enemies speak evil of me: when shall be die, and his name perish? [I am the fitter object of thy compassion, because my enemies have none at all; but to the affliction which thou hast laid upon me, add their defamations, and impute more evils to befall me: for nothing will satisfy them but my death; which they impatiently long to see, and hope to bury my reputation together with me.

Ver. 6. And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself, when he goeth abroad, be telleth it. [If any of them indeed come to see me, he seems to be sorry for me, and concedes with me; but there is nothing but fraud and deceit under these fair words, which he bestows upon me: for all the time that he either counsels or comforts me, or makes any promises of what he will do for me, he is hatching some mischief in his heart against me, from what he can gather out of my words, or actions, or disease; and as soon as he is out of my doors, he spreads it abroad among his companions, to increase their hatred, or their contempt of me.

Ver. 7. All that hate me whisper together against me; against me do they devise my hurt: [Which discovers itself in their private assemblies, where they secretly confer together how to undo me; they have no other business there, but to contrive what use they shall make of his information for my ruin.

Ver. 8. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now be lieth, be shall rise up no more. [This is the time, say they; for now God hath met with him, and punished his heinous sins with a grievous disease; which sticks as fast to him as our reports, (which the people believe, and he will never be able to confute,) and hath laid him so low, that he cannot possibly recover.

Ver. 9. Tea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. [And, which is still more afflictive, the man with whom I never had any quarrel, but rather used as a friend, he in whom I reposed the greatest confidence, (2 Sam. xvi. 23,) who was one of my family, and was maintained by my service, hath in a brutish manner, not only forsaken me, but (like as horse that kicks at him that feeds him) contemptuously lifted up himself against me.

Ver. 10. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. [But all this doth not discourage me when I think of thy mercy, O Lord; which as I most humbly implore, so thou art wont to shew to those that are merciful. I am not so low, (ver. 8,) but, contrary to their expectation, thou art able to raise me up, and restore me to my throne, from whence they have driven me; and then I shall punish them, according as my office, and their wickedness requires.

Ver. 11. By this I know that thou savourrest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. [And truly I take this to be an argument of thy kind intentions towards me, that hitherto thou hast marvelously preserved me, both in this sickness, and in all other dangers; so that my enemy hath missed the triumph he hoped for in my ruin.

Ver. 12. And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever. [The triumph belongs to me, who thankfully acknowledge, that thou hast supported me, and defended my innocence: thou hast taken a special care of me, that I hope I shall serve thee all my days, without interruption, in that office thou hast committed to me.

Ver. 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and amen. [For which, and all other his benefits, let the great Lord of all the world, the God of Israel, whom he hath chosen for his own peculiar people, be most heartily blessed and praised: let him be blessed throughout all generations, as long as the world shall last, and unto all eternity: let him be blessed; let him be blessed, (again and again I repeat it with most fervent affection); and let all his people concur with me in these desires, and with one consent accompany me with their joyful acclamations, saying, The Lord be praised, the Lord be praised.
THE SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALM XLII.

To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah.

THE ARGUMENT.—Here begins the second of the five books of Psalms, according to the Hebrew division. All those of the former book, except four, have the name of David prefixed to them, as the author of them; and so were put together by him that collected them, into one volume. But in this second book, the first part of it consists of psalms intituled to the sons of Korah; as several learned men understand the inscriptions: who imagine that some holy men among them composed these psalms in the time of the captivity. But I shall follow our English translation, and take this psalm (as the LXX. and the vulgar Latin do) to be directed to the sons of Korah; to be set or sung by them, under the chief master of music in the tabernacle. And then there is little question to be made, but David indited this, and some of the psalms, which have this title: as it is certain he did most, if not all, of those that are contained in the latter part of this second book, from Psal. I. to the end of the 72d. And this present psalm, with that which follows, seems to have been penned, either when he was under the persecution of Saul, or (which is more probable) when he was driven again from the house of God by Absalom. Which sad condition he bewails, with a great mixture of grief for his banishment from those sweet enjoyments he had there; and of hope to be restored to them again.

This psalm is the second of those thirteen which are called Maschil, (see Psal. xxxii.), by some here taken to be an epithet of the master of music, who taught or instructed the sons of Korah very skilfully.

Ver. 1. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.] The hunted deer doth not long more earnestly, and cry more loudly for the brooks of water, to quench her thirst, than my soul doth for the happy enjoyment of thee, my God, in the public solemnities, from whence I am driven by those that seek my life.

Ver. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? It is not my throne of which I am so desirous, as the place where thou my God dwellest; who art the eternal spring of life and comfort, which no other God can communicate. O how vehemently doth my soul long for thee; and how tedious doth the time of my banishment from thee seem! O when shall I see that happy day, wherein I shall be restored to the liberty again of presenting myself before thee in thy tabernacle?

Ver. 3. My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? There I was wont with great delight to feast with thee; but now my appetite fails me to my daily food: instead of which my only satisfaction is in tears; to which I have wholly abandoned myself. For what can be more grievous than to hear them say, I am abandoned by thee? (2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8.), and to be continually reproached and derided with this taunting question, What is become of thy God, of whose favour thou wast wont to boast?

Ver. 4. When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day.] O what a sad thought is it, to call to mind those pleasant days which are past and gone! particularly when I brought the ark to thy dwelling-place, with the joyful shout of all thy people; who, in a pompous manner, accompanied me with their praises and thanksgivings at that festival solemnity. (1 Chron. xv. 25, 8.) It even breaks my heart with grief to remember this thing, and all the other sacred times, when before this banishment we met together at thy house, to worship and acknowledge thee for all thy benefits.

Ver. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.] And why may I not expect the like again? It is true, my soul, these are very sad and melancholy reflections; but must I therefore be utterly dejected? Is there any cause that anxiety of mind should make thee so tumultuous, as if all hopes of this felicity were lost for ever? Trust in God, and patiently wait upon him; for the time will come when I shall go to his house, and praise him still for his favour towards me, in delivering me from this as well as all my former afflictions.

Ver. 6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.] O my most gracious God, thou seest how I chide myself for it; and yet I am overcome with grief, and should be quite oppressed, while I am forced to hide myself in this wilderness beyond Jordan, (2 Sam. xvi. 22, 29,) and wander up and down in these solitary mountains, far distant from thy tabernacle; did I not comfort myself with the thoughts of thy goodness and power, whom I have served there.

Ver. 7. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-sprouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.] I am fallen into a bottomless depth of miseries; which follow one upon another, as if the
Psalm XLIII.

The Argument.—This psalm, in all probability, was composed by the same author with the former, and accordingly the LXX. expressly ascribe it to David; and upon the same occasion, when he was driven by Absalom (who drew the whole kingdom into his conspiracy, 2 Sam. xv. 10. 13. &c.) from the house of God, which he loved more than his own palace. Thither, therefore, he desires to be restored, and expresses his hope of it, in the very same words that he did in the psalm foregoing.

Ver. 1. **JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.** O God, the supreme Judge of the whole world, I appeal to thee, in this contest between me and a seditious people, who, void of piety and humanity, are risen up in rebellion against me; beseeching thee to vindicate my innocence, and defend me from their violence. O deliver me from this deceitful man, who pretended devotion, when he went to make an insurrection, (2 Sam. xv. 10.) deliver me from the crafty counsel which Ahithophel gives him; and from the open force, whereby he seeks injuriously to take away my life, 2 Sam. xvii. 1. 2.

Ver. 2. **For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?** O how cutteth are their reproaches! how deeply do they wound my soul! It is like a stab to the very heart, to hear them say in their daily jeers, What is become of thy God, in whom thou trustedst? why dost he make no more haste to send thee deliverance?

Ver. 3. **Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.** But it better becomes me to expostulate with myself, than with thy majesty. Therefore I ask myself again, O my soul! why art thou thus sad? why do these things so miserably torment thee, and disturb thy quiet? since there is hope in God, that I am not utterly banished from his presence, but shall return to his house again to praise him. On whom I fix my eyes as my only Saviour, (for hitherto he hath been my most gracious God,) who will pull off my mourning apparel, and make joy and gladness take place of sorrow and sadness in my countenance.

Psalm XLIII.

Ver. 4. **Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.** Then will I faithfully perform my promises unto thee; and the first thing I do, shall be to go to thy altar, with sacrifices of thanksgiving to thee, the author of my joy and triumph; which shall not cease with that public service, but when I am alone, entertaining myself with my harp, I will praise thy mercy, and faithfulness, and power, O God, my righteous Judge; who graciously protectest the innocent, and defendest those that cannot right themselves.

Ver. 5. **Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.** I doubt not of it, and therefore be no longer dejected, O my soul! Why shouldst thou give thyself any farther disquiet, and trouble thyself with tumultuous thoughts? Hope in God to see better days; and believe the enemy hath not so blocked up the way to his tabernacle, but God will open it.
again, and give me liberty to go and sing praises there unto him; from whom alone, as I expect deliverance, so he (who hath always been my most gracious God) will turn my mourning into joy, and let my countenance be decked no more.

PSALM XLIV.

To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah, Maschil.

THE ARGUMENT.—This is the third of those psalms called Maschil, (see Psal. xxxii.), and the second of those directed to the sons of Korah, (see Psal. xlii.), but doth not seem to have been composed by David, as the two foregoing were: for in his days they were not oppressed by foreign enemies, as the psalmist here complains in the name of the whole church, they were to such a degree, that some of them were made slaves, others killed, and all of them became a reproach. Yet I do not think it was composed in the captivity of Babylon, (much less in the persecution by Antiochus, as Theodoret thinks, when these inspirations were ceased); but before that time, though long after David's days, while their kingdom was as yet standing, and they had some forces remaining, though God did not bless them with success, ver. 9. And if we will fix upon any particular time, and not content ourselves-to know in general that it was penned when the whole nation was in great distress, I can find none so likely as the days of Hezekiah, who was a pious reformer of that church, and had restored the divine service, according to the law of Moses, and the ordinances of David, (a Chron. xxix. 3, 4, 12, 25.) and taken care the priests and Levites-should not only do their duty, but have their tythes paid them punctually, &c. (2 Chron. xxx. xxxi.), and yet notwithstanding was invaded by the king of Assyria; who did not merely make some inroads upon them, and carry away a great many people, (as had been done before his time, 2 Chron. xxxix. 9; ) but took all the fenced cities, and came before Jerusalem with a great army, 2 Kings, xviii. 13, 17, 18, xxxvi. 1. In this strait that good king (or some other divine person, 2 Chr. xxix. 25.) intided this psalm; wherein he remember what God had done for their ancestors; and considering he was still their king, thought they might have hoped for the like victories, of which they could not but still boast and glory. But alas! it fell out quite contrary; for when they expected his help, he delivered them up into their enemies hands, and that when they were the true worshippers of him, and for his sake were slain all the day long. The consideration of which, he hoped, would move God at length to take compassion upon them, and arise for their deliverance.

This is the best account I can give of this psalm, which I shall follow in my paraphrase. And we need not scruple, to think there were psalmist in Hezekiah's days; for after that, we find this gift remained with the prophets. For instance, it is visible in Habakkuk; who composed a prayer after the manner of David's psalms, as we read in the last chapter of his prophecy; where there are several words which are to be met withal now where, but in the book of Psalms; such as, Sioncloth, Selja, and Nogimoth.

Ver. 1. We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what they did in their days, in the times of old.] We have been certainly informed, O Lord, by our fathers, and we believe what they have told us, not only concerning the wondering works thou didst in their times, but in the ages long before them; as our ancestors that lived in those days have recorded.

Ver. 2. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.] How thou didst by thy power expel the seven nations out of the land of Canaan, and settle in their stead thy people Israel, whom thou didst transplant thither from among the Egyptians; upon whom thou inflictedst the sorest plagues, till they were forced themselves to thrust them out, Exod. vi. 1, xii. 33.

Ver. 3. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hast a favour unto them.] This is to be ascribed to thee alone, and not to their strength and valour; such a speedy conquest was not gained by the force of arms, but by thy mighty power and glorious presence; which thou didst pleased to afford them, not because they had obligated thee by their meritorious services, (for they were a murmuring and refractory people), but merely out of thy love and good will towards them.

Ver. 4. Thou art my king, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.] And thou, O God, who didst such astonishing things for them, art still the very same Almighty Being; whom I honour as my sovereign, my governor and protector; and humbly beseech thee that thou wilt now in this sore distress vouchsafe to deliver (for alas! it is not in my power, though thou canst as easily as speak a word deliver) the prosperity of those for whom thou hast so great a favour.

Ver. 5. Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.] If thou wouldst but appear for us, the most powerful enemies should not be able to stand before us; but (as thy servant Moses foretold, Deut. xxxiii. 17. O fulfit that gracious promise!) we should overthrow and trample under foot all that oppose us.

Ver. 6. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall I use my sword against me.] It is then alone must do it, as thou didst for our forefathers, when thou broughtest them into Canaan: For I have not the least confidence (as they slander me, 2 Kings, xviii. 20.) in my arms; no hope to be delivered from this dreadful invasion by any forces that I can raise.
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Ver. 7. But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.] But by thee, O Lord, of whose goodness we ourselves, as well as those before us, have had experience; for thou hast often rescued us from our enemies, and shamefully disappointed those whose hatred armed them against us.

Ver. 8. In God we boast all the day long; and praise thy name for ever. Selah. In this we glory, and make our boast continually, that we have such a King, such a mighty Saviour and deliverer, who hath wrought wonderful things for us, and for our forefathers: this is our only comfort and security, which give us hope that we shall praise thee for relieving us in this distress, and that all posterity shall praise thy power and goodness.

Ver. 9. But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. Yet for the present thou art so far from being our defender, that thou hast exposed us to the will of our enemies: the shame which was wont to fall on them, (v. 7.),(v. 7.) is now our portion; and thou hast withdrawn that gracious presence (v. 3.) wherewith thou wast wont to conduct and accompany our armies.

Ver. 10. Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.] We have lost the courage wherewith thou didst formerly inspire us, and cannot defend our cities and fortresses; but instead of pushing down our enemies, (v. 5.) are forced to flee before them, and shamefully leave our camp, to be a spoil to them that hate us.

Ver. 11. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat: and hast scattered us among the heathen.] And some of us they kill in the pursuit without any mercy, like sheep appointed for the shambles: others they carry captive, and disperse them among strange people.

Ver. 12. Thou seest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.] Where, being disowned by thee, they are become so contemptible, that they are sold as the vilest slaves, who are nothing worth: thou hast parted with them very easily, and their lords look upon them as unprofitable wretches; by whose sale they do not enrich themselves, but only seek to be rid of an useless burden.

Ver. 13. Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours; a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.] This hath made us that remain to be so cheap-in the eyes of all our neighbours, who do not only despise, but reproach and vilify us; for we are grown ridiculous to them that are round about us, and they make a scoff of us.

Ver. 14. Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen; a shaking of the head among the people.] Thou hast brought upon us the curse pronounced by thy servant Moses, (Deut. xxviii. 37.,) for we are become a by-word among the heathen: who, when they would express the wretchedness of any person, say, He is viler or more miserable than a Jew; and, when they say nothing, they signify, by the scornful motion of their heads, their contempt and derision of us.

Ver. 15. My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me:] I cannot open my eyes, but the tokens of our disgrace present themselves before me: which hath made me so ashamed, that, to hide it, I do not willingly shew my face.

Ver. 16. For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemedeth by reason of the enemy and envenometh] For I can hear nothing neither, but reproachful words against us, and blasphemous words against thee, (2 Kings, xix. 3. 23.,) from that insolent enemy, whose very countenance is full of disdain and scorn, and threatens further mischief to us.

Ver. 17. All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.] This great heap of calamities is fallen upon us, and certainly we have deserved them all: though this comfort is still remaining, that we are not so wicked as to be moved by all this to desert thee, and violate that covenant, whereby we are engaged to worship thee alone.

Ver. 18. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.] We adhere still to thy religion, though both it and we be thus wilified and persecuted, (2 Kings, xviii. 22.,) we have such an hearty affection to it, that we have not hitherto proved apostates from it:

Ver. 19. Though thou hast made us to be broken in all places, to be the sport of the Gentiles, and covered us with the shadow of death.] No, though thou hast so shattered and broken in pieces all our forces, that we are in the most dismal and forlorn condition, little short of utter destruction.

Ver. 20. If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god:] Thou knowest the truth of this: for if there have been so much as a design in our hearts to revolt from thee; or we have made prayers, when we spread out our hands towards heaven, unto any other god, whose worshippers we saw so prosperous;

Ver. 21. Shall not God search it out this? For be knowneth the secrets of the heart.] How is it possible for us to conceal it from thee? or how should we escape thy vengeance for it, who art privy to the most secret motions that are in our souls?

Ver. 22. Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.] And that which thou seest in secret, our sufferings testify openly to all others; for our constancy to thee exposes us to continual slaughters: we prefer a shameful death before prosperous impurity: and rather than sacrifice to any other god, choose to fall ourselves a sacrifice to thee.

Ver. 23. Awake; why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever.] And therefore we hope at last thou wilt take notice of our fidelity: and no longer seem to neglect those that have not deserted thee. Give us leave, O God, to beg this of thee most earnestly, and to ask why thou dost not send re-
lie to thy afflicted servants. Make no farther delay; but though for our sins we have been exposed to the cruel contempt of our enemies, (v. 9), own us now at length for thy people; and shew that we are not such objects as they account us.

Ver. 24. Wherefore bidest thou thy face? and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?] It is very grievous to us to think that they look upon us as deserted by thee; which provokes us to expostulate with thee, and to demand (in an humble manner) wherefore is it that thou givest us no countenance; nor expressest the least regard to our intolerable affliction, wherewith we are oppressed?

Ver. 25. For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth.] For the load of it is so great, that it hath sunk us into the most dejected condition; wherein we lie dismayed, as men without life and soul, having no strength at all to help ourselves.

Ver. 26. Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies sake.] Therefore do thou appear for our deliverance, now that we can neither do any thing for ourselves, nor deserve any thing of thee: let not thy goodness, which hath been so famished, suffer together with us; but, for the sake of that, which we and our fathers have so often experimented, rescue us from our miseries.

PSALM XLV.

To the chief musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil. A Song of Loves.

The Argument.—The foregoing psalm is not more sad and mournful, than this (as Theodoret observes) is joyful and comfortable; promising the most glorious things to them. The author of it is not named: but it was delivered, as the former, to the master of music, for the use of God's service in the tabernacle; to be sung upon Shoshannim (by which we may understand all those instruments that had six strings) by the sons of Korah, to the known tune of Maschil, (see psalm xxxii.) and being a song of Loves, as the title tells us, (alluding plainly to the name of Jedidiah, given to Solomon by Nathan the prophet, 2 Sam. xii. 25.), most interpreters conclude it was composed upon the occasion, at least, of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter; who, it is most probable, was a proselyte to the Jewish religion.

Some few, indeed, will not allow so much as this, that there is any respect to Solomon at all in this psalm; but only to Christ. And the truth is, many of the expressions in it are so magnificent, that they can but in a very poor and low sense be applied to Solomon and his bride; and some of them scarce at all. Though, on the contrary side, other expressions seem so plainly to belong to him, that they can no other way, but by allegory, be applied to our Saviour. Therefore, I believe that I ought not wholly to omit all respect to Solomon and his marriage in my paraphrase; though principally I shall direct the psalm to Christ; it being so apparent, that no Christian can deny it, that the mind of the prophet, while he was writing some part of this psalm, was carried quite beyond King Solomon, to the great King, the Lord Christ: Of at least he was guided to use words so high, that they proved too big for Solomon: and we must say, as our Saviour doth in another case, "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." And so the best of the Jewish interpreters acknowledge.

Ver. 1. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.] My heart is full of a festival-song, which I have meditated, and am ready to utter in praise of King Solomon, who is but a shadow of that great King which we expect: in honour of whom chiefly, I will recite what I have composed, with such fluency as shall equal the style of the most skilful writer.

Ver. 2. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.] Thou, O king, art lovely above all other persons, thy speech is most acceptable and persuasive; because the Lord loves thee, (2 Sam. xii. 24.), and hath therefore promised long blessings to thee; which yet do but faintly represent the truly eternal blessings, which he hath bestowed on that great King, who when he comes, it shall be said that he is in favour with God, as well as man, (Luke, ii. ult.), and speaks as never man spake, (John, vii. 46.), so that all wonder at the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth, (Luke, iv. 22.)

Ver. 3. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.] Put on thy royal ornaments, and the ensigns of thy power, O most mighty prince; and appear like thyself, in such splendour and majesty, as may serve for an emblem of that most illustrious power and sovereign authority, wherein the omnipotent Lord of all the world shall shew himself among men.

Ver. 4. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.] And may thy kingdom so prosper every way, in the planting all virtue among thy subjects, and terrifying thy enemies, that it may prove a lively type of the happy government of the Lord Christ: whose kingdom shall prevail over all, when he goes forth like a great conqueror, (Revel. xix. 11.), not to enslave men's persons, or to spoil them of their goods, but to settle the true faith among them, to make them humble and meek, just and charitable: and for the furtherance of this glorious work, thy mighty power, O Lord, shall instruct thee to do miraculous and amazing things, Luke, iv. 36. v. 26.

Ver. 5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.] Which shall make thy word pierce, like sharp arrows, into the hearts of all those that oppose thy royal authority; and make the nations of the earth (far more than shall obey King Solomon, though he should.
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reign over many kingdoms, 1 Kings, iv. 21.) humble themselves, and become subject to thee.
Ver. 6. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.] O great Lord, the God of King Solomon, and of all those that are called gods in heaven or earth, the Judge of the whole world, how weak and tottering are the thrones of all other princes in comparison with thine, which shall never be subverted! It is the glory of King Solomon, that God hath promised his kingdom shall continue many ages, 2 Sam. vii. 13; but thou shalt reign for ever and ever; and of thy kingdom there shall be no end, Luke, i. 33. Thy laws are so just and so good, thy government so equal and fit, that they shall be subject to no alteration.

Ver. 7. Thou Lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.] For thou thyself also inmutably lovest all righteousness and goodness, (from which other princes may swerve, and so bring their kingdoms to ruin, 1 Kings, ix. 4, 5.6.), and perfectly hatest all impiety and wickedness: for which cause God the Father hath highly exalted thee, O God, above all others whom he calls his sons; and conferred on thee such supereminent gifts, as make a joy among thy subjects far exceeding that by whose sound the very earth was rent, when Solomon was anointed king, and preferred above all his brethren, 1 Kings, i. 39. 40.

Ver. 8. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.] That, indeed, was a joyful day; and so is this, wherein thou dost appear with great gladness in thy wedding-garments, brought out of the stately wardrobes: the odour of which is so fragrant, as if they were made of the richest perfumes among us; and yet nothing so grateful as the knowledge of Christ, which shall be spread as a sweet odour in every place, when he goes to espouse a church unto himself, 2 Cor. ii. 14. 15. 16.

Ver. 9. Kings daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand stood the queen in gold of Ophir.] Thou wast most honourably attended by many princely virgins, the daughters of kings, (though far inferior in their descent to the true disciples of Christ, who are all born of God); and next to thyself was placed the royal bride, in a vesture of the purest gold, as an image of the church of Christ, which shall sit with him in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6. having the glory of God upon her, Rev. xxi. 9. 11.

Ver. 10. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.] O royal bride, understand and consider seriously the happiness to which thou art advanced, by being married to such a prince; and never think more of the religion of thy country in which thou wast born and bred; but become a true proselyte, and consent to the law of God, (as we ourselves and all the world must do to Christ, when he calls us to incline our ears to his heavenly doctrine; and not only renounce all our former rites, but father and mother, and all things else that are dearest to us, for his sake, Luke, xix. 26. Eph. v. 31. 32.)

Ver. 11. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.] So shall thou be most beautiful and amiable in the eyes of the King thy husband, (as Christ by that means shall present to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27.), who is now become thy Lord; and therefore see thou beest subject unto him, (as the church must be unto Christ, whom God will highly exalt, that at his name every knee shall be bound to bow, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord, Phil. ii. 9. 10.)

Ver. 12. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.] The people of Tyre, as rich and as proud as they are, shall come with their neighbouring countries, and bring thee presents; the most powerful among them shall make suit unto thee for thy friendship, (as the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into the church, Rev. xxi. 24.)

Ver. 13. The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.] For King Pharaoh's daughter, the wife of our prince, is no less adorned with all excellent qualities of mind, than her body is with rich attire, wherein she now appears in a splendid manner, (as the ornaments of those that are born of God in the Christian church shall not be so much the outward adorning of wearing of gold, as the hidden man of the heart, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. iii. 3. 4.)

Ver. 14. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work: the virgins her companions that follow shall be brought unto thee.] She shall be brought home unto the king with magnificent pomp, in embroidered raiment; and the virgins, her maids of honour, that attend upon her, shall come along with her, (as the church, being owned by Christ for his spouse in a solemn manner, and being pure and holy, Rev. xix. 7. 8. there shall be many chaste virgins among us, who shall make a part of it, and follow Christ whithersoever he goes, Rev. xiv. 1. 4.)

Ver. 15. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace.] They shall express their inward gladness by all the outward tokens of joy, as they go along in that pomp, and so shall enter into the royal palace; (a figure of the church, into which men shall enter with far greater joy, and say, Alleluia, let us rejoice and be glad, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Rev. xix. 6. 7. Acts, ii. 46.)

Ver. 16. Instead of thy fathers shall be the children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.] And may this be the happy fruit of this marriage, that instead of thy royal ancestors in Egypt, whom thou hast forsaken, thou mayest be the mother of children whom thou mayest make rulers in all the countries which are subject to King Solomon, 2 Kings, iv. 21. 24. As instead of the patriarchs of our descent, from whom we are apt to boast, shall be the twelve apostles and their successors, sitting upon thrones, and judging
the twelve tribes of Israel, Matth. xix. 28. by whose means the church shall bring forth children unto Christ, whom he shall make kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign upon the earth, Rev. v. 10.

Ver. 17. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.] By this very song I will make thy name to be mentioned with honour throughout all ages, who shall learn from hence to give thee thy deserved praises, as long as the world shall last; and much more to propagate the Christian name (prophesied of so long before) to the latest posterity, and celebrate their worth with perpetual praises, who forsook all to follow Christ, and rather chose to lose their life than quit his service, Jam. v. 11.

PSALM XLVII.

To the chief musician, for the sons of Korah. A song upon Alamoth.

THE ARGUMENT.—It is not known to what time this psalm belongs, (about which there are several conjectures), nor who was the author of it. I shall suppose it to have been made by David, or some of the sons of Korah, after those great victories which he won over several nations, mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 10. For any one may see that it is a pious triumph in God, after some remarkable deliverance from very powerful enemies; and there are none we can find in the historical books to whom it can more probably relate, than to those there recorded. Of which great victories it was very fit there should be some thankful monument left to posterity, whereby they might be encouraged to hope in God, and not suffer themselves to be dismayed at the sight of the most numerous armies that might be gathered against them, if they adhered faithfully to their duty. And therefore this psalm was delivered to the master of music, to be sung in the tabernacle upon Alamoth, of which mention is made, 1 Chron. xxv. 20. and is thought to be either some tune then in common use, or some kind of musical instrument unknown to us, in which young virgins, as some fancy, took a peculiar delight, and were wont to learn to play upon it; which they make the reason and original of its name.

Ver. 1. God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.] God is the most powerful protector, in whom we may safely confide; he inspires us with courage, and gives us strength to meet our enemies; we were in great danger, but found him exceeding ready to send us help, and give us a safe deliverance when we were sorely distressed.

Ver. 2. Therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.] For which cause we will never hereafter be dismayed, but steadfastly hope in God in the midst of the greatest tumults and dangerous com-
To the chief musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

The Argument.—This psalm is thought by some to have been composed by David, (though his name be not in the title), when he translated the ark (which was the token of the divine presence with them) either from Kirjath-jearim, with the most solemn pomp, and all sorts of music, 2 Sam. vi. 5, or from the house of Obed-Edom unto Mount Sion, ver. 14. 15. Others think it was composed by some of the sons of Korah, when the ark was again translated by Solomon, with the like rejoicing, (2 Chron. v. 2. 12. 13.) from Mount Sion to the house which he had built for it upon the neighbouring mountain. And there may be a third conjecture allowed, that it was made after some great victory which God had given them over their enemies; and sung as they followed the ark back to its dwelling-place, from whence it had been carried before them to the battle. There is no doubt but one or other of these triumphs gave occasion to it: and the ark being a figure of Christ, as that mountain was of the heavens, the translation or carrying back of the ark thither, may be looked upon as a figure of Christ's ascension (after he had dwelt here a while in a meaner place, and conquered death) unto the high and holy place, where he is now at God's right hand in the heavens. And with relation to this alone, the ancient fathers expound the psalm; which may easily be applied, in the mystical sense, unto that business.

Ver. 1. O Clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.] O be joyful, all ye people, who are now assembled at this festival; let your hearts overflow with joy, and express how exceeding glad they are, by clapping your hands, and lifting up your voices, and shouting after a triumphant manner, in honour of the great God, who dwells among us.

Ver. 2. For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.] For his majesty is most sublime, his dominion absolute, his power dreadful; being the sovereign Lord of the whole world, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Ver. 3. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.] By whom the people of these countries, though warlike and strong, were actually subdued; and other nations since have been made our subjects.

Ver. 4. He shall chase our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom he loved. Selah.] He who is the supream disposer of all things, hath of his mere good-will chosen this good land to be our inheritance, and therein chosen a place for his own dwelling; which is an honour wherein we excel all other people, and a most singular token of his love towards us.

Ver. 5. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.] God is gone up, by the special token of his presence, into that holy place, with shouts of joy and praise: the Lord is gone up in a triumphant pomp, with the sound of the trumpet, and all other instruments of music, 2 Sam. vi. 5. 15.

Ver. 6. Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.] Let us never cease to sing his praises, who hath chosen us to be his people; let it be our constant employment to praise our King, who hath subdued the nations to us: O sing praises to him, sing praises to him: it cannot be too often repeated, that he alone is to be praised.

Ver. 7. For God is the King of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding.] For our King is the sovereign of all the nations upon earth; sing ye praises, therefore, skilfully to his most excellent majesty: It is your wisdom to praise him in the best manner you are able, who alone is wise enough to govern all the world.

Ver. 8. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.] He hath made those heathens, who dwell in Sion, to feel his power, and submit themselves unto him, (2 Sam. v. 7.) And there he hath seated himself upon the ark of his presence, as on his holy throne:

Ver. 9. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God; he is greatly exalted.] Before which the heads of the tribes, with all the people that worship him, who promised to give this
country unto Abraham, are assembled together: at
their solemn feasts, without any fear of invasion
from their foreign neighbours: for God (when, to
attend his service, they have left their own houses un-
guarded) hath undertaken their protection, (Exod.
xxxvi. 23, 25;) and he is infinitely superior to all
other gods, which pretend to be the defenders of the
earth.

PSALM XLVIII.

A Song and Psalm, for the sons of Korah.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm seems to have been
composed after the repulse of some army which
invaded them, and intended to have destroyed Je-
rusalem. If all things else would agree, it might
not unfitly be applied to the destroying of Sennach-
errich the king of Assyria's army, which actually
begirt that city; but by a sudden pestilence, which
in one night killed a vast number, was forced to
quit the siege, and retreat with shame, 2 Kings,
xviii. 19. But the fourth verse of this psalm
speaks of a combination of kings, who had joined
their forces together upon this design: which makes
it most applicable, in my judgement, to that histo-
ry in 2 Chron. xx. where we read (ver. 1. 2. 10.)
that Moab, and Ammon, and they of Mount Seir,
came against Jehoshaphat, with an intention, I sup-
pose, to fall upon Jerusalem. And though Jeho-
saphat went out to oppose them, yet he acknowl-
dges, (ver. 12.), their multitude was so great,
that he had no power to resist them: but they
might do what they pleased with him. For he
knew not which way to turn himself; but only de-
pended upon God; who in a marvellous manner
dispersed them, as he told Jehoshaphat he would
do, without their striking one stroke against them.
For which gracious message, sent him by a prophet,
ver. 14. the Levites, and among others those de-
scended from Korah, immediately praised the Lord
beforehand, ver. 19. and after the victory gave
solemn thanks, before they left the field, in the
Valley of Blessing, ver. 26. And then returned
to Jerusalem with psalters, and harps, and trump-
ets, unto the house of the Lord, ver. 28. At
which time, it is probable, this psalm was sung,
and called a Song and Psalm; that is, a psalm of
triumph, or of great joy; composed perhaps by
some of the sons of Korah. But of a Song and
Psalm, see Psal. lxvii.

Ver. 1. GREAT is the LORD, and greatly to be
praised in the city of our God, in the
mountain of his holiness.] Great is the majesty and
the power of the Lord; who is therefore to be cele-
brated with the highest praises: and nowhere so
much as his own city, by the inhabitants of Jerusa-
lem, in that mountain which he hath long ago set a-
part for the place of his worship; and hath now so
marvellously defended.

Ver. 2. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole
earth, is Mount Zion; on the sides of the north, the city
of the great king.] And a beautiful place it is which
he hath chosen for his habitation, the very situation
of Mount Zion being most delightful, the pleasantest
in all the country: for it lies on the north side of Je-
rusalem, the city of the great King, the Lord of
heaven and earth:

Ver. 3. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.] Who
is the principal glory of that place, as that is
of the country: for Mount Zion is not so beautiful
for its situation, as for his divine presence in that
magnificent palace, which is built for him there; and
makes that city an impregnable fortress.

Ver. 4. For, to, the kings were assembled, they passed
by together.] For, behold a fresh instance of it; the
kings of several neighbouring countries entered into
confederacy to cast us out of off possession, (2
Chron. xx. 11.) and made a great progress in their
design; marching together from beyond the Dead
Sea, (ver. 2.), till they came nigh to Jerusalem,
(ver. 16. 20. 24.)

Ver. 5. They saw it, and so they marvelled, they were
troubled, and hasted away.] But then, they only had
a sight of it, and that was all: for a sudden amaze-
ment seized on them, and such a panic fear, that
they fell into confusion; and, taking one another for
enemies, were destroyed by the ambush, which one
nation laid for the other, (2 Chron. xx. 22.)

Ver. 6. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a
woman in travail.] There was nothing but terror and
shuddering to be seen throughout all the host; which
surprised them so suddenly, and cast them into so
great anguish, that it may be compared to the hasty
and violent pangs of a travelling woman;

Ver. 7. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an
east wind.] Or to the consternation and confusion
which the mariners are in, when a fleet of ships rich-
ly laden from Tarshish is broken in pieces by the fa-
rious blasts of the east wind, one against another.

* * * * * * *

* As a fleet of Jehoshaphat's was shortly after, (1 Chron.
xx. 37.)

Ver. 8. As we have heard, so have we seen, in the
city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God
will establish it for ever. Selah.] We have heard of
such things heretofore; which our fathers have re-
ported to us; but now our eyes see the wonderful
works of God; who told us by his prophet, that he
would save us from this great army which invaded
us, (2 Chron. xx. 14. 15. &c.) And we have seen
his word verified in this city; from whence God,
whose city it is, and who is the Lord of all the host
of heaven and earth, sent invisible powers to terrify
and disperse them, ver. 22.), and will, we hope, de-
defend and protect it from being subverted by the as-
saults of our enemies in future ages.

Ver. 9. We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O
God, in the midst of thy temple.] O God, we had no
confidence in our fortifications, or in our army; but
we assembled ourselves together in thy temple, to ask
help of thee, (2 Chron. xx. 3. 4. 5.) and, meditating
on thy wonted mercy to those that seek thee, we
quietly expected what thy loving-kindness would do
for us.
VER. 10. According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of righteousness.] And as thou art called, O God, by the name of the Lord of hosts, so thou hast demonstrated thyself, in the glorious victory thou hast given us, (2 Chron. xx. 15.), for which not we alone praise thee, but the most distant people, who hear the fame of it, shall acknowledge and magnify thy power, (ver. 29.), which thou hast abundantly declared in the just destruction of our enemies, and the gracious protection of us thy faithful servants.

VER. 11. Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.] Let the inhabitants of Jerusalem, then, which is the mother city, give an example of joy and thankfulness to all the rest of the cities and towns of Judah: and let them unanimously join together with the greatest gladness, to express how sensible they are of thy power and goodness, in this wonderful deliverance.

VER. 12. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.] Make a solemn procession, and go round about the city, blessing and praising God with thankful hearts; who hast preserved you from being begirt by the enemy: tell all the towers as you go along, and see if there be so much as one wanting, or the least hurt done to any of them.

VER. 13. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.] Observe the out-works, and attentively consider them; take a distinct survey of all the sumptuous buildings also; and mark how entire they are, and untouched by the enemies batteries, that you may keep a record of it, and preserve the memory of so great a wonder, for the benefit of succeeding generations.

VER. 14. For this God is our God for ever and ever; be will be our guide, even unto death.] For this is the God who alone can protect us, and will be our defender, if we depend upon him, for ever and ever: he will not content himself with having preserved us once; but be our conductor, and exercise a most tender providence over us, as a shepherd doth over his sheep, all the days of our life.

PSALM XLIX.

To the chief musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

The Argument.—The author of this psalm is not known; nor can we find whether there was any particular occasion of it. But whosoever composed it, (whether some of the sons of Korah, or any other), it is likely that he had in his eye the unreasonable thirst of mankind after riches, and their insolvency and haughtiness when they have acquired them; which, it is possible, was a great encouragement to some pious but poor people in those times. And therefore, after the example of David, (Psal. xxxvii. xxxix.), he indited this psalm, to check that vanity, by setting death before their eyes; the serious meditation of which, he knew, would both pull down the plumes of the proud and scornful, and preserve those upon whom they trampled, from being dejected at their prosperous impiety.

VER. 1. HEAR this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.] Listen to me, all ye people: in what part of the world soever you dwell; for that which I am going to deliver is of such common concernment, that it belongs to all countries, as much as any one upon the face of the earth.

VER. 2. Both low and high, rich and poor together.] Whether you be men of obscure birth, and meaner rank, or persons nobly descended, and in great authority; whether you abound in wealth or are of a poor estate, you are all alike concerned to attend to my instruction.

VER. 3. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.] Which is neither about trivial things, nor slightly considered, but about the most weighty matters, which my mind hath deeply pondered: I will enrich your souls with wisdom, which is better than all the worldly wealth you covet; and teach you how to direct all your actions aright unto that scope at which you aim of being happy.

VER. 4. I will incline mine ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the harp.] It is not vulgar instruction, but most excellent advice, which I have to give you; more to be desired than the skill of resolving the darkest riddles: to which I myself will diligently attend, while it is sung, as I play upon my harp.

VER. 5. Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my foes shall compass me about?] I intend not to neglect the counsel I give to others; and therefore shall ask myself the question I mean to answer: What cause is there that I should be troubled with fears and cares, and anxiety of mind, in calamitous times, when the iniquity of those that endeavour to suppliant me, hath surrounded me on all sides, and left me no way to escape them?

VER. 6. They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches:] They are confident of their strength and power is such, that none can resist them; and the high conceit they have of their vast treasures make them so proud, that they insult over others, and brag what they can do to ruin them.

VER. 7. None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:] Alas! poor men, their weakness is apparent; there is not a man among them, that by all the power he hath can find a means to save the dearest friend alive, when God calls for him: he alone can dispose of men's lives; and the richest of them hath not wealth enough to purchase a reprieve, when he pronounces the sentence of death upon them.

VER. 8. (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it costeth for ever;) That is a business too difficult and costly for him to redeem the life of a man; or to reprieve for a time his departure, whose soul is leaving his body: he must let that alone; for as long as the world lasts, it will be a vain endeavour.
Ver. 9. That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.] Let him attempt it, if he please, upon himself: can he prolong his own life, from time to time, so that it shall be perpetuated and never dissolved?

Ver. 10. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.] No such matter; the wisdom I speak of (ver. 3.) promises no exemption to the best of men; but they must die as well as others: and therefore, those wicked sorts, whose life differs little from that of beasts, may justly expect not merely to die, but to be destroyed and cut off like the beasts that perish. And then, what becomes of all their wealth, which they are forced to leave to others, perhaps to strangers?

Ver. 11. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.] They imagined indeed, and secretly pleased themselves in this fancy, that when they could stay no longer in the world, their godly houses, which they had built, should stand for ever, and the places of their abode continue in their family from age to age: though they could not be immortal themselves, yet they hoped their names, which they imposed upon their lands, should never die.

Ver. 12. Nevertheless, man being in honour, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.] But, alas! the thoughts of man are vain: for whatsoever esteem or reputation one of these worldlings gets here, it lasts not at all, but dies together with him; he is in this also like to his fellow-beasts, whom, when they are dead, nobody remembers.

Ver. 13. This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.] Thus their life concludes, as it was spent, in folly; (for they have no security that the names they impose on their lands shall last; or if they do, that men shall think of them; or if they should, what are they the better for it?) and yet so close doth this folly stick to mankind, that they that succeed in their possessions make no benefit of this observation, but are as very fools as themselves, and tread in the steps of those that went before them.

Ver. 14. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.] They go in droves to their graves, when death seizes on them; thither it drives them in the close of their days, just as the shepherd doth his sheep to the fold in the evening: And then the just, over whom they insulted, shall quickly trample upon, and triumph over them, (as they shall do much more when they awake out of the dust at the resurrection): All their power and splendour wherein they formerly appeared, though it seem as firm as a rock, shall moulder away; for the grave is its utmost bound, beyond which it cannot go.

Ver. 15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me. Selah.] And doubtless God will rescue me from that imminent dan-

The Argument.—The author of this psalm, the title tells us, (as we translate it), was Asaph, who composed several songs as well as David, for the use of the tabernacle, as we read in 2 Chron. xxi. 30. But whether he was Asaph the Levite, who lived in the same age with David, or some other prophet in after times, cannot be certainly resolved. It seems to me that it was not the former; because he is never, that I remember, called Asaph the seer, as the other is; whose psalms Hezekiah caused to be sung together with those of
king David. And therefore I judge it most likely that he lived in after-times, in the reign of some pious prince, such as Jehosaphat; or, which is most probable, in the days of Hezekiah, himself, (see Psal. xivv.) who, though he had reformed the worship of God, yet could not amend men's minds; but there still remained, this prophet observed, abundance of hypocrisy among them; both among the people, who placed all religion in sacrifices, and other external rites and ceremonies; and among the doctors of the law, and the judges, who taught the people their duty, but observed none of those precepts themselves which they expounded to others.

Both these this holy man awakens, by this psalm, to a consideration of the danger they were in; representing God as the supreme Judge of the world, coming in an amazing manner to call them all to a strict account, and to take a severe vengeance on them, unless they amended. Which began to come upon them by Sennacherib; whom God threatened to send against the hypocritical nation, Isa. x. 6.; and calls that time, "the day of his visitation," ver. 3. when Sennacherib over-ran all the country, (as Isaiah prophesied, viii. 7. 8.) till he came to Jerusalem. Upon which city Nebuchadnezzar completely executed the judgement here threatened, when he destroyed Jerusalem, and the temple itself; unto which it was no purpose to bring a multitude of sacrifices, while they continued the evil of their doings, Isa. i. 13. 16.

In both which days of visitation, first by the king of Assyria and then by the king of Babylon, the psalmist here represents the divine majesty, after the manner of men, like to a king coming out of his palace, attended by his ministers, with the ensigns of terror carried before him, and issuing out his orders to summon all his subjects to appear at his tribunal, and hear their accusation read, with the sentence he would pronounce upon them.

Ver. 1. THE mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.] The omnipotent majesty, the supreme Judge of heaven and earth, to whom the greatest kings and potentates are but subjects, the eternal Lord, who changes not, hath given out his orders, that all the people of the land, from east to west, be summoned to appear before him.

Ver. 2. Out of Sion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.] He will go forth in the greatest splendour, out of his magnificent palace, where he dwells in Sion; and let you see how much his incomparable excellencies and perfections are to be reverenced.

Ver. 3. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.] Our God will undoubtedly come and reckon with you, though now he seem to take no notice of your impiety; and he will not come like earthly princes, before whom there marches an armed multitude, but in a far more terrifyable and irresistible manner, which shall make you as sensible of his dreadful presence, as your ancestors were at mount Sinai, when the devouring flames, and thunder, and lightning, which attended on him, made the very mountain quake and tremble. (Exod. xix. 16-18. Isai. ix. 18. 19.)

Ver. 4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.] He shall call heaven and earth to be witnesses of the equity of his proceedings, (Isa. i. 2.) and you may as soon move them out of their place, as avoid appearing before his tribunal.

Ver. 5. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.] He will send out his officers, with a peremptory charge, saying, Bring those men before me, whom I have obliged above all other people, and separated to myself, to be a holy nation, (Deut. xiv.) and who have engaged themselves to me in such a solemn covenant, confirmed by the blood of sacrifices, that they wish they might perish in like manner, if they did not observe it, (Jer. xxxiv. 18. 19.)

Ver. 6. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself. Selah.] (They shall have a fair trial, whether they have done so or no; for the justice of his judgement shall be as conspicuous as the heavens; because God himself, who cannot do unrighteously, will examine the cause, and pronounce the sentence.)

Ver. 7. Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.] Imagine, then, that all things being thus prepared, you hear him calling to you, saying, Hearken, O my people, for I have something to say to thee. O Israel, my beloved people, hearken; for I must admonish and convince thee of the breach of those laws, which I, the supreme Lawgiver, and thy most gracious God, have given to thee, (Exod. xx. 2.)

Ver. 8. I will not reproach thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. I do not mean those concerning sacrifices; I have no complaint to make about that matter; thy burnt-offerings, I acknowledge, never fail to be brought, both morning and evening, to my altar; and I see how busy thou art in that employment.

Ver. 9. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds.] But is this all that I require of thee? Do not mistake thyself, nor think that I will be content all the rest of my laws should be broken, if you do but multiply sacrifices of which I have no need; or if I had, need not be beholden unto thee for the very best of them.

Ver. 10. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.] For I could be supplied out of my own folds and herds, which thou hast nothing to do withal; having all the beasts of the forest at my command, with the cattle that graze on more hills than thou hast ever seen.

Ver. 11. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. I know also where the fowls of the mountains build their-nests, which thou canst not reach; and the wild beasts in
the open fields, whom thou canst not inclose, are all ready at hand to do me service.

Ver. 12. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.] If I were hungry, I would not come to acquaint thee of it, that thou mightest provide me food; why should I be beholden to thy poverty, when I am so rich? For the whole world is mine, and all that it containeth.

Ver. 13. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?] Canst thou be so absurd as to imagine that I need meat or drink? and for that reason, call daily for the flesh of bulls, and the blood of goats, to satisfy my hunger, and to quench my thirst? Or that my nature is such, that I can be pleased merely with the smoke of these upon my altar?

Ver. 14. Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High.] They have their use, but if thou wilt bring me acceptable sacrifices, know that I value, in the first place, a truly thankful heart, which gratefully acknowledges my benefits, above all the peace-offerings in the world; and, next, that I expect thou shouldest faithfully perform all the vows and promises thou makest, when thou beggest any blessing of me; and not think to put me off (who am too great to be dallied withal) with sin-offerings of the breach of them.

Ver. 15. And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee: and thou shalt glorify me.] And, thirdly, devoutly commend thyself unto me, when thou art in any trouble, by ardent prayer; piously confiding in me, and thou shalt find it more powerful than all burnt-offerings; for I will certainly deliver thee, that thou mayest honour me with thy praises, and proclaim my power and goodness, to invite others into my service.

Ver. 16. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?] Not that this is all that I require of thee; for if thou leadest a wicked life, and art injurious to thy neighbours, what care I for thy praises, or for thy zeal to boot, in pressing my commands upon others? thou dost not observe thyself? Thou braggest thou art a doctor of the law, and thou declarest to the people my will and pleasure, and makest often mention of my covenant, whereby they stand bound to be obedient to me; but to what purpose is it? or with what face canst thou do it?

Ver. 17. Seeing thou hastest instruction, and castest my word behind thee.] Since, by thy example, thou teachest them to contemn all those instructions, to which thou hastest to be bound thyself; and by thy actions declarest thou hast no regard at all to any thing, either that I have bidden thee do, or threatened I will do to those that violate my precepts.

Ver. 18. When thou satisfiest a thief, then thou consentest with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.] When thou hast observed a man thrive by theft and robbery, instead of having him punished, thou hast greedily accepted the proffer of being a sharer with him; and, which is worse, the adulterers find favour with thee, and thou art partaker with them in their filthiness.

Ver. 19. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue framest deceits.] Thouatest thy tongue loose to slanders; and backbitest those who are not present to answer for themselves; and dost not stick to contrive artificial lies and deceits, to cheat those that have any dealing with thee.

Ver. 20. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, thou slandest thy very mother's son.] Nay, when thou sittest in an open court, solemnly to judge men according to the law, thou makest bold to speak falsely (for a reward); and that not against a stranger, but thy own brother; yea, thou wilt not spare him that lay in the same womb with thee; but load him with calumnies and reproaches.

Ver. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.] All this wickedness thou hast committed, and I have forborne to punish thee; but instead of amending thy life, to which my patience should have invited thee, thou hast presumed so much upon my leniency, as to add another sin to all the rest; and imagined that I am ignorant of what is done in secret, or am altogether as well pleased with these things as thyself; and therefore now I have sharply rebuked thee for them (so hateful they are to me), and set them all in order (that thou mayest see nothing can escape my knowledge) distinctly before thy eyes.

Ver. 22. Now, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.] Let this be a warning to you, and to all those that abuse the patience and long-suffering of God; never thinking of his just severity against such wicked doers. Consider this seriously, and repent in time; lest my patience be turned into indignity and wrath, and I lay hold on you, and snatch you away, to suffer your deserved punishment; and none of your companions, whom you have served in their sins, shall be able to give you any relief; but all perish together with you.

Ver. 23. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.] Remember I have told you what sacrifices I am well pleased with; not with those of beasts, but with the sacrifice of praise, and hearty thanksgiving for all my benefits; which doth me more honour than all the lifeless sacrifices of bulls and goats; but he that thus devoutly worships me, must take care withal to dispose his life into a conformity with all my precepts; for this is the man whom I will make partaker of the blessings which I have promised.

PSALM LI.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone into Bathsheba.
Psalm L.

The Argument.—Here now begins a new collection of some Psalms whereof David was the author; which, I suppose, were found after the first book was published, and this second begun; to the end of which, from this place they continue; as we read expressly, Psal. lxxii. ult. For though the author of the two last before that be not mentioned in the title, yet the very matter of them, as well as the conclusion of the book, assures us they were composed by David; who, in this 51st Psalm, (as the title tells us), most sadly bewails the sin which he had committed with Bathsheba, and those that followed it. In which he had also continued for some time, till Nathan the prophet came with a message from God to reprove him, and to pronounce a very sore judgement against him and his family for his crimes.

After this divine reprehension and threatening, he was very much humbled, and, to make himself as notorious an example of true repentance, as he had been of foul wickedness, he composed this penitential hymn; and sent it to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be used perpetually there, as a testimony of his unfeigned sorrow for what he had done, and of the miserable condition he thought himself in, without the infinite mercy of God to him. Which he begs with the greatest earnestness, together with the assistance of his grace; which he promises to employ for the reducing other sinners, beseeching him withal to be favourable to his people, especially to the city of Jerusalem; and not let them, and that, suffer for his offences.

Ver. 1. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. O God, the supreme Judge of the world, whom I have most highly offended in many ways, and therefore may most justly be condemned to suffer the effects of thy severest displeasure; I cast down myself before thee, and humbly supplicate for mercy; unto which I am encouraged by thy known clemency, and thy infinite compassion, which will move thee, I hope, to take pity upon a grievous sinner, and to pardon the adultery and bloodshed, accompanied with a number of foul circumstances, which I have committed.

Ver. 2. Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. I have made myself indeed exceeding loathsome by my repeated wickedness, which, like a stain that hath long stuck to a garment, is not easily got out; but do not therefore, I beseech thee, abhor me, but rather magnify thy mercy in purifying me perfectly, and cleansing me so thoroughly, that there may be no spot remaining in me.

Ver. 3. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. For how stupid soever I was, before thou sentest thy prophet to awaken me, I am now deeply touched with a sense of my horrid transgressions; which I both sorrowfully confess and bewail in the presence, and in the face of the public congregation; and carry also a sad and amazing remembrance thereof, continually before my eyes.

Ver. 4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Not because I stand in fear of punishment from men, who have no power over me; but because I am so obnoxious to thee, whose judgements I ought to dread the more, the less I am liable to give an account of my actions unto others. O how it afflicts me, that I presumed, because I had none to control me, here on earth, to offend thy majesty, thy all-seeing majesty, at whose tribunal the highest must be judged; and if thou should pronounce the heaviest sentence upon me, for my crimes, and execute it also with the greatest severity, I could not accuse thee of too much rigour; but must still justify thee in thy proceedings, and clear thee from all such unjust imputations.

Ver. 5. Be bold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. It is true, indeed, and thou, O Lord, knowest it better than I, that there is in me an innate proneness to evil; but I am so far from representing this as an excuse for what I have done, that I confess the consideration of it ought to have made me the more watchful and diligent to suppress those bad inclinations, which I knew to be so natural, that I brought them into the world with me.

Ver. 6. Be bold, thou dost desire truth in the inward parts; and in the outward parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom. I am amazed at my folly, that I should be so careless, when I was not ignorant that thou didst desire truth in the inward parts, and in the outward parts thou shouldest make me to know wisdom.

Ver. 7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. I have nothing therefore to say in my own behalf, but wholly betake myself to thee for a gracious pardon of my sin, which every thing I can think of sadly aggravates. I am as impure as a leper, and deserve to be banished from thy presence, and shut from among thy people; far more impure by touching Bathsheba, than he is that toucheth a dead body; yet I am not so foul, but, if thou pleasest, thou canst purify me, and make me as clean and white as snow: vouchsafe me that grace, O Lord; expiate me, I beseech thee, (Lev. xiv. 6. Numb. xix. 17. 18.), and restore me perfectly unto thy favour, and the happy fruits of it, which I have justly forfeited and lost.

Ver. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Raise me out of this woefully dejected state wherein I lie; and as the terrible message I received by thy prophet, hath cast me into such insufferable anguish and pain, as if my bones were crushed in pieces by my fall;
to send me the most comfortable news of my reconciliation with thee, to ease me of the torment I endure under the weight of my guilt, and the sense of thy heavy displeasure; and to turn it into the height of joy and gladness.

Ver. 9. Hide thy face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities. Remember not any longer how wicked I have been, nor lay my sin to my charge; but pass by all my transgressions, and acquit me from the punishment they deserve.

Ver. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. And bestow upon me that pure and holy heart, which, alas! I have lost, and am not able to recover without thy grace. I may utterly hereafter detest all such filthy motions; and because we are apt to revolt from our good resolutions, do thou daily supply me with fresh strength from above, to confirm and settle them, that I may never return to folly.

Ver. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. I deserve, I confess, to be rejected by thee, as my predecessor was, (1 Sam. xv. 25, 26,) and to be admitted no more into thy favour; but I humbly beseech thee, deal not so severely with me, nor deprive me (as thou dost him, compare 1 Sam. x. 6. with xvi. 14.) of the gift of thy Holy Spirit, wherewith thou hast anointed me, (1 Sam. v. 13.)

Ver. 12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Let not that evil spirit, which troubled him, seize on me; but restore to me the joy which I was wont to have, when I saw myself so much in thy favour, as to be delivered by thee out of the greatest danger, (Psal. xxi. 1;) support me and my authority, with such a cheerful, free, and generous spirit, as becomes him whom thou hast appointed to be the governor of thy people.

Ver. 13. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. That I may have the confidence to admonish those of thy duty that transgress thy laws, (as I will not fail to do,) and they may not take the boldness to despise my instruction; but the very worst of them may, by my authority and my example, be reclaimed from their sinful lives, and become, like me, thy faithful servants.

Ver. 14. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. Though I have added the sin of murder to that of adultery, the murder of a trusty servant, of several of my servants, (2 Sam. xi. 17,) who by my order were exposed to that danger wherein they lost their lives; let it not hinder this grace which I beg of thee; but, O God, the God from whom I have received so many deliverances and blessings, vouchsafe this one favour more, to deliver me from the punishment due to this sin; and I will not spare to proclaim, as loud as ever I can, thy infinite goodness and clemency, together with thy truth and faithfulness in thy promises to returning sinners: it shall be my joy to speak of them,

though therewithal I publish my own most horrid wickedness.

Ver. 15. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.] Try me, O God, and let the sense of thy gracious pardon give me the boldness and liberty to open my lips, (which shame, confusion, and fear, have closed and shut up,) and my mouth shall every where declare thy mercy, to thy perpetual praise and renown.

Ver. 16. For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.] This shall be the sacrifice I will offer to thee, as an acknowledgement of thy kindness; but that of beasts, I know, thou desirest not I should bring thee; the whole burnt-offerings being no pleasure at all to thee, but only as they are tokens of a grateful mind.

Ver. 17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. With which I will also join that divine sacrifice of a humble, sorrowful, and penitent heart: for a soul that is truly contrite, and entirely submits itself, is such an acceptable sacrifice, that thou canst not possibly reject it.

Ver. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.] And the same mercy I desire for myself, I beg also for all thy people. Spare them, good Lord; and let not my folly be the occasion of bringing upon them any calamity; or upon that city, which is called after my name, where I have set both thy throne and mine, (9 Sam. v. 7, 9, vi. 16;) but be favourable to that place, and do it good; let the walls of Jerusalem, which I have begun to build, (2 Sam. v. 9;) be perfectly finished, 1 Kings, iii. 1. xi. 27.

Ver. 19. Then shall I be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering, and whole burnt-offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar. Then shall the righteous be very thankful to thee; and express it by bringing peace-offerings in abundance; and all other sacrifices; they shall offer thee the choicest sacrifices upon thy altar, (1 Kings. iii. 5, viii. 63, 64,) which from such pious persons shall be acceptable to thy majesty.

PSALM LII.

To the chief musician. Mesehil. A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Abimelech.

The Argument. The title sufficiently instructs every one about the author; and in the occasion of this psalm, if they will but read the history to which it directs them in 1 Sam. xxii. where Doeg, (one of the seed of Esau, or that had lived so long among them, that he had got the name, as well as savage manners of the Edomites,) to ingratiate himself with Saul, pretended to discover those who were confederate with David, particularly Abimelech; whom he undertook also to kill, together with all his family, when others refused.
Psalm LIII.

To the chief musician upon Mabalah, Maschil. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—This Psalm LIII. differ so little, that it hath troubled interpreters to give a reason for the repetition of the same thing in almost the same words. There is some variation, indeed, in every verse, but it is merely the change of one word for another of the same import, (as, for example, God for Lord, Ver. 2. 4. 9.)—

that bloody charge, which Saul would have imposed on them. And when he had done, it should seem he bragged of it, as if it had been some gallant action, or famous achievement; as is intimated, I take it, in the first verse of the Psalm. Which David penned when Abiathar (who was the only person that escaped in that slaughter, whereby they thought to terrify others from harbouring-David, or shewing any kindness to him) came and told them the sad tidings of what was befallen their city. And it was afterwards delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle, to be sung in perpetual memory of the thing, to the vulgar tune called Maschil (see Psal. xxxii.), or, as Theodoret seems here to expound the word, to fortify those with patience and constancy, who unjustly suffer, by instructing them in the justice of the divine sentence in the issue.

Ver. 1. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually.] A goodly feat indeed for a man to boast of! that he hath killed eighty-five innocent and unarmed priests, together with a company of women, children, and sucklings, (1 Sam. xxii. 19.) A mighty champion thou art; who vapourest, no doubt, that thou wilt do the like execution upon me: but know, vain man, that the goodness of God, whereby I have been hitherto preserved, (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 3. 5.), will still defend me; for it is not a thing of short continuance, like our prince’s favour, but lasts for ever.

Ver. 2. The tongue deviseth mischief; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.] O thou contriver of false stories! who pretendest to be the only or most loyal person in the court of Saul, (1 Sam. xx. 8. 9.), but art an egregious hypocrite; a mere designer of mischief to others, thereby to advance thyself: thy tongue was the first instrument in this butchery, being sharpened by thy malice, on purpose, like a razor newly set, to cut the throats of the guiltless, that thou mightest seem to be the most zealous of all others for the safety of the king’s person and government.

Ver. 3. Thou loveth evil more than thou doest righteousness. Selah.] To have told the plain truth would not have served thy ambition and thy malice; which makes thee love to do mischief rather than good offices unto others, and to devise lies against Ahimelech, rather than to declare his innocency.

Ver. 4. Thou loveth all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.] Thou carest not whom thou destroyest, but can swallow up a whole city at a morsel: O thou false tongue, who, to curry favour with thy prince, devisest the most impudent lies against those that never offended him.

Ver. 5. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever; he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.] The great God, whose priests thou hast slain, shall avenge their cause, and pull thee from that greatness and honour to which thou seest by this vile means
cept only ver. 5, where there is a much greater alteration; and the 6th wholly omitted; which makes it probable, there was some new occasion for the using this hymn again, though an occasion exceeding like the former. What it was, writers do but guess; and if I take the liberty also to interpose my conjecture, it will be nothing so remote as all those that I have met withal seem to be.

If we suppose the defection of the people, in the rebellion of Absalom, to have been the matter of his complaint in the 14th psalm; then, it looks like a probability, that the new revolt, which the Israelites generally made, immediately after the other, before David had quite recovered Jerusalem, and his settlement there, was the occasion of this. For you read, that upon the quarrel which arose between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, about preceidency in bringing back the king, Sheba blew the trumpet of rebellion afresh; and it is said, that every man of Israel left David, and followed after him, 2 Sam. xx. 2. This is the revolt, I apprehend, here spoken of, ver. 3, where the psalmist says, "Every one of them is gone back." And a dangerous revolt it was, as David apprehended, more dangerous than the former, unless timely checked, 2 Sam. xx. 6, which made him, before all his army could be assembled, (ver. 5,) send his guards to pursue him speedily, ver. 7. As they did through all the tribes of Israel, ver. 14. Who being afraid of the issue, (ver. 5. of this psalm,) fell off from Sheba more and more, the farther he went, and left him at last to shift for himself, so that he was shut up in the city of Abel, there taken and beheaded, ver. 22. After which, his body, it is likely, was exposed to the fowls of the air, or the wild beasts; insomuch that his bones were indeed at last scattered, (as the Psalmist here speaks, ver. 5,) and all his adherents made contemptible.

This David desired should be commemorated, together with his deliverance from Absalom's rebellion; and therefore, making a review of the 14th psalm, (wherein that distress is described,) he delivered it again to the master of the music, (as appeared after the first collection of the book of psalms was finished,) with some alterations, relating to this new business; desiring God, for instance, to give them still some farther and new salvation, ver. 6. For the word here is in the plural number, but in the 14th psalm in the singular; which hath made me render it here complete salvation, which he implores with the same earnestness he had done before, and orders also how the psalm shall be sung upon Maholath, or the hollow instrument, (flute or pipe,) to the tune of Maschil, (or as a cavet against rebellion, see Psal. xxxii.) If any be not satisfied with this account of the psalm, because of the word captivity, in the last verse, which they may think ought to be taken properly, then they may suppose this psalm to have been reviewed by Asaph the seer, in the days of Hezekiah, when abundance of the people had been in-deed carried captive, Isa. v. 13. But there is no need to have recourse to this: for the word captivity imports no more in some places, but only great desolation; such as was made of Job's estate and family, xlix. 10. and by the Philistines, when Shiloh was destroyed, Judg. xviii. 30. 31.

Ver. 1. THe fool hath said in his heart, There is no God; corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.] Though the wicked are not yet so impudent as openly to deny God with their mouths; yet such is their abominable filthiness, so shameless are they in their wickedness, so universally depraved, that their secret thoughts sure are, God takes no notice of what they do, or that he will not judge them for it.

Ver. 2. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.] But let them know, that he exactly observes them, and all the ways of the sons of men, which are naked and bare before his eyes; though, alas! there is nothing now to be seen but ignorance and contempt of his majesty.

Ver. 3. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.] The Israelites have made a new separation, and are entirely revolted; being like a body without spirit, so rotten and putrefied, that it is hard to find so much as one that hath any kind of goodness in him.

Ver. 4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread? they have not called upon God.] Strange, that they should still be thus senseless! and (after such a defeat as they have lately received) continue to work iniquity; nay, to be cruel and void of all pity and compassion to my poor people; the reason is, they have no religion.

Ver. 5. There were they in great fear where no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encamped against thee: thou hast put them to shame, because God hath despised them.] And none more cowardly than such atheistical wretches; whose courage so soon failed them, that a panic fear seized them before my forces could approach them: for they ran away, and dispersed themselves, when I sent but a small party after them. God, O my soul, hath broken him in pieces, and his bones lie scattered on the ground, who thought to oppress thee: thou hast obtained this favour of him, to put them to shame; for he despised those who had so little regard to his majesty.

Ver. 6. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Sion! when God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. And he is mighty to save, (whosoever such wicked people think), and resides by a special token of his presence there, on Mount Sion: O that it might please him to complete our deliverance from thence; and restore us all again to the happy enjoyment of that place, from whence we have been banished: It would turn our sad lamentations into the most cheerful thanksgivings; and fill, not only Judah, but all the tribes of Israel, with joy and gladness.
PSALM LIV.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, Maschil. A Psalm of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm, the title tells us, was composed, when (not long after the butchery of Doeg) the Ziphites, a false people, void of humanity, and that sought nothing but how to raise themselves, thought by another's ruin, endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Saul, by discovering to him where David lurked in their neighbourhood, (1 Sam. xxiii. 14. 19.) and undertook to guide the king to the very place, and assist the forces he should send to take him, ver. 20. &c. By which means, David was brought into such a great strait, (ver. 26.) that if Saul had not been diverted by a sudden invasion which the Philistines made, he could not have escaped him. In this distress, he made his address to God by prayer, in the words of the three first verses of this psalm. But on a sudden (hearing, I suppose, how Saul himself was alarmed with the news of an invasion) he breaks out, ver. 4. 5. into admiration of God's goodness. And when the danger was quite over, added, I suppose, the two last verses; wherein he expresses with what joy he took a view, from the mountain where he lay hid, of Saul's forces as they retreated. Which was a thing so memorable, that, when he came to the kingdom, he delivered the whole to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the 4th psalm, to the tune of Maschil.

Ver. 4. Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. O the wonderful goodness of God! who, in this deplorable condition sends me, in a strange and unexpected manner, most seasonable relief! behold, how he takes my part, the Lord preserves my life: for, alas! the small forces I have with me are unable to secure it; and can by no means support me against those numerous enemies that thought to destroy me.

Ver. 5. He shall reward evil unto my enemies; cut them off in thy truth. And as for those spies that undertook to find out all my hiding-places, (1 Sam. xxiii. 22. 23.) he shall bring the mischief they intended to me upon themselves. Take a just vengeance on them, and execute thy threatenings, O Lord, against such treacherous persons.

Ver. 6. I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O Lord, for it is good. In the mean time I will not be sparing in expressing my thankfulness for what thou hast done already, but make thee my grateful acknowledgements both in word and deed. First, I will offer thee liberal sacrifices; and then I will accompany them with my praises of thy wisdom, power, and goodness, O Lord: which is the most pleasing sacrifice, I know, unto thee, and the most delightful employment unto me.

Ver. 7. For he hath delivered me out of all trouble; and mine eyes hath seen his desire upon mine enemies. Who, by his special providence, am marvellously delivered out of that distress wherein I was, and all the dangers which it threatened: for my eyes now dare look upon those enemies in their retreat, from whom I lately fled for fear, (1 Sam. xxiii. 26. 27. 28.)

PSALM LV.

To the chief musician on Neginoth, Maschil. A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm was sent to the master of the music, to be sung as the former; having an occasion something like it. For the complaint which he makes in the middle of the psalm, that his greatest confidant proved treacherous to him, makes it probable, that it was composed when Absalom's rebellion broke out, and he was forced to flee suddenly from Jerusalem: and as he was going barefoot upon Mount Olivet, (he and all his company weeping,) to increase his sorrow, met with the news that Ahithophel also was among the conspirators, 2 Sam. xv. 31. Upon which, we read there, he presently fell to his prayers; and as soon as he came to a place where he could rest, and retire himself, he represented, it is likely, the sadness of his condition more largely in this psalm; beseeching God to disappoint the conspirators, ver. 9. first, because of the violence they had committed at Jerusalem, (ver. 9. 10. 11.) and, secondly, because of the vile treachery of Ahithophel, from the 12th to the 15th, which seems to me ought to be connected with the beginning of the 9th verse,
for he goes on in the 15th, to beseech God to defeat them all, which he had begun in the 9th, but breaks off to insert his reasons why he was so earnest. And then, in the conclusion, he exhorts all those that adhered to him, not to be discouraged, but to cast their care upon the Lord, who would reward their pious confidence in him, by protecting and delivering them, and destroying their and his enemies.

Ver. 1. *Give* ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not myself from my supplication. O God, the supreme Judge of all the world, I most humbly address myself to thee, who art inclined to relieve those that are oppressed; beseeching thee not to reject a poor suppliant, but graciously to receive his petition which he puts up unto thee.

Ver. 2. Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. Let the sadness of my condition move thee to consider and relieve me; which I am not able to represent in my prayer, without shrieks and lamentable cries: so great is the perturbation of my mind.

Ver. 3. Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked; for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me. Because my own son is become my enemy, and hath blown the trumpet of rebellion against me, (2 Sam. xv. 10.), and because of the sore straits to which he hath wickedly reduced me: for which, that there might be some colour, he and his associates load me with false accusations, and say I am unjust, and take no care of my people, (2 Sam. xv. 3-4.), and therefore furiously set themselves against me, to dethrone me.

Ver. 4. My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. This is a sore grief unto my heart, and puts me into the very agonies of death; which, without thy mercy, I must suddenly expect, (2 Sam. xvii. 2.)

Ver. 5. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. The suddenness and strength of this conspiracy hath struck me into such a fear, as makes me tremble: I am involved in such difficulties, that, which way soever I look, horror and consternation seize upon me.

Ver. 6. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest. In this confusion I rather wished than hoped to escape, (2 Sam. xv. 14.), saying, Who will lend me wings as swift as those of a dove, that I may flee away to some place of safety and repose?

Ver. 7. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. So, then would I go to some far distant country, though I wandered I knew not whither, (2 Sam. xv. 20.); I would hide myself in some desert place, remote from all society.

Ver. 8. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. And I would make all the haste imaginable to escape this fierce persecution, (2 Sam. xvii. 16. 21.), which is risen like a sudden storm of wind, or violent tempest, and threatens utterly to subvert me.

Ver. 9. Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues; for I have seen violence and strife in the city. O Lord, let that speedy destruction swell up them, which they design against me, (2 Sam. xvii. 16.); divide their counsels, and raise dissentions against them, (2 Sam. xv. 31. xvii. 14. 15.); for I am certainly informed, that by rapine and cruelty, brawling and contention, they have filled the whole city of Jerusalem with tumult and confusion.

Ver. 10. Day and night they go about the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. There is nothing else to be seen, either by day or by night; for they that guard the gates, or go the rounds, make it their business to ravage and spoil, to pick quarrels, and fall out with every body they meet with; and such as run to the main guards, in hope to meet with some relief, are miserably deceived; for there the same iniquity, oppression, and injurious dealing, keep their station.

Ver. 11. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets. There is no place free either from their open violence, or secret fraud and deceit; but they barbarously abuse or cunningly circumvent the inhabitants, both within doors and without.

Ver. 12. For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I would have borne it; neither was it he that bated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have bid myself from him. And there is one most notorious traitor, whose ingratitude deserves to be severely punished; for he hath maliciously reproached and calumniated me and my government, when I thought of no such treachery: for we never had any quarrel, (then his treason would not have been so strange, but far more tolerable): nor did he give any sign of hatred to me; for then I could have secured myself, by withdrawing from his familiarity.

Ver. 13. But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. No; thou, O most perfidious of all mankind, who contrivest this mischief against me, was the person whom I esteemed above all others; whom I loved as myself; whose counsel I ever followed; and to whom, as my friend, I unbosomed all my secrets.

Ver. 14. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God together. Whose conversation was most delightful to me, and to whom I thought I had been tied, not only by the bond of civil friendship, but (which is far more stronger) of religion.

Ver. 15. Let death seize upon them, and let them go quick down into hell; for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them. Let death seize upon them unexpectedly, as this treason broke out against me; let them sink on a sudden into the grave, when they think of nothing less; for wheresoever they go, all manner of mischief marches along with them.

Ver. 16. As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. As for me, I will lay no body to preserve myself, but only commend myself and my cause to God, the righteous Judge: and the Almighty Lord, who changes not, will deliver me as he hath done formerly.
Ver. 17. Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and be shall hear my voice. For this I will not cease to solicit him when I go to bed, and when I rise, and before I take my repast; both in my inward thoughts, and with my mouth, in silent desires and lamentable moans, I will never give over my importunity, till he graciously grant my petition, and send me relief.

Ver. 18. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me; for there were many with me.] He will rescue me from the hand of this rebellious army which comes against me, and restore me to my throne in peace: for be they never so numerous, there is a far greater power on my side, to defend me, and to fight for me.

Ver. 19. God shall bear and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.] God himself, who hath so long governed the world most justly, and never alters nor changes, will bear my prayer, and bring down their pride: for having prospered hitherto in their villany, there is not one of them that repents; but they all persistently persist in their rebellion, without any fear of the divine vengeance:

Ver. 20. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: be hath broken his covenant.] Especially that perfidious person, who hath not only violated all the laws of friendship, but profanely broken his promise and oath of fidelity, wherein he was engaged to me.

Ver. 21. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil; yet were they drawn swords.] Nothing can be falser than he; who entertained me with the fairest and smoothest language, when at the same time he was contriving this rebellion in his heart; all his soft words and tender professions of kindness to me, served only to hide his design of giving me a mortal wound.

Ver. 22. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.] But why do I trouble myself any farther with him? Be not dejected, O my soul, (and let me give this counsel to everyone that adheres to me), but reposing thy humble trust in God, cast all the burdens of thy cares upon him; who will certainly support thee under any troubles that he is pleased to impose upon thee. Preserve thy integrity; and, though thou mayst be shaken and disturbed for a time, he will not suffer thee to be moved out of thy place, but quietly settle thee there again.

Ver. 23. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction; bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.] But as for those that have given me this disturbance, thou, O God, wilt bring them to an untimely end, and throw them headlong into the pit of destruction. They are men that thirst after blood, and by all manner of fraud and treachery endeavour to compass their ends: and such shall perish in the flower of their age; when I trust to spend my days in prosperity and peace.
Ver. 1. **BE merciful unto me, O God; for man would swallow me up; be fighting daily oppressed me.** [O God, the Supreme, and therefore impartial Judge of all the world, take pity upon me, I beseech thee, and rescue me from the violence of my enemies: for Saul, forgetting his own mortality, and how unseemly it is for frail man to continue his enmities for ever, most eagerly pursues me, with an insatiable desire to take away my life; he never intermits his persecutions, but presses me so closely, that he gives me no time to breathe.]

Ver. 2. **Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou Most High.** He sends abroad his spies, to watch all opportunities to ensnare me; for which they gape as greedily as ravenous beasts do for their prey; and great multitudes there are, O thou Most High, (who alone canst disappoint them), that, proud of their numbers and of their power, have insolently set themselves against me to destroy me:

Ver. 3. **What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.** As I have just reason to fear they will, unless I be defended by thee, with whom I have intrusted myself and all my concerns; which is the only thing whereby I overcome those fears when they seize upon me.

Ver. 4. **In God I will praise his word; in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.** By the help of God, I will be so far from being dismayed, that I will rejoice in the faithful promise he hath made to me by his prophet, (1 Sam. xvi. 13. & Sam. iii. 9, v. 2.) though it be not fulfilled presently, yet by his assistance I will depend, as I have hitherto, upon his fidelity for the performance of it, and never fear what frail man can do to hinder it.

Ver. 5. **Every day they wrest my words; all their thoughts are against me for evil.** I know what an ill construction my enemies would put upon these words, if they could hear what I say; for they do nothing but wrest the most innocent speeches; and because I profess to confide in God, pretend that I conspire against the king, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.) their whole business being nothing else, but to contrive how to do me mischief.

Ver. 6. **They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.** For this end they hold many consultations among themselves, and lay snares privily for me; curiously observing all my motions, and still expecting an opportunity to take away my life.

Ver. 7. **Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.** Shall this iniquity always go unpunished? or by their subtility and craft shall they, who thus unjustly persecute the innocent, escape thy vengeance? O God, the righteous Judge, throw down those insolent people, who have so long provoked thy patience; and make them feel the effects of thy just displeasure.

Ver. 8. **Thou testest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?** Thou art perfectly acquainted, I am sure, how often I have been forced to fly, like a vagabond, from place to place, which has cost me many a tear: good Lord, preserve a kind remembrance of them; and let them not perish as things thou nothing regardest. But why am I so importunate for this, since I know thou art so far from despising my misery, that thou art as mindful of it, as if thou keepest a register of every tear, and of all my troubles?

Ver. 9. **When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know, for God is for me.** My prayer therefore shall prevail, when my enemies oppress me, and obtain a glorious victory over them; of this I am assured, because the mighty God, who rules all the world, is on my side.

Ver. 10. **In God will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his word.** By his gracious assistance, I will continue my resolution to rejoice in the faithful promise I before mentioned: lie is the eternal Lord, who never alters nor changes, and I will, like him, immutably rejoicing in that faithful promise.

Ver. 11. **In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.** Nothing shall shake the confidence I have reposed in him; nor will I fear what the greatest man can do, were he more powerful than he is, to hinder the accomplishment of what the Lord designs for me.

Ver. 12. **Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.** Nor will I ever be unmindful of the promises I have made to thee, O God; to whom, when I was in distress, I vowed the most grateful acknowledgements, if thou wouldest deliver me: though I am not able to requite thy kindness, yet I will not cease to magnify and extol it with my highest praises.

Ver. 13. **For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?** For thou hast so remarkably rescued me from death, (to thy goodness I ascribe it, not to my policy,) when I was in the power of the Philistines, that I ought not to doubt of thy continued preservation of me, from the snares my enemies lay to entrap me, or from the open violence they use to overthrow me: thou wilt support me still to praise thee, and to perform further service to thee here in this world; as I intend to do most sincerely.

**Psalm LVII.**

To the chief musician, Al-taschib, Michtam of David, when he was fled from Saul in the cave.

**The Argument.**—This psalm, the title informs us, was penned upon the like occasion with the former. For after several other wanderings, (besides those he speaks of in the foregoing psalm, ver. 8,) or removes from place to place, mentioned 1 Sam. xxiii. you find David in the strong hold of En-gebi, ver. 29. where there was a cave among the rocks, xxiv. 2. 3. in which David and his men lurked and hid themselves, for fear of Saul: Who, in his pur.
Psal. LVII.  

Ver. 3. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. 

There are greater armies in heaven than those that here surround me; which, rather than I shall perish, he will send for my deliverance; he will expose him to shame and reproach, that gapes like a ravenous beast to devour me: I doubt not of it; for besides his infinite mercy, I have his promises for my security; in the performance of which, he will visibly declare his fidelity.

Ver. 4. My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire; even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword. ] Now and there is a fit opportunity, when my life is in extreme danger; for here I lie close, and dare not stir, being encompassed with enemies picked out on purpose to destroy me, (1 Sam. xxiv. 2.), who are as fierce and cruel as lions, and enraged against me so furiously, that they are continually incensing Saul to pursue me; tearing my good name (as they hope to do me) in pieces, and giving the most deadly wound to my reputation, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.)

Ver. 5. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. ] Confute them, O God, the most righteous Judge of men’s actions and intentions; and by delivering me from this imminent danger, raise to thyself the highest praises; and spread the fame of thy glorious power, goodness, wisdom, and truth, throughout all the earth.

Ver. 6. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they have fallen themselves. Selah. ] And how ready art thou to hear the prayers of thy faithful servant! For, after all their projects and devices to entrap me, when I was just falling into their hands, I am miraculously preserved, and they themselves precipitously run into that very danger wherein they thought to have caught me, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3-4-5. &c.

Ver. 7. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise. ] My heart also is ready, O God, my heart is prepared and firmly resolved, to pay thee the vows which I made in my distress; my song shall be of thee, and with all the joy I can express, I will set forth thy praise.

Ver. 8. Awake up, my glory; awake psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early. ] My tongue, wherewith I ought to glorify thee, shall be no longer silent, or merely full of complaints; nor shall any instrument of music be wanting to accompany my hymns; which I will sing unto thee so early, that I will prevent the rising sun.

Ver. 9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing unto thee among the nations. ] Nor will I content myself with my private acknowledgments of thy goodness; but I will publish thy praise in the greatest assemblies of thy people, among whom this song shall be sung; yea, other nations shall read therein, how thankful I am to thee for what thou hast done.

Ver. 10. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, 

T2
Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? 

From whom may we expect justice, if not from the princes and rulers of the people met together in council? But let me ask that grave assembly, Do you verily think, that you have pronounced a righteous sentence against me? did you judge according to your consciences, uprightly and sincerely, and not suffer yourselves to be brassed by your affections?

You know the contrary to be true; and that you are not only disposed to do as the king would have you, but have hearts fraught with malice and wicked devices against me: you that ought to weigh things in an even balance, and judge a cause according to its merits, suffer yourselves to be inclined by base respects, to do an open violence to your country, and to oppress the innocent.

The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray, as soon as they are born, speaking lies:

But it is no wonder I am thus used by a wicked brood, who never had any sense of God and goodness, but were depraved from the very womb; going astray as soon as they could go, and telling lies as soon as they could speak.

Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear:

And such is the malignity of their venomous nature, they tell the most malicious and destructive lies of me; which strike at my life as plainly, as if they were the poison of a serpent: whom they resemble in this also, that they will not be better instructed, nor, as becomes good judges, keep an ear open to further information; but are as obstinate as the deaf adder, (so much spoken of in our neighbouring countries), which can hear well enough, but stops both her ears.

Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. And will not listen to the magical song, whetwhere their cunning men are wont to charm those serpents, and draw them together out of their holes.

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

I appeal, therefore, from them, unto thee, O God, the most righteous Judge; beseeching thee to disable those men's forces, whose wickedness is incorrigible: though they be as strong and terrible, as fierce and ravenous, as the young lions, thou, O Lord, who art superior to all, canst easily disarm them, and leave them a desire, without any power to do me mischief.

Let them melt away, as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces. Or if they have any strength remaining, let their courage fail them when they would attempt any thing against me; let them be dissipated like waters which slide away: when
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Saul bends his mind to do me any harm, let him miss his aim, like him that shoots a broken arrow out of his bow;  

Ver. 8. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away; like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.] Or be like a snail, that appears with a threatening look when it puts forth its horns; but the farther it goes, the more it wastes and proves itself: whatsoever designs he and his followers may have to destroy me, let them all miscarry and prove like an abortive child, which dies in the womb, and never sees the light of this world.  

Ver. 9. Before your pot can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.] O ye unrighteous judges, who, instead of preserving the people, devour and eat them up: God shall hurry you away suddenly, as in a furious tempest; which before your flesh-pots can feel the thorns, carries them all away, both the green thorns and the dry.  

Ver. 10. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.] Which just judgement of God, when innocent persons, whom you have oppressed, shall behold, it will fill them with joy: yea, the shall triumph over these wicked men, like a great conqueror; who, returning with an absolute and complete victory from the slaughter of his enemies, dips his feet in their blood, as he passes over their carcasses.  

Ver. 11. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.] And the most vulgar people, who observe little, seeing so remarkable a vengeance, shall confess, and say, Surely it is best to be just and pious: surely there is a supreme Judge, whatsoever profane men imagine, who takes notice of all that is done upon earth, and punishes or rewards men according to their deserts.  

Psalm LIX.  

To the chief musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David, when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.  

The argument.—The title sufficiently informs us of the occasion of this psalm, wherein David expresses what his thoughts and affections were, when Saul sent officers to watch his house all night, and to slay him when he came out of his doors in the morning: as you may read 1 Sam. xix. from ver. 11. to ver. 18. He represents his danger; beseeches God's protection; describes the wickedness of his enemies, and their diligence to destroy him; commends himself to God; expresses his confidence in him; and at last gratefully acknowledges God's goodness, who, by the kindness of his wife, preserved him from this danger. Which was so great, and the deliverance from it so remarkable, that he would have it commemorated in this psalm: Which is therefore called Michtam, (see Psalm xvi.); and was sent to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the two former, which have the name of Al-taschith. See Psalm lvi.  

Ver. 1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.] O God, who hast hitherto graciously preserved me, (see Sam. xix. 10.), take me now into thy protection, and deliver me from this great danger: thou seest the number and the power of my enemies, who are risen up to destroy me, be thou my defence, I beseech thee; and bring me into some place of safety, where they may not be able to reach me.  

Ver. 2. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.] Rescue me from the malice of men, whose business and constant employment it is to do wickedly: save me from the cruelty of those whom nothing but my blood will satisfy.  

Ver. 3. For lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.] For lo, a strong guard hath beset my house, and lies in wait to apprehend me, and take away my life; though I have committed no offence against them, either great or less, as thou, O Lord, from whom nothing can be hid, very well knowest.  

Ver. 4. They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.] Unprovoked by me, (I dare again repeat it, so great is my innocence), they very busily run to and fro, and with all diligence dispose their watch in every place to hinder my escape: O that thou wouldest therefore seasonably interpose for my succour, and consider the danger of my condition.  

Ver. 5. Thou, therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.] What is all their power and force to thine? who art the sovereign Lord of all the world, and commandest all the hosts in heaven and earth; and hast made also a gracious covenant with thy people, to protect and defend them: appear now for my relief, and punish all those wicked men, who call themselves thy people, but are as barbarous and cruel, as false and perfidious, as the heathen; do not spare them, therefore, nor shew any favour to such as violate all the laws of justice and charity, and keep not faith with their neighbours.  

Ver. 6. They return at evening; they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.] After I had escaped the fury of Saul in the day, he reneweth his attempts in the evening, and sends armed men to apprehend me; (1 Sam. xix. 10. 11.) some of which lie about my house, ready, like a growling dog, to seize upon me; and others (should they miss me there) go round about the city, to way-lay me in every corner.  

Ver. 7. Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips; for who, say they, doth bear?] Behold, how full their hearts are of malice! which burst out at their mouth: they openly threaten to kill.
Psalm LX.

To the chief musician upon Shushan Eduth, Michtam of David, to teach, when he was stroke with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom, in the valley of Salt, twelve thousand.

The Argument.—This Psalm, we learn by the title, was penned by David, after Saul's persecution was ended by death, and David not only ruled over Judah, but Israel also. Till which time, the Philistines and other nations afflicted the country very much, by reason of the divisions there were between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; as they had done also all the days of Saul, while he was busying himself in pursuing his hatred against David, and neglected his foreign enemies so much, that the Philistines were too hard for him, and at last overthrew him, in that great battle wherein he and his sons were slain, 1 Sam. xxxi. But when David was come to the crown, and both kingdoms also united in him, God himself seemed to lift up an ensign to them, (as he speaks here, ver. 4.), to call them to resort with one consent unto David, in assured hope of victory over their enemies. Accordingly he subdued the Philistines, as you read, 2 Sam. viii. 1. (which chapter must be read for the understanding of this Psalm); and after that smote the Moabites, ver. 2, of that

Ver. 8. But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the brethren in derision. Thou, O Lord, art not in their thoughts, who wilt so disappoint them in their designs, as to make them very ridiculous; thou wilt expose all those Paganish people to the scorn and derision of those who see how they are defeated, (1 Sam. xix. 15.).

Ver. 9. Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence. For what is the strength of Saul to thee? on whom I will wait with the same diligence that they watch for me; knowing that I am safer under God's protection, than if my house were an impregnable tower.

Ver. 10. The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies. He who hath given me so many demonstrations of his love, will not now desert me; but make way for my timely escape, notwithstanding all their diligence to apprehend me: let them observe me as closely as they can, God will let me behold their disappointment.

Ver. 11. Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield. Not that I desire they should all be slain at one stroke, which, though a terrible vengeance, might soon slip out of my countrymen's mind; whose profit I desire, more than my own private revenge: and therefore wish rather thou wouldst employ thy power, O Lord our protector, first to depose them from their honour and high place; and having laid them low, and made them contemptible, then to disperse them here and there, and make them wander up and down as vagabonds: that they may remain every where public spectacles of thy just displeasure.

Ver. 12. For the sin of their mouth, and the words of their lips, let them even be taken in their pride; and for cursing and lying, whibch they speak. The falsehoods and calumnies which their mouths continually utter, deserve this vengeance, which shall certainly come upon them; for, though they may thrive by this means for the present, yet at last these very artifices shall prove their ruin; especially since they are so arrogant and audacious, as to dare to forswear themselves, and to confirm their forgeries with oaths and horrid execrations.

Ver. 13. Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be; and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. Let such wile wretches as these, who incense thy just displeasure against them after this manner, be utterly consumed; let them waste away by degrees in their dispersions, till there be none of them found; that they may be convinced there is a supreme Being, and most righteous Judge, who governs all things, and controul even kings themselves, not only among us, but throughout the world.

Ver. 14. And at evening let them return, and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them therefore watch me now, as narrowly as they please, (ver. 7.), lying near my house, like a dog, ready to seize upon me; or hunting about the city every where to apprehend me.

Ver. 15. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. They shall be punished in their kind, and go up and down the city and country hereafter, upon another design; wandering like a hungry dog, from door to door, to get something to eat; and forced to pass whole nights in complaints, for want of satisfaction.

Ver. 16. But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning; for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Whilst I (whom they thought to have devoured) am praising thy power, as I intend to do continually, I will get up early, to give thee the highest praises for thy mercy, (as I did that morning when I had escaped the hands of those that watched for me), because thou didst so mightily defend me, and take me into thy gracious protection, when I was in such a strait, that without thy miraculous mercy I must have perished.

Ver. 17. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing; for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy. It is but just that I should praise thee (who didst inspire me with strength and courage) with the same diligence that I prayed to thee, against the power of Saul, (ver. 9.); for whosoever was the instrument, it was God that brought me into a place of safety; that God who hath been most merciful to me, and tied me unto him by innumerable benefits.
chapter; and then, in a memorable battle, (particularly taken notice of in the title of this psalm,) overthrew the Syrians, called here, and in other places, Aram; both those that lived between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, called Nabarraim, and those that adjoined to them, in that part of Syria, called Zobab, ver. 3. &c.

And returning from this victory, after his lieutenant-general Abishai had slain of the Edomites eighteen thousand, (2 Sam. viii. 13. 1 Chron. xviii. 12.) Joab, the general of all his forces, fell upon them again, and killed in the same place, the valley of Salt, twelve thousand more, (as the title of this psalm informs us,) and afterwards destroyed them entirely, leaving never a male-child that he could find remaining; 1 Kings, xi. 15. 16.

For all which expeditions when David was preparing himself, he composed this psalm, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung upon an instrument of six strings, which was wont to be used in solemn thanksgivings, (and therefore called Shushim-eduth.) For he nothing doubted, but God would prosper his arms, better than he had done Saul's; and both give him the victory over their forces in the field, and bring him also into their fortified cities, ver. 9. as we read he did, 2 Sam. viii. 14. Which made this psalm also be called Michtam of David, (see Psal. xvi.), being a most precious memorial, worthy to be ever preserved, of his faith in God, and of the admirable success of it, whereby posterity should learn to trust in him.

Ver. 1. O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us; thou hast been displeased, O turn thyself to us again. O God, the Judge of all the world, who hast lately rejected us, and refused to go out with our armies; who hast broken and scattered our forces, (1 Sam. xxxi. 1. 7.) so highly had our sins provoked thy displeasure; I most humbly beseech thee to return to us with thy favour, and make us as prosperous as we have been unsuccessful.

Ver. 2. Thou hast made the earth to tremble, thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh. There have been dreadful commotions among ourselves, and miserable rains and divisions, (2 Sam. ii. 9. 10. 17. iii. 1.) the woful effects of which remain to this day, and call for thy help, who alone canst repair the breaches our dolly hath made, and perfect the union which is begun.

Ver. 3. Thou hast shewed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. Thou hast made us feel what it is to offend thee, by inflicting grievous punishments upon us; wherein thou hast fulfilled the words of thy servant Moses; (Deut. xxviii. 8. 34.) for we have been like to men bereft of the use of their reason, by some intoxicating potion, and have madly destroyed one another.

Ver. 4. Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah. But now thou hast granted the desires of those that devoutly worship thee, and, according to thy faithful promise, (2 Sam. iii. 9. 18.) given me to them to be their king, to whom they should all repair, as soldiers do to their ensign when it is lifted up, and unanimously fight against their enemies under my conduct.

Ver. 5. That thy beloved may be delivered, save with thy right hand, and hear me.] Which I beseech thee to bless and prosper; that by the mighty power accompanying my arms, I may be an instrument of delivering thy beloved people from those that have oppressed them.

Ver. 6. God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.] Why should I doubt of it? and not rather rejoice in assured hope of victory; since God, who is most holy, and cannot lie, hath said, he will deliver them by my hand, (2 Sam. iii. 18.) and hath already put me in possession (as he also promised, ver. 2.) of all the country about Samaria, which I will distribute under such officers, as I think fit to set over them.

Ver. 7. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine, Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my law giver.] Gilead also, and Manasseh, who were lately under another king, (2 Sam. ii. 9.) have submitted themselves unto me; and so hath the tribe of Ephraim, which is a main support of my authority, these, and all the rest of the tribes of Israel, are now united to the royal tribe of Judah, which (according to the word of our forefather, Gen. xlix. 10.) supplies me with wise and able men to administer the laws, and order the affairs of my kingdom:

Ver. 8. Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my bow; Philistia, triumph thou because of me.] Which shall now extend itself beyond the bounds of this country, for I will tread Moab under my feet, and reduce them to the vilest servitude, (2 Sam. viii. 2.) I will trample also upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves, 2 Sam. v. 14.; the Philistines likewise, whom I have begun to smite, (2 Sam. v. 17. &c. 22. &c.) shall add to my triumphs, and be forced to meet me as their conquering Lord. (2 Sam. viii. 1.)

Ver. 9. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?] These are difficult things indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, by what power or force shall I enter that strongly-fenced city, in the frontiers of their country? Who is it that will conduct me into Idumea, and make me master of it?

Ver. 10. Wilt not thou, O God, which hast cast us off, and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?] But I can soon answer myself; for why should I despair of thy presence with us, O God of all power and might? who formerly, indeed, didst reject us, and forsake the conduct of our armies; but now, I hope, wilt graciously aid us, and make us victorious.

Ver. 11. Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man.] Do not frustrate these hopes, but afford us thy help against the Syrians also, (2 Sam.
viii. 5.), now that they distress us; for no human force is able to deliver us, not have we any confidence in it, but in thee alone.

Ver. 12. Through God we shall do valiantly; for it is that shall tread down our enemies.] By whose assistance we will behave ourselves courageously, and do valiant acts; for God will utterly rout our enemies, and tread them down like mice in the streets.

PSALM LXI.

To the chief musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—All agree, that in the beginning of this psalm, David relates what his thoughts were, when he fled either from Saul, or from his son Absalom, who drove him over Jordan, as far as Mahanaim, the very extremity of Judea. Of this latter, it is most probable, he complains here, ver. 2. because afterwards he calls himself king, ver. 6. which he would not have done during the life of Saul, though he was anointed, and designated by God to that high dignity, because nothing could have justified Saul’s persecution of him so much as his taking upon him that title.

It may be said, indeed, that he kept this psalm private till he was possessed of the kingdom, and then delivered it to the chief musician, to be sung as Psal. iv. But that will not seem so likely, when we consider that his danger was over before he had finished this psalm, and called himself a king, as appears from the latter part of it, beginning ver. 5. Where, after a pause, he begins to acknowledge how God had granted the desires he made, when he was in distress; and thankfully commemorates his mercy, in bringing him back again to his tabernacle, hoping he would prolong his life in the throne, (ver. 6.), to which he was newly either advanced, or restored by God’s goodness. I shall suppose the latter in my paraphrase.

Ver. 1. HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.] O God, the supreme Governor and Judge of all the world, graciously vouchsafe to admit and answer the petitions of a poor suppllicant, who, in a most lamentable condition, cries unto thee most earnestly for relief.

Ver. 2. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.] Of which I will not despair, though I am upon the brink of being thrust out of my kingdom, (2 Sam. xvii. 23. 24.), and in such anxiety of mind, that I am even overwhelmed with fear, and grief, and care; still I cry unto thee, saying, Secure me, I beseech thee, and bring me into a place of safety, which as without thee I am not able to reach, so there my enemies may not be able to approach me.

Ver. 3. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.] For in all my distresses hitherto thou hast been pleased wonderfully to preserve me; I fled to thee, and was protected as in an impregnable fortress, when Saul sought to destroy me.

Ver. 4. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever; I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.] Which makes me hope thou wilt restore me again to the place where thou dwellest, and that I shall never be thus banished from it any more, but remain in safety under thy Almighty protection, in which I will put my entire confidence.

Ver. 5. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.] And since thou, O God, hast heard the prayers, which with these vows I made unto thee, and hast given me again the possession of that country which is the inheritance of thy faithful people;

Ver. 6. Thou wilt prolong the king’s life; and his years as many generations.] I doubt not but thou wilt grant their king a long and prosperous reign over them, and add so many years to those which his enemies would have cut off; as if thou hast given him a new life, and added another age unto the former.

Ver. 7. He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.] He shall sit upon his throne, and ever govern in the fear of God: O that thy goodness and faithfulness, which are a stronger guard than all his military forces, may be ever ready at hand to defend him.

Ver. 8. So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.] So will I perpetually sing psalms in praise of them, and learn thereby to be faithful to my promises, and day by day perform the vows which I made unto thee when I was in trouble.

PSALM LXII.

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—There are no petitions at all in this psalm, nor any thanksgivings, but only expressions of David’s faith and confidence in God. Which (notwithstanding the straits he was in, as appears from ver. 3. 4.) grew greater and stronger, (compare ver. 2. with ver. 6.), and moved him to earnest exhortations of all other persons never to trust in men, much less in those wicked arts of fraudulent dealing and robbery, whereby men are wont to advance themselves to great estates, hoping thereby to be so strong, that nobody dare meddle with them; but to place all their confidence in God alone, who can and will make those supports fail those that rely upon them, and bless the piet of such men as depend wholly upon him.

Which would make one think this psalm was penned by him when he had overcome all the fears into which the rebellion of Absalom at first put him, but not was restored to his kingdom. Unto which when he returned, he committed this meditation as the master of the music, to be sung according to the tune to which Jeduthun, a famous artist, had set the 39th psalm.
Ver. 1. **Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation.** Let the dangers be never so great which threaten my destruction, I am resolved quietly and patiently to commit myself to God; expecting what he will be pleased to do for me, who alone is able to deliver me.

Ver. 2. **He only is my rock and my salvation: be is my defence, I shall not be greatly moved.** Be my enemies never so powerful, I doubt not by his providence to be safe, so secure, that though they give me some disturbance, they shall not be able to do it long, much less to throw me quite out of my throne.

Ver. 3. **How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.** I wonder at your obstinacy, who continue thus to contrive the ruin of a man whom God hath so visibly declared that he favours: to what purpose are all your conspiracies, but only to bring sudden destruction upon yourselves? for you shall all perish in this enterprise, and fall to the ground, like a wall that is not evenly built, or like a partition made only of loose stones, that have no mortar to cement and hold them fast together.

Ver. 4. **They only consult to cast him down from his excellency; they delight in lies: he bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.** It is plain what they design, and whither all their consultations tend; to dethrone him whom God hath been pleased to advance to the highest dignity: this they hope now to effect by lies and calumnies; in which they please themselves, as formerly they did in fawning and flattery: speaking fairly to me with their mouth, when in their heart they wished my utter ruin. (See Psal. lv. 21.)

Ver. 5. **My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him.** But let not this discourage thee, O my soul! resolve still to wait upon God with quietness and patience: for from him I expect my deliverance.

Ver. 6. **He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence: I shall not be moved.** By his providence, as I said before, I doubt not I shall be so safe, so secure, that, do what they can, they shall not be able to take one step more, to throw me out of my throne.

Ver. 7. **In God is my salvation, and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.** Both my safety, and my honour and dignity, depends upon God alone, and not upon their will and pleasure: and I trust not either in fortresses or armies, but make him my confidence, on whom I rely for defence and protection against the strongest enemies.

Ver. 8. **Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.** And so I would advise all my people to do continually; in whatsoever condition you be, repose a pious confidence in him: be not fearful, nor too solicitous, but commit yourselves to God by earnest prayer, and implore his help; for he will never fail us.

Ver. 9. **Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.** But do not place any confidence in man; for as the multitude are vain, giddy, and unconstant, so the greater sort are false, deceitful, and treacherous: take them altogether, they are no more to be depended on, than the vainest thing in the world; which, thrown into the balance against them, will prove more solid and ponderous.

Ver. 10. **Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.** And do not by any means, when all human helps may fail you, betake yourselves to frauds, cheating, and calumnies, for support; much less endeavour to enrich yourselves by rapine, spoil, and robbery. Be not so vain as to trust to ill-gotten goods; for, if your riches increase by honest means, they are not things wherein to place either your confidence and hope, or your love and joy.

Ver. 11. **God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.** For God hath frequently declared, in the course of his providence; as well as in his word, I myself have been witness of it more than once, that by his power he disposes things quite otherwise than men project; dashing all their worldly confidences in pieces, and especially defeating the hopes of those that think to prosper in evil courses.

Ver. 12. **Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.** And that thou, O Lord, art also exceeding gracious to those that piously trust in thee; preserving and providing for them, when they are destitute of human succour: for thou art not an idle spectator of men's actions, nor acceptest any man's person, but an exact dispenser of rewards and punishments, to every man according to his work.

**A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.**

**The Argument.**—This psalm, the title informs us, represents the thoughts which David had when he was in the wilderness of Judah. But whether by that he meant the forest of Hareth, wherein, after other places, he secured himself when he fled from Saul, (1 Sam. xxii. 5.), or the wilderness he went through when he fled from Absalom, (2 Sam. xvii. 30.), may be questioned. Theodoret takes it for the former, but I incline to the latter, for the same reason I gave before; because he calls himself a king, ver. 11. which he would not have done, as I said, (upon Psal. lxi.), during the reign of Saul; because it would have given him too just cause to persecute him, and made the people look upon him as a traitor. Unless we say that he did not publish this psalm, but reserve it for his own private use, till he came to the kingdom. When he delivered it to the chief musician, for the service of the tabernacle; where he longed very much to be, when he was in his banishment. As appears by this psalm, in which he expresses ex-
ceeding great love to God, (as Thodoret notes),
and predicts the destruction of his enemies.

Ver. 1. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is :) O God, the governor of the world, who hast ever been my gracious God, and art my only confidence; to thee I early direct my morning thoughts, most earnestly beseeching thee to take pity upon me, in this desolate condition: wherein I languish, and am ready to faint, as I travel through this dry and tiresome wilderness, (2 Sam. xvii. 29.), where there is no water to refresh me.

Ver. 2. To see thy power, and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.] It is not so much some satisfaction to my hunger and thirst that I desire, as to be restored again to worship thee before the ark of thy presence, (2 Sam. xv. 25.), which is the token of thy power and majesty residing among us: and there to enjoy thee, as I have done heretofore, when I had the liberty to go into thy sanctuary.

Ver. 3. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.] My lips shall then praise thee with the same devotion that I now pray unto thee: for nothing is so dear unto me as thy favour and love: without which, life itself, and the all pleasures of my court, would be of little value.

Ver. 4. Thus will I bless thee, while I live: I will lift up hands in thy name.] The greatest pleasure of my life shall be continually to bless thee for such a happy restoration; and with the most thankful acknowledgments for what thou hast done for me, to implore thy future kindness towards me.

Ver. 5. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness: and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.] My hungry appetite would not now receive greater satisfaction, if the best cheer in the world was presented to me, than my soul shall be filled withal in that sweet employment; when, with the highest expressions of joy, my mouth shall, with a loud voice, sing thy praises.

Ver. 6. When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.] Mean time I comfort myself with the hope of that happiness; calling to mind, as I lie upon my bed, and seriously considering, as oft as I awake, how gracious thou hast been unto me.

Ver. 7. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.] From whence I conclude, that since thou hast relieved me in my greatest straits, I shall be safe under thy almighty protection; and at last triumph over all my enemies.

Ver. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.] Though thou seestest to cast me off, my soul, notwithstanding, cleaveth fast unto thee; and will not part with its hope in thee: and I feel the happy fruit of it, for by thy mighty aid I am supported and preserved from sinking under these sore calamities that have lain upon me.

Ver. 9. But those that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.] Which now shall fall upon those that endeavour to destroy me; who seeking to take away life, shall lose their own, (2 Sam. xviii. 7, 8. &c.)

Ver. 10. They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.] They shall perish by the sword; and their carcasses have no other sepulchres but in the bowels of foxes, and other such like ravenous creatures, who live as they do by stealth and deceit.

Ver. 11. But the king shall rejoice in God: every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.] But I their sovereign shall be filled with joy; and so shall all pious men, who preserved their loyalty, and would by no means violate their oath, wherein they stood engaged to me: they shall triumph when my calumniators, (2 Sam. xv. 2.), and all perfidious persons, shall be so silenced, that they shall not have a word to say for themselves.

PSALM LXIV.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—The enemy of whom David here complains, it is most probable, was Saul; whose hatred to him was very much heightened, and made more malignant, by the calumnies and false stories which were told of him by some ill men in his court; who were always plotting and contriving in their cabals, (as we speak), how to compass his destruction, (and found no means more effectual for that end than lies and calumnies), though in truth they were all that time (as he foretold) devising their own. In memory of which he delivered this psalm, together with several others, (which he made on the same subject), to the master of music, to be sung in the tabernacle.

Ver. 1. HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.] O God, the governor of the world, who seest the danger I am in by a dreadful enemy, be thou my friend, I humbly beseech thee; and preserve the life of thy persecuted servant, who by earnest commendation himself unto thy custody.

Ver. 2. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.] Protect me from the secret plots, and the open violence of those wicked men who make a great stir against me, and unjustly seek my ruin.

Ver. 3. Who wbet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.] Their tongue is their principal weapon; which they have in readiness (as soldiers have their swords) upon all occasions, to wound my reputation: calumnies and slanders, like so many poisoned arrows, are ever at their tongue’s end.

Ver. 4. That they may shoot in secret at the perfect; suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.] Which, when they are in private with Saul, they shoot at me, who never did him or them any wrong; but am perfectly guiltless of that which they charge me withal:
yet I find these false accusations, which I never expected, spread abroad by those who have no fear of God to restrain them from doing mischief to their innocent neighbours.

Ver. 5. They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them? They use their utmost endeavours to make their calumnies be believed, and confirm one another in their resolved prosecution of their wicked design; which they consult how to effect, though it be by falsehood and treachery, or by wiles and crafty practices, so subtly contrived, that nobody, they hope, shall be able to discover them.

Ver. 6. They search out iniquities, they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and their heart, is deep.] They employ all their wit and diligence in these wicked devices; and leave nothing unattempted to produce the most exquisite and absolute piece of villany that can be invented by men of the deepest reach and policy.

Ver. 7. But God shall shoot at them with an arrow: suddenly shall they be wounded.] But all to no purpose; for when they little think of it, they and all their projects shall perish, by a sudden stroke of the divine vengeance.

Ver. 8. So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves; all that seek them shall flee away.] Their slanders shall reflect upon themselves; and their wicked counsels prove so pernicious to those that gave them, that they shall be forsaken even of their friends, and they that were wont to visit them shall flee away from them.

Ver. 9. And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God, for they shall wisely consider of his doing.] And all other men shall be afraid to imitate them, not being able to deny the just vengeance of God, the judge of all, upon them; for they shall be convinced, that it was not by chance, but by his counsel, that they were not only defeated, but insaured in their own contrivances.

Ver. 10. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him, and all the upright in heart shall glory.] Which shall both fill my heart, whom they unjustly maligned, with such joy in the Lord, as shall encourage me to commit myself unto him for ever in well-doing; and make all true lovers of piety triumph in the victory, which integrity and simplicity hath gotten over falsehood and subtlety.

P S A L M L X V.

To the chief musician. A Psalm and Song of David.

The Argument.—The latter part of this excellent hymn of praise (as the title calls it; see more, Psal. lxvii.) hath moved some judicious interpreters to think, that it was delivered by David to the master of music, after some great drought, which had brought, or threatened to bring, a dearth upon the land; and there are those who imagine it relates to the three years famine after the rebellion of Absalom, 2 Sam. xxii. which being removed by plentiful showers of rain, the psalmist gives God public thanks in this hymn, for sending them seasonably to his people, whom he had formerly obliged by several other great benefits, as he doth all other nations, which David here first of all commemorates.

I can find nothing more probable than this. For as to the title which I find in the vulgar Latin, out of some Greek copies, that it is a psalm sung by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with the people of the captivity, when they were about to go into or come out of it, (I know not well which they mean;) there is no sense that I can see to be made of it. For Jeremiah was not carried captive, as Theodoret observes, but left at liberty to go whither he pleased, and Ezekiel was gone long before; nor are there any such words, as the same Theodoret notes, to be found either in the Hebrew, or in other interpreters; no, not in the LXX. which was in the Hexap. But somebody who neither attended to the sense of the psalm, (as he passes this censure,) nor understood the history, added this inscription. Yet he himself thinks it was spoken by them in captivity, when, far from their own land, they longed to sing God’s praises, but could not do it publicly in Babylon; and therefore prayed God, in the words of this hymn, to turn their captivity, and to bring them again to Sion; which I know not how to contradict; but seeing no proof of it, I shall not meddle with that sense in my paraphrase.

Ver. 1. PR AISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed.] It becomes us, O God, above all other people, to praise thee in thy sanctuary, (though we cannot worthily express, but must rather silenly adore, thy incomparable excellences), and to pay the vows which we made unto thee in the time of our distress.

Ver. 2. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.] And more especially to magnify thy clemency in hearing my prayer, (2 Sam. xxi. 1.) which may invite all mankind, even those that are most miserable, to make their addresses unto thee.

Ver. 3. Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.] Nor need their sins discourage them, for thou hast matter enough of that kind against me, to have hindered the prevalency of my prayer, if thou hadst charged my iniquities upon me; but thou hast been graciously pleased to forgive not only me, but all thy people their transgressions, whereby they have provoked thee.

Ver. 4. Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.] O how happy is the condition of a priest, or a Levite, whom thou hast chosen to minister before thee, and hast the privilege to be continually employed in thy service! though we cannot all be so blessed, yet such is thy goodness, we enjoy most sweet refreshments in thy house, when
we offer our prayers and praises to thee, and taste of the sacrifices of thanksgiving which we there present for the benefits we have received from thee:

Ver. 5. By terrible things in righteousness, wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.] Who hast done wonderful and astonishing things for us, out of thy mercy and bounty, when in our necessity we implored thy help, O God, who not only marvelously saved and delivered us in this nation from destruction, but art the support and safeguard of all mankind in the remotest parts of the earth, or islands of the sea.

Ver. 6. Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power.] For God's power, which is ready at all times to execute his pleasure, is not inferior to his mercy, but hath settled the mountains in their places, and sustains their vast weight from sinking down into the earth.

Ver. 7. Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.] Against which, when the sea beats tempestuously, he composes and silences its swelling and roaring waves; as he doth, with the same ease, the rage and fury of the people, when, by the breath of unquiet sedition spirits, they rise up tumultuously, and break out into rebellion.

Ver. 8. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts, are afraid at thy tokens; thou maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.] The most barbarous people, who live in the remotest corners of the earth, behold with wonder and amazement the heavenly bodies, which thou hast appointed for signs and tokens, (Gen. ii. 14.), by the rising of the sun, the moon and stars, in the morning and evening, thou fillest them with joy, as well as admiration.

Ver. 9. Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it.] But we are more particularly bound unto thee, whose land, which was lately visited with drought, thou hast now refreshed and enriched with such liberal showers out of the clouds, (which, like a vast river, are never exhausted), as have made it exceeding fruitful, for from thence thou hast ordained it should be constantly replenished.

Ver. 10. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundant-ly; thou setteth the furrows thereof; thou maketh it soft with showers, thou blusseth the springing thereof.] And accordingly, when the ground is ploughed up, thou sendest abundance of rain upon its ridges, which settle the clouds, and make them sink down upon the seed that is newly sown; and when the ground grows too hard, and hinders its sprouting forth, thou softenest and openest it with gentle showers, which bringeth up the blade; and that thy blessing makes to prosper and thrive, till it grow up into corn.

Ver. 11. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.] Thus thy goodness hath made this a most plentiful year, and magnificently adorned it with variety of fruits; for thy clouds have wheeled about, and every where distilled a fattening juice into the earth.

Ver. 12. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side.] They have made green pastures, even in desolate places; and the little hills, which before looked ruefully, appear now most beautiful, and have, as it were, put on the garments of joy and gladness.

Ver. 13. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.] The pastures, which were bare before, are clothed now with flocks, as they are with grass; the fields also are so covered with corn, that the face of the earth cannot be seen; they keep a kind of festival, which hath filled us all with an universal mirth, and made us triumph in thy goodness.

PSALM LXVI.

To the chief musician. A Song or Psalm.

The Argument.—The vulgar Latin here again (so little trust is to be given to it) hath an inscription, which, as Theodoret witnesses, is not to be found in other interpreters, no more than in the Hebrew; no, not in the LXX. translation, which was in the famous Hexaplaus. Nor can any good reason be given why they call it, A song-psalm concerning the resurrection; unless thereby we understand the resurrection of the dry bones, of which Ezekiel prophesied, chap. xxxvii. which was the bringing the people in Babylon, where they seemed to be buried, to their own land again, ver. 12. And so Theodoret himself takes it for a psalm which David, by a prophetical spirit, composed for the people in captivity, not praying for their return (as, he fancies they do in the psalm foregoing), but upon their way home, and praising God for their liberty.

Certain it is, this psalm was made after a very remarkable deliverance from some sore calamity under which the nation had groaned. And it not being said by whom it was penned, nor who the enemies were that oppressed them, it is generally thought not to be David's, whose name it doth not bear in the title, as the foregoing do; but to have been made by some holy man after, or in their return from the fore-mentioned captivity. But he that collected the psalms contained in this second book, though he did not find David's name in the front of it; yet took him, I believe, to be the author both of this and of the next psalm, as well as of the foregoing: otherwise he would not have placed them between those on both sides which certainly belong to him, when he intended, it appears by the conclusion of this book, (lxxii. 20.), to put together all the prayers that he had then met withal of David's. He that considers also that the 71st and 72d psalms have not David's name in the title, and yet are generally thought to be of
Psalm LXVI.

his composing, will not take the want of the usual inscription here to be a sufficient argument why we should seek for some other author of this psalm.

Which was penned, I judge, after God had advanced David to his throne, and peacefully settled him in his kingdom. Till which time they had been in a very unsettled condition, not only during the rule of the judges, (when, as he speaks here, ver. 12., many of their neighbours rid over their heads, or, as we now speak, domineered over them as they pleased), but also in the reign of Saul, when the Philistines were so powerful, that the Israelites durst not look them in the face, but hid themselves in caves, and thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits, 1 Sam. xiii. 6. For they had disarmed them; so that when they came to fight, there was not a man had a sword or a spear but only Saul and Jonathan, ver. 22. And though they prevailed over the Philistines afterward in several battles, chap. xiv. xvii.; yet they grew so strong again, that they penetrated into the country as far as Mount Gilboa, where Saul and his sons were slain, (chap. xxi.) and the people thereupon were so dismayed, that they about Jordan forsook their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them, ver. 7. To these things the 20th, 11th, and 12th verses of this psalm may have respect. And then the freeing the country from that oppression, and forcing these insolent enemies to submit to David, ver. 3. (where there is the same expression in substance with that which he uses, Psal. xviii. 45. after he had overcome all his enemies), may be the thing for which he here gives praise to God; exciting all the country to join with him, in blessing his divine Majesty, not only for this, but for former deliveries he had wondrously to that nation. Which he would have acknowledged with their most cheerful thanksgivings, (which may be the meaning of a song-psalm, see lxvii.), especially in the public service of God, at the tabernacle. Into which he promises to go, ver. 13. (a sign of the psalm was not made at their coming out of Babylon, when there was no house to go unto), and pay his vows, which he had made before these victories. But at their return from Babylon, it is like they might use this psalm, and apply it to that purpose, going to the place where the house of God formerly stood.

Ver. 1. Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:] Let all the people of this land shout aloud, and triumph in the liberty which God hath restored unto us.

Ver. 2. Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.] Sing psalms in honour of his most glorious Majesty; and do not merely praise him, but do it in the most splendid manner; and place your principal glory in this, that you have the honour to sing his praises.

Ver. 3. Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.] Saying, O God, thy tremendous works fill us with wonder and amazement; but we are not able to express the greatness of them: they strike terror into the hearts of thy enemies, who, feeling the dreadful effects of thy power, dare not oppose thee any longer, but, dissembling their hostility, shall come and offer thee their service, (2 Sam. viii. 1.)

Ver. 4. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.] For which be thou adored by all the inhabitants of this country: let them all sing joyful hymns unto thee: let them sing the praise of thy power, which hath thus daunted our enemies, and delivered us.

Ver. 5. Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doings toward the children of men.] Approach, I beseech you, and attentively consider what our God hath done, and then I need not exhort you to praise his name; for the works and counsels of his providence over all mankind are very astonishing:

Ver. 6. He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot; there did we rejoice in him.] Especially over us, for whose fathers, to their unspakable joy, (Exod. xv.), he opened a passage through the Red Sea; when they were so shut up between that before, and the army of Pharaoh behind, there was no way left for their escape, (Exod. xiv. 16.). And also led them dry-shod through the river Jordan, when it was so full of water, that it overflowed its banks, (Josh. iii. 15. 16. 17.) which created a new joy in the hearts of our nation.

Ver. 7. He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves.] And it ought to continue still in succeeding ages, since the same divine power which did those wonders governs the world throughout all generations: he sees and observes the motions of all nations, who may learn, by the Egyptians and Canaanites, that they who contemn his authority, in vain endeavour to exalt themselves to greater eminence; for they shall certainly be abused.

Ver. 8. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard.] We have reason to say, that he is our God, and takes care of us, as well as of those before us; and therefore let all the tribes of Israel agree together to bless him, and proclaim his praises; that it may be for ever known how good he is, and how grateful they are.

Ver. 9. Whose steadfastness our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.] For he hath wonderfully preserved us from perishing in our affliction; and not suffered our enemies to pursue their advantages to our utter overthrow and ruin.

Ver. 10. For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.] Thou hast proved our constancy indeed, O God, by most severe chastisements; and as a refiner tries his silver by throwing it into the fire, so thou hast dealt with us, as well as with our forefathers; whose labours in the iron furnace of Egypt, we have been forced to imitate under our oppressors.

Ver. 11. Thou broughtest us into the net, thou laidst...
Our enemies have pursued us, and brought us (like to wild beasts taken by the hunter) into most grievous straits, (1 Sam. xiii. 6.) They have used us like beasts of burden, and laid sore loads upon us, which they have fast bound upon our backs. {1 Sam. 19. 10.}

Ver. 12. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.] Thou hast made us slaves to the vilest of men, who exercise the most insolent tyranny over us: we have endured variety of the sorest miseries; and yet, such is thy goodness, thou hast carried us through them all; and at last brought us into a state of perfect liberty, ease, and plenteous prosperity.

Ver. 13. I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings: I will pay thee my vows:] I will go therefore into thy house, and give a good example to all my people; for I will not present myself before thee with empty praises; but acknowledge thy benefits with burnt-offerings, and faithfully discharge the vows wherein I stand engaged.

Ver. 14. Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble:] Which I was not more forward to make with open mouth when I was in distress, than I will be to perform with all solemnity, now that thou hast graciously delivered me out of it.

Ver. 15. I will offer unto thee burnt-sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams: I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.] For as I will not come empty into thy house, so will I not bring thee a negligently present; but offer sacrifices of all sorts, and the best and choicest in every kind.

Ver. 16. Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what hath been done for my soul:] And together therewith I will make a thankful commemoration of his loving-kindness, (which is the most acceptable sacrifice), and let all pious men know (O that they would come and hearken to me while I relate) how good God hath been unto me.

Ver. 17. I cried unto him with my mouth, and was exulted with my tongue:] For the ardent prayers which I made unto him, in a very low condition, are now turned into the highest praises of his powerful goodness, whereby I am advanced unto a throne;

Ver. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me:] Which hath brought along with it a testimony of my sincerity, far more valuable than my kingdom: for if I had been guilty of any such crimes, or entertained so much as a thought of them, as my enemies charged me withal, the Lord, who hates iniquity, would have denied me my request.

Ver. 19. But verily God hath heard me: be hast attended to the voice of my prayer:] Which now sure you all see he hath graciously granted; and thereby cleared my innocence from all the aspersions that were cast upon me.

Ver. 20. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.] To the praise of God's infinite goodness be it spoken, (not of my own righteousness), who did not reject my prayer; but vouchsafed me the mercy which I desired.

To the chief musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm or Song.

The Argument.—This excellent psalm, all agree, hath the same author with the former; which I have made it probable (see Psal. lxvi.) was composed by David, who being settled in his throne after miserable confusions, and having brought the ark to Jerusalem, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, (as he promised in the psalm foregoing, ver. 15.), blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts, a Sam. vi. 17. 18., pronounced, that is, this psalm, (as I conjecture), wherein he manifestly imitates that form of blessing, which the priests were appointed to use on solemn occasions, (as you may read Numb. vi. 23. 24. 25.), beseeching God to continue his favour to them, and to make them such an example of his loving-kindness, that it might invite all nations, to whom the fame of it should come, to submit themselves unto his government.

It is no argument against this, to say, that he doth not bless them here in the name of the Lord; which is used in the blessing which Moses taught them. For it is certain he alludes, in the beginning of the next psalm, to the form of prayer used at the setting forward of the ark, (Numb. x. 35.), and yet there also he uses the word Elohim instead of Jehovah, as he doth in this psalm; which he delivered afterwards to the master of music, to be sung as the 4th psalm.

But what difference is there betwixt a song-psalm and a psalm-song, (in which the title of the 45th, and of this and the next, differ from the foregoing, as the title of the 30th, doth from the 48th,?) I am not able certainly to resolve. For some think that a psalm-song, or psalm of a song, began with voices, the musical instruments following after; and a song-psalm, or song of a psalm, began with instruments, the voices following after: others give a contrary account, for taking a psalm to be properly the sound of instruments, (whereof there were six or seven sorts), and a song to be the voice of singers, they will have a psalm-song to be that where the sound of instruments preceding, the singing voices followed; and a psalm-song that where the voices preceding, the instrumental music followed. But Kimchi ingenuously confesses, in his preface to the book of psalms, that their nation can give no account of such like things, which we meet with in the title of the psalms.

Ver. 1. God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah.] Be gracious unto us, O God, and complete the happiness which thy Almighty goodness hath begun to
Psalm LXVII.

To the chief musician. A Psalm or Song of David.

The Argument.—David having brought the ark to Jerusalem with a great deal of joy and triumph, (2 Sam. vi.), after it had been long neglected in the reign of Saul, (1 Chron. xiii. 3.), which was one cause, it is like, that he had no better success against his foreign enemies, hoped God would be more propitious to him, according to the prayer he had made in the foregoing psalm. For now he had (to repair that negligence of Saul) not only brought the ark near to his own palace, in the chief city of the kingdom, but prepared a noble place for its reception, (2 Sam. vi. 16. 2 Chron. i. 4.), which it had been a long time without. For ever since its falling into the hands of the Philistines, (1 Sam. iv. 11.), it had been separated from the tabernacle of the congregation, built for it by Moses, which was God's habitation or dwelling-place; and after the destruction of Shiloh, was removed to Nob, (1 Sam. xxii. 6.), and from thence, after Doeg had slain the priests, to Gibeon, (2. 7. x. 3.), where it remained till the building of Solomon's temple. All which time, it is manifest, it had no ark of God's presence in it, for that was in Kirjath-jearim, (1 Sam. vii. 1.), from whence David fetched it (1 Chron. xiii. 5.) to Mount Sion; where he having made a tabernacle for its entertainment, the Lord God might be said (as we render it, ver. 18. of this psalm) to dwell among them, with an intention not to remove from thence (as the ark had done before) to any other mountain, ver. 16. And indeed here he dwelt more magnificently than he had done before, and was more royally attended and solemnly served; David appointing a little before he died, (as he had begun to do before, 1 Chr. xvi.), the priests and Levites, in their courses, constantly to wait upon him, with songs and instruments of music; and settling all other officers belonging to a house, and suitable to the greatness of the majesty that dwelt there, 1 Chron. xxxiii. xxiv. xxv. xxvi.

Which honour being done to God, he hoped, as I said, that God would favour him in his enterprises better than he had done Saul, who took care of no such matters. And being shortly to engage some potent enemies, (2 Sam. viii.), he earnestly besought the presence of God with him (of which the ark was a token) in this excellent psalm. And he begs in that very form of words, (ver. 1.), which Moses had directed the priests to use every time they took up the ark, to set forward in their march to the land of Canaan, Numb. x. 33. Upon which occasion, he calls to mind what wonders God had done for them in leading them, by the ark of his presence, through the wilderness into their good land. Where he hoped he would establish and settle his people, now that he had in so pompous and triumphant a manner ascended into the high hill of Sion, (out of which David had expelled the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6.), and by his special direction and conduct already given them such great victories over the Philistines, their mortal enemies, (1 Sam. v. 19. 25.), that it was an emblem of the far more glorious ascension of the Lord Christ, after he had overcome death itself, the last and greatest enemy of mankind, into the highest heavens.

Of the title of the psalm, see lxvii.

Ver. 1. **Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him.**

O that God, who by his powerful presence conducted his people, in spite of all opposers, into the land,
(Numb. x. 35.), would now graciously appear, to disperse and put to flight those numerous armies, which, out of mere hatred to him, come to dispossess us of it.

Ver. 2. *As smoke is driven away, so drive them away:* *as wax melteth before the fire,* so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.* They are no more able to stand before him than the smoke (whatever soever it makes) is to stand before the wind; or the wax (how firm soever it seem) before the fire; but shall be dispelled, and melt away like those feeble things: just so shall those wicked people perish, if God will be pleased to manifest himself to be among us.

Ver. 3. *But let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God,* ye, *let them exceedingly rejoice.*] Which shall fill the hearts of his faithful servants with joy and gladness: they shall leap for joy before him, (as I lately did when I brought up the ark into Mount Sion, 2 Sam. vi. 14. 16.), and be so extraordinarily transported, that they shall not find words enough to express the joy they have in his gracious presence with them.

Ver. 4. *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that riseth upon the heavens by his name Jah, and rejoice before him.*] O begin your cheerful hymns unto his majesty; sing the praise of his powerful goodness, and of all the rest of his glorious attributes, whereby he is known to you: magnify him, and prepare a triumphal pomp for him, who turns about even the highest heavens, and rules them at his pleasure: O rejoice exceedingly before him, who hath plainly shewn, by what he hath lately done, that he is the eternal, unchangeable God, who faithfully keeps his promises for ever.

Ver. 5. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.*] The poorest and meanest persons on earth need not doubt of his patronage; for though he be higher than the highest heavens, yet he hath taken up his dwelling among us; that the fatherless and widows, when they have no helper, may fly unto his fatherly care, and appeal to him as their righteous Judge, to redress the wrongs that are done unto them.

Ver. 6. *God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains, but the ravenous dwell in a dry land.*] God provides for those who are utterly destitute, and settles them in comfortable habitations: he unites the chains of the captives, and gives them a happy deliverance; but brings rebellious oppressors into that want and scarcity whereunto they have reduced others.

Ver. 7. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people; when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:* A famous instance of which we saw at our coming out of Egypt; when thou, O God, wentest before thy people night and day, in a pillar of cloud and fire, (Exod. xii. 21.), and conducted them, as their captain, through a barren and dangerous wilderness.

Ver. 8. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God:* even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.] The earth trembled, yea, the heavens dissolved into thunder, lightning, and rain, (Exod. xix. 16.), when the Divine Majesty descended upon Mount Sinai; the mountain itself quaked (ver. 18.) before his glorious majesty, who is still present with his people Israel.

Ver. 9. * Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain,* *whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was dry.*] For whom, O God, thou didst miraculously provide, by sending them liberal showers in those dry and desert places; and, having chosen them for thy own peculiar people, didst rain down bread from heaven, (Exod. xvi. 4.), to refresh and strengthen them when they were faint and weary.

Ver. 10. *Thy congregation bath dwelt therein; thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*] A vast congregation of people, with their flocks and their herds, found a convenient habitation in that wilderness by thy bounty, O God; who didst furnish those who were in danger to starve with all things necessary for them.

Ver. 11. *The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it.*] Yes, the Lord made them so victorious over all those who opposed them, that they still returned from the battle with songs of triumph in their mouths; and a great army of women met them, (according to the custom, Exod. xv. 23. &c.), to join with them in publishing his praises, saying,

Ver. 12. *Kings of armies did flee before thee; and the kings of Ethiopia did come.*] The kings and captains of those hosts who thought to have destroyed us, were put to flight, (Exod. xvii. Numb. xxxi. 2. 3. &c.) They fled away in haste, and left their spoil behind them, to be divided among us, that were too weak to go into the field, (Numb. xxxi. 8. 11. Judges, viii. 21. 26.)

Ver. 13. *Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*] But we welcome home our victorious countrymen with this encouragement, that though you have endured great hardships in Egypt, where you looked not like valiant soldiers, but rather like vile scullions besmatted among kettles and pots, you shall hereafter appear most beautiful and splendid, and the wings of your armies shall shine like those of a dove, when they glisten as if they were covered with silver and gold.

Ver. 14. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.*] And their word was fulfilled at our entrance into Canaan; when, by scattering all their kings, the Almighty appeared most illustrious as Salmon, and gave us possession of the country on this side Jordan.

Ver. 15. *The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.*] As on the other side of it he subdued the country of Og, king of Bashan, (Numb. xxx. 33. &c.), which hill became the hill of God; the hill with so many fertile risings, the famous hill of Bashan, became part of his inheritance.

Ver. 16. *Why leap ye, ye high hills; this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will
dwell it for ever.] But do not grow proud of this, ye lofty mountains, for neither the height of Salmon, nor of Bashan, shall invite him there to make his habitation; Sion is the hill which he hath chosen to honour with that favour; yea, there the Lord hath resolved to fix his tabernacle, and never (till the Messiah come) to remove to any other.

Ver. 17. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them in Sinai, as in the holy place.] Nor let the heathen brag of the multitude of their chariots, wherein consists their strength; for in Zion there are ten thousand times more, innumerable hosts of angels attending upon the divine majesty, who is with them there, as he was upon Mount Sinai, which now is in the sanctuary.

Ver. 18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.] Thou hast declared as much, O God, who art gone up thither, and hast highly exalted thyself by illustrious victories; which, through their invisible ministry, thou hast given us over our enemies, (as the Messiah, who shall be thy sanctuary, will do far more magnificently, when, after the conquest of death, &c. he shall ascend in a bright chariot, Acts, i. 9. attended with the heavenly hosts, into the highest heavens, to be exalted at thy right-hand,) whom by thy aid we have carried away captive, and their spoils together with them, to be distributed among thy people, (an emblem of the rich gifts the Messiah shall bestow upon us, and distribute among us after his ascension;) yea, the rebellious opposers of thee in other nations shall become proselytes to dwell with thee, O Lord God, and worship at thy sanctuary, (as the Gentile world shall, by that effusion of divine gifts, submit themselves to the Messiah, the Lord God of all the world.)

Ver. 19. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.] Blessed be the Lord, who day by day exercises as tender and careful a providence over us, as a mother over her children, (Isa. xlvi. 3.) That mighty God be blessed, to whom we owe all our deliverances.

Ver. 20. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.] And they are very great and very many, which it is not in the power of any other God to bestow, but of him alone that dwells in Sion; who, as the Author of all men's being, and their supreme Lord and Governor, disposes of their lives, and assigns them what passages he pleases out of the world.

Ver. 21. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his oppressors.] And certainly God, the righteous Judge, will now break in pieces all those enemies that lift up their heads so high, in hope to destroy us; their fierce captain, (2 Sam. viii. 3.), whose shaggy hair makes him look very terribly, shall not escape, if he go on still presumptuously to offend thee.

Ver. 22. The Lord said, I will bring again from Babylon; I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea.] Thus the Lord hath determined within himself, saying, I will renew the wonders I wrought in former times, and make my people as victorious over all these mighty armies, as they were over Og the king of Bashan, (Numb. xxi.), and over Pharaoh, when they marched through the Red Sea, (Exod. xv.)

Ver. 23. That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies; and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.] The victory shall be so complete, and such a slaughter made, that thou mayest wade, and thy dogs put their tongues in the blood that shall flow from those enemies, and from him that leads them.

Ver. 24. They have seen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.] For thy people, O God, have seen to their joy, and thy enemies to their terror, what a solemn entrance thou madest, (by the ark of thy presence,) with what pomp thou, my mighty God and my King, was brought into the sanctuary, 2 Sam. vi. 13. 15. 16.

Ver. 25. The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; amongst them were the damsels playing with timbrels.] Part of the Levites were singing before, and the rest with musical instruments followed after, (1 Chron. xv. 16. 28.) and to complete the melody, the damsels playing with timbrels came between them both.

Ver. 26. Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.] And as they went along, they sung this song, O bless your good God, all your assemblies; bless the Lord, all ye that are the offspring of Israel.

Ver. 27. There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah, and their counsel, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.] Who were universally assembled to accompany that pomp, (1 Chr. xiii. 5. xv. 3.) for not only the nearest tribes were there, viz. Benjamin, little indeed in number, (Judges, xxi. 6.) but from whom the first king of Israel came; and the princes of the tribe of Judah, the great support and prop of the kingdom; but the princes also of those which are most remote, as Zebulun and Naphtali, came to attend at that solemnity.

Ver. 28. Thy God hath commanded thy strength; strengthen, O God, that which thou hast brought for us.] This happy union, thy God, O Israel, hath brought about, and thereby made thee strong and formidable to thy enemies; and may it please thee, O God, to continue and confirm it; for as it is begun, so it must be perfected by thee alone.

Ver. 29. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.] Pour down thy blessings upon Jerusalem, opt of thy sanctuary, (1 Sam. i. 9. iii.) which now thou hast settled there; and so shall heathen kings bring presents, (2 Sam. viii. 11.) in token of their subjection to thee.

Ver. 30. Rebuie the company of spear-men, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter thou the people that delight in war.] Destroy that fierce prince, (2 Sam. viii. 3.), who like a wild beast...
Psalm LXIX.

To the chief musician upon Shoshannim. A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—This psalm, the title assures us, was composed by David; and the matter of it sufficiently declares, that he was in extreme great danger when it was penned. I should suppose it might have been about that time, when he concluded, that he should one day perish by the hand of Saul, (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.), were it not for what we read here, ver. 35. of this psalm, concerning God’s love to Zion; which was not then in the possession of the Israelites. And therefore it must rather be intimated when he was persecuted by his rebellious son Absalom; who pressed him so sorely, and reduced him to such lamentable straits, that, as he feared, he should never be able to extricate himself; so he could find no words high enough to express the agonies into which they cast him. But this is not so considerable a difficulty, as to be sufficient to incline those who read the whole psalm seriously, to conclude that it hath no reference to Saul’s persecution; unto which some passages in it seem more plainly to belong than to the other. And therefore I suppose he only reviewed it, (see Psal. lxx.) and added the 35th verse in the rebellion of Absalom; which was likewise so grievous and dangerous, that he could find no words fitter to represent his sad condition, than those he had formerly used in the like distress. And some of the expressions, it is manifest, are such as were not literally fulfilled in him, in either of those afflictions, but in our Saviour Christ; of whom David was a figure, both in his sufferings, and in his advancement after them to a kingdom. There is no mystery, I suppose, in the word Shoshannim, (as some of the Jews fancy;) but it only denotes that the master of the music was to take care this psalm should be sung as the 45th; to which I refer you for an account of this word.

Why Theodoret should think this psalm was made without respect to David, for the Jews in the captivity of Babylon, praying for deliverance out of that servitude, I cannot imagine. But what he adds concerning our Saviour’s sufferings, which are here foretold, together with the utter overthrow of the Jewish nation, who were the authors of them, is very considerable. For because, saith he, they were so audaciously wicked, as to do that to their benefactor and Saviour, which they had suffered from their spiteful enemies; God the righteous Judge condemned them to suffer that themselves, which they prayed might fall on the heads of those enemies.

Psalm LXIX.

SAVE me, for the waters are come in unto my soul.] O most mighty God, in whom alone I hope for safety, deliver me, I beseech thee, out of this miserable condition; wherein I am overwhelmed with so many calamities, that my life is in extreme danger; unless thou mercifully preserve it.

Ver. 2. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.] There is no hope otherwise that I should escape, for I am like a man that sinks deeper and deeper into the mud, and can find no bottom; or that is fallen into the very deepest place in a river, and carried away out of the reach of human help, by the violence of the stream.

Ver. 3. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.] I have long also implored thy help, with most earnest prayers, even till I am tired with my crying; I can now scarce speak a word, nor lift up my eyes towards heaven, from whence, with great intention of mind,
I have expected some relief; but cannot yet obtain it of my God, who hath been formerly most gracious to me.

Ver. 4. They that hate me without a cause, are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; then I restored that which I took not away. No, rather my enemies are grown more formidable, both for their number, which exceeds the hairs of my head, and for their power, which enables them to destroy me; to which they want no will, having conceived an implacable, but undeserved hatred to me: Who have been so far from provoking their, malice, that I am content, rather than quarrel with them, to part with my own right; and to make them satisfaction for a wrong that I never did them.

Ver. 5. O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. O God, the righteous Judge, I make appeal to thee, who knowest the very worst of me; and protest, that, whatsoever my mistakes or my wilful sins have been, which cannot escape thy sight, I never did them any injury, nor gave them cause to persecute me.

Ver. 6. Let not them that wait on thee, O LORD God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Which will move thee, I hope, to take some compassion on me; for it will extremely dishearten all pious men, if thou sufferest innocence to be thus ruined; for their sakes, as well as for mine, be pleased to relieve me; O let not those that rely alone on thee, O Lord the mighty God, who commandest all the powers in heaven and earth, hang down their heads for shame, to see me deserted by thee; let not those, O God, (who hast engaged thyself unto us by a gracious covenant), that commend themselves to thee in well doing, be confounded; as they will, if they see me forsaken by thee.

Ver. 7. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. For it is upon thy account (merely because I adhere to thee, and will use no unlawful means to right myself, 1 Sam. xxiv. 10. &c.) that I have thus long suffered so many reproaches and abuses, as have made me extremely contemptible.

Ver. 8. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. Not only to those that do not know me, but to my cousins and familiarina, nay, to those who lay in the same womb with me; who behave themselves towards me as if I were a perfect stranger, or a man of another country and religion.

Ver. 9. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. Whereas thou knowest it was nothing but my ardent zeal for thy honour and service, (not any childish ambition), which made me hazard my life for them; and was the first occasion of this hatred they bear me, (1 Sam. i. xvii. 6. 7. 8, as it will be of the death of the Messiah, Job. ii. 17.), I could not endure the blasphemies which I heard against thee, but they moved my indignation (as they will do
Ver. 17. And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.] Who, as despis- 
cable as I am, yet am thy servant; and upon that 
score claim the patronage of my most gracious Lord 
and master; O disown me, especially now that 
I am in such helpless straits; but rather make the 
greater haste to relieve me.

Ver. 18. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: 
deliver me, because of mine enemies.] For nothing less 
than my life (which is in imminent danger) will sa-
sify the rage and hatred of my enemies; therefore 
terpose thy power for my rescue, and let not them 
have the pleasure (which will make them still more 
insolent) to see me ruined.

Ver. 19. Thou hast known my reproach, and my 
shame, and my dishonour; mine adversaries are all be-
fore thee.] Thou art perfectly acquainted with the 
reproaches, the shameful and contumelious abuses of 
all sorts, which I have suffered, and must still (with-
out thy seasonable deliverance) endure from my cruel 
enemies: none of whom, nor of their secret plots, 
and subtle lies, whereby they seek to defame and un-
do me, are hidden from thy all-seeing eyes.

Ver. 20. Rejo'each hath broken my heart, and I am 
full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but 
there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.] 
Which, behold likewise, what an intolerable burden 
it is to me, to be thus loaded with reproaches and 
to have no means to clear myself from their false 
imputations: It even breaks my heart, and I am op-
pressed with heaviness, looking still for some help to 
arrive; but, alas! I cannot meet with so much as the 
comfort of any body to console with me.

Ver. 21. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in 
my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.] Instead of that, 
they exasperated my grief; and because I was so mi-
serable, reproached me the more bitterly: just as if, 
when a man is hungry, one should give him gall to 
eat; or when he is thirsty, they should give him (as 
they really will do to Christ, Job, xix.) vinegar to 
drink.

Ver. 22. Let their table become a snare before them: 
and that which should have been for their welfare, let it 
become a trap.] Which barbarous usage shall meet with 
a suitable vengeance; for they shall have no friends 
neither: but that they eat of their meat shall betray 
them, and their posterity shall prove their ruin. This 
shall be the recompence of those that abuse the Mes-
siah, as now they do me, Rom. xi. 9.

Ver. 23. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; 
and make their loins continually to shake:] They shall 
be deprived of all judgement, and not be able to see 
the evils that are coming on them; or if they do, 
let them not be able, O Lord, to prevent them; but 
make their councils uncertain, and let them have no 
power to execute any good design for their preserva-
tion.

Ver. 24. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let 
thy wrathful anger take hold of them.] Pour out on a 
sudden so many evils upon them, that they may not 
be able to escape; but feel they suffer the most dismal 
effects of thy severest and lasting displeasure against 
them.

Ver. 25. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none 
dwell in their tents.] Let their most magnificent struc-
tures be laid waste; and root them out so entirely, 
that there may not be a man left to dwell in their 
poorest cottages, (Matth. xxiii. 38. Acts, i. 20.)

Ver. 26. For they persecute him whom thou hast smit-
ten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast 
wounded.] For they had no pity upon the miserable; 
but, instead of comforting him when they saw him 
afflicted by thee, they took that opportunity to insult 
over him, and oppress him; nay, made a pastime of 
his calamity; and added to all his other suffering their 
scoifs and jeers, their lies and calumnies, or at least 
their uncharitable censures of him.

Ver. 27. Add iniquity to their iniquity: and let them 
not come unto thy righteousness.] Let such obstinate 
offenders be quite deserted by thee; and by thy just 
judgement be suffered to go on to complete their in-
iquity, and never obtain any mercy from thee.

Ver. 28. Let them be blotted out of the book of the 
living, and not be written with the righteous.] Let 
them be cut off before their time, in the midst of their 
jollity; and let them enjoy none of the blessings 
which thou hast promised to the righteous.

Ver. 29. But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salva-
tion, O God, set me up on high.] But let me, O God, 
who now am despised and dejected, be graciously de-
ivered by thee, and raised above the contempt or 
power of such men to depress me.

Ver. 30. I will praise the name of God with a song, 
and will magnify him with thanksgiving.] And I will 
not be unmindful of the benefit; but praise thy power 
and goodness in joyful hymns; and acknowledge 
how great they are, in thankful commemorations of 
them.

Ver. 31. This also shall please the LORD better than 
an ox or bullock that hath borns and hoofs.] Which 
will be, I know, more acceptable sacrifices to the 
Lord, than if I should bring him a whole ox, when 
he is young and in his prime, and offer him at his 
altar.

Ver. 32. The humble shall see this, and be glad: and 
your heart shall live that seek God.] For other pious 
men, reading in my songs the goodness of the Lord, 
will be filled with joyful hopes, when they fall into 
such like troubles as I am in: they will think they 
have not: hear me saying to them, Do not despond, but be of 
good comfort, whosoever you are that seek God, and 
faithfully depend upon him.

Ver. 33. For the LORD heareth the poor, and despi-
seth not his prisoners.] For the Lord, you see, doth 
not fail to relieve the afflicted and helpless men, when 
they cry unto him, and rely on him alone; but owns 
them for his servants, when they are no better than 
slaves, by delivering them from their hard and cruel 
bondage.

Ver. 34. Let the heaven and earth praise him, the 
sea, and every thing that moveth therein.] Let the 
whole world, therefore, join together, to celebrate
him with their praises: for one tongue is not sufficient to proclaim his most excellent goodness, and to thank him for all his benefits.

Ver. 35. For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell therein, and have it in possession.] Which shall be continued towards Sion; for God will preserve it from being destroyed in these tumults; and will repair the ruins of the other cities of Judah; that his people may dwell quietly, and not be disturbed in their possessions.

Ver. 36. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.] And their posterity also may hereafter inherit it, provided they faithfully serve him, and heartily love him and his religion: for then they shall dwell securely in Sion; and offer the continual sacrifice of praise unto him.

PSALM LXX.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

THE ARGUMENT.—It is not easy to determine, whether this psalm was only separated from the 40th, (whereof, for the main, it is a part,) that it might serve those who are in any distress, as a short form, recommending themselves and their condition to God; or that David in some new danger (probably that into which he fell by Absalom's conspiracy, as Theodoret thinks,) took a review of what he had there said; and with some small alterations, composed this as a distinct prayer, to be used by him constantly, during the time of that sharp affliction. I incline to this latter, because there is some difference (though not very much, in the 4th verse) between every verse of this psalm, and those in the latter end of the 40th, from which it is taken; just as there is between the 53rd and the 14th. See what I have said there; and in the title of the 88th psalm, you will find why this is called, A Psalm to bring to remembrance.

Ver. 1. MAKE haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.] O God, the judge of the world, thou seest the danger I am in is so exceeding great, that I am undone without thy speedy relief; which I beseech thee therefore not to delay; but to make haste, O Lord, to declare thy power in sending me seasonable help, for my rescue, now that I am ready to perish.

Ver. 2. Let them be ashamed and confounded, that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put them to confusion, that desire my hurt.] My enemies fancy that I cannot escape their hands: but do thou most shamefully disappoint all those that restlessly endeavour to take away my life: defeat them, and put them to flight with open disgrace: whatsoever they be that study to do me any mischief.

Ver. 3. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame, that say, Aha, aba.] Let a total rout of their forces be the recompence of their shameful deeds; whereby they thought to have exposed me to shame; when they insulted over my calamity; and made a mock both of it, and of my hope that thou wouldest deliver me.

Ver. 4. Let all those that seek thee rejoice, and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.] But let all those that depend on thee alone, and seek by no other means, but such as thou allowest, for safety, have perpetual cause to rejoice in thee exceedingly: Let such as expect and delight to see thee appear for the deliverance of thy people, never cease to say, Let the righteous Judge of the world be praised; and the glory of his wonderful works be everywhere published and extolled.

Ver. 5. But I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying.] O God, I beseech thee again, delay not to speed the relief I expect from thee; that this song may be my song also: for at present I am stript of all, and utterly destitute of human help; nay, so forlorn, that I shall perish presently, unless thou prevent it, O Lord; on whom alone I rely for help and deliverance, which I once more beseech thee to send me speedily.

PSALM LXXI.

THE ARGUMENT.—Though this psalm want an inscription, yet it is generally thought that David was the author of it; and if he was, there is no doubt he composed it, upon the occasion of Absalom's unnatural rebellion. For the matter of the psalm sufficiently informs us, that when he made it, he was in extreme great danger of perishing; and this danger also happened in the time of his old age, ver. 9; when he was grey-headed, ver. 18. Now, he was not so during the time of Saul's persecution, (2 Sam. v. 4,) but in that of Absalom's he was; which though it did not last so long as the other, yet in this regard was more grievous to him; that it fell out in his declining years, when men are more unapt for toil and labour, and naturally desirous of quiet and repose. And therefore he begins the psalm almost in the same words as he doth one of those which he made when he was distressed by Saul (Psal. xxxi.) in his younger tears, when he was better able to bear it.

As for the title, which some of the Greek translators, and from them the Latin, have prefixed to this psalm (which they will have to be a psalm of the sons of Jonadab and the first captives); it is so far from the business, that it is hard to give any account of it. For Theodoret pertinently observes, that the sons of Jonadab were not among the first captives; and that he who made this inscription, confesses he did not find it in the Hebrew, but placed it there himself. Yet that learned father, I know not for what reason, takes this psalm to have been composed by David, in the person of those who were captive in Babylon; and wishing
VER. 1. IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion. Thou seest, O Lord, that in all these troubles which have befallen me, I have no confidence in any thing but only thy powerful goodness; which I hope will not fail me now, no more than it hath done heretofore; for I shall be lamentably ashamed, if thou shouldst frustrate my expectation.

VER. 2. Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline thine ear unto me, and save me. Magnify thy mercy and fidelity in delivering me, and finding a way for my escape from these dangers that surround me: let me obtain this extraordinary favour of thee, and preserve me from falling into the hands of those who have conspired to destroy me.

VER. 3. Be thou my strong habitation, wherein I may continually resort; thou hast given commandment to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress. For I am forced to quit my habitation, and have no place of safety (so universal is the revolt) to retreat unto; but whenever I fly to thy Almighty protection, dost thou always keep me as secure as if I reposed myself in an impregnable castle; it is thy purpose, I am confident, to preserve me; for I never trusted in any other strong hold or fortress, but in thee alone.

VER. 4. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. Deliver me therefore from falling into the power of that turbulent man, who hath no fear of thee before his eyes; from the power of him that cares not by what perfidious arts, or cruel violence, he brings his ends to pass.

VER. 5. For thou art my hope, O LORD God; thou art my trust from my youth. For in thee, O Lord, who hast a sovereign dominion, which alters not, have I placed all my hope; and from thee is my expectation: when I was but a youth I confided in thee, (2 Sam. xvii. 33; 37;) and was marvellously preserved by thee.

VER. 6. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art that took me out of my mother’s bowels; my praise shall be continually of thee. Who didst take care of me, even before I could trust in thee; for I have been supported by thee, and preserved in innumerable dangers, ever since I came out of my mother’s womb; where I had perished also, if thy power had not drawn me thence, and brought me into the world; to praise and bless thee, as I have ever done, and will never cease to do, to the end of my days.

VER. 7. I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. There are many indeed (especially the great ones) that stare upon me, as if I were a monster; marvelling, as much at this confidence I place in thee, as they do at my sudden fall into this deplorable condition: but for all their taunts, I do not look upon myself as abandoned by thee; but have a strong hope, that thou wilt deliver me.

VER. 8. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day. And that I shall still have abundant cause to praise without ceasing thy most magnificent goodness towards me.

VER. 9. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. I have deserved, I know, very ill of thee; but let me prevail with thee, notwithstanding, for the continuance of thy favour towards me; and do not reject me now in my old age: O forsake me not, when I have most need of thy help, and am least able to do any thing for myself; but let that good providence, which watched over me in my youth, be still my security.

VER. 10. For mine enemies speak against me: and they that lay wait for my soul, take counsel together. For my enemies are no less subtle, than they are cruel; having defamed me, and taken away my reputation: as they now seek for an opportunity, and for that end are combined in a strong conspiracy to take away my life, (2 Sam. xv. 3. 12.)

VER. 11. Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him. Encouraging one another in their enterprise, with such words as these: God, it is manifest, hath forsaken him, for the hearts of all Israel are turned from him, and his own heart faileth him, (2 Sam. xv. 13. 14;) pursue him closely now, and we shall certainly take him; for he hath not forces enough to withstand us, and to deliver him out of our hands, (2 Sam. xviii. 1. 2.)

VER. 12. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help. But how false soever my subjects are, it daunts me not, if thou, O God, who judgest righteouslie, wilt not be estranged from me: let this their vain confidence, and insulting language, O my God, who hath hitherto so wonderfully preserved me, incline thee to make the greater speed to relieve me.

VER. 13. Let them be confounded, and consumed, that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour, that seek my hurt. Let these implacable enemies, that will not be satisfied but with my life, be most shamefully, disappointed; and see all their forces wherein they trusted, quite dissipated, and come to nothing; expound them that design my ruin to the open shame and contempt of all the world; when they find that they have only ridiculously contrived their own destruction.

VER. 14. But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more. And I will learn thereby, both to hope in thee perpetually, (as now I do,) even in the greatest straits and difficulties; and to add new songs of praise, over and above all those which I have already composed, to magnify thee for the vast heap of benefits which thou hast conferred on me.

VER. 15. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day long; for I know not the numbers thereof. That shall be the subject of my songs, to publish thy mercy and truth in judging righteously between me and my enemies: this shall be my continual employment; though I shall never be able to tell the least part of that mercy, which will appear in my deliverance from such formidable enemies.

VER. 16. I will go in the strength of the Lord God;
I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.] I will enter notwithstanding upon this work, of pondering in my mind, and publishing with my mouth, the mighty things which I expect from the sole powers of the great Lord and governor of all things: I will not ascribe them to my own deserts, or to the courage or fidelity of those few friends that still adhere to me, but to thy undeserved favour, and faithfulness to thy word; and to that alone will I give the praise.

Ver. 17. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.] O good God, thou hast given me many instances of this kind power and faithfulness of thine ever since I was a youth, (ver. 5;) and from thence unto this present moment thou hast been doing wonderful things for my preservation and preferment; which I have not failed to proclaim, and thankfully commemorate.

Ver. 18. Now also when I am old and grey-bearded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.] And therefore do not now, O God, abandon the care of me, when I need it most: but continue the same kindness to me in my declining years, which I found when I was a youth: and let me survive these calamities, to proclaim thy power in fresh instances of it to this present generation, and let all posterity know how mighty it is, in making a few victorious over very great multitudes.

Ver. 19. Thy righteousness also, O God, is very big, who hast done great things; O God, who is like unto thee?] Which I do not despair to see, when I consider how infinitely thy mercy, O God, surpasses all our deserts, nay, expectations; and what stupendous things thou hast already done for me, such as have no example; for who is there, O God, that can be compared to thee, either in goodness to design well for us, or in power to do what thou thinkest good?

Ver. 20. Thou which hast shewed me great and sore trouble, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.] I never was in such straits and distresses (yet I have been in the greatest and sorest) but I found relief from thee: and therefore I doubt not thou wilt revive me, now that all men give me up for dead; and draw me out of this extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help.

Ver. 21. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.] Nay, thou wilt not only restore me to my former greatness, but much augment the splendour of it: and though now I seem forsaken by thee, wilt thou return again, and so surround me with thy favour; that my future comforts shall far exceed my present troubles.

Ver. 22. I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God; unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou holy one of Israel.] And then surely I shall be no less forward to bless thee, than thou art to bestow thy benefits on me: I will bless thee, O my God, in the most joyful manner, with the psaltery and harp, and the rest of my musical instruments; which shall play to the songs I will compose in praise of thy faithfulness and constancy to thy word; O thou, whose incomparable excellencies are peculiarly known unto, and celebrated by thy people Israel.

Ver. 23. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.] It is not possible to express the joy wherewith not merely my lips, but my heart and soul, shall sing triumphant songs; for the miraculous deliverance which I expect from thee.

Ver. 24. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long; for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.] Which shall not only be the subject of my solemn songs, but of my constant discourse; wherein I will perpetually magnify thy goodness and truth towards me, and thy just vengeance upon my enemies; whom I look upon already as utterly defeated; and hanging down their heads, to see that ruin fall upon themselves, which they designed for me.

P S A L M LXXII.

A Psalm for Solomon.

The Argument.—That David was the author of this psalm, we may be satisfied from the conclusion of it. From whence we may also gather, that it was made by him towards the conclusion of his life. When by his command Nathan, the prophet, and Zadok, the priest, took Solomon and set him upon his throne, (1 Kings, i. 39. Ec.) that David might have the satisfaction to see all the great men do homage to Solomon, and acknowledge him for their succeeding sovereign before he died, which you find he did, see 1 Chron. xxix. 24. And therefore the spirit of the holy man being transported with an extraordinary joy, he indited this hymn, and sent it to Solomon; wherein he first recommends him to the divine benediction, and then instructs him how to make his people happy, by describing the qualities of a good king, and the prosperous state of the kingdom under his government. Which his eyes began to behold before he died, (1 Chron. xxix. 25.), and he hoped others should behold when he was gone, to the example and admiration of all following generations. For what we translate in the future time, as if it were a prophecy, may be construed to be only a prayer; which he carries on in so high a strain in some places, that the words had not a full accomplishment in Solomon, nor in any one else, till the appearing of that great King Christ. Of the happiness of whose reign, and of the justice of whose government, together with the mightiness, and the largeness, and the eternal continuance of his kingdom, his father David here prophesies.

Of that there can be no reasonable doubt; (for the Jews themselves acknowledge it, as appears by the Chaldee Paraphrase, Misdarch Tebillim, the book Siphrite, and many others;) but that in this psalm he prophesies of nothing else, and hath no respect
to Solomon, as Theodoret supposes in his interpretation, seems as far wide from the truth as to say, that he looks no father than Solomon. For the psalm doth in part agree as aptly (if not more) to Solomon, as the name of Solomon doth to the Messiah, our Saviour Christ; who was indeed the Prince of Peace, and left his peace with his disciples when he left the world, (as Theodoret notes), and made peace wheresoe'er his doctrine was entertained, and his government settled over men's hearts. Yet he is not the only person here spoken of, but as St Hierom hath excellently stated the matter, in Solomon himself there was the shadow and image of the truth, which was more perfectly fulfilled in our Lord and Saviour.

Ver. 1. *Give* the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.] O God, the supreme Judge of the world, bestow, I beseech thee, upon Solomon, who is now anointed to sit on my throne, such a right judgement in all things, and such uprightness and integrity of heart, that he may govern thy people according to thy laws, and temper justice with mercy, may be a worthy successor to me, who have now resigned my charge unto him.

Ver. 2. *He* shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgement.] The weight of which I know is so exceeding great, that he needs thy special guidance and assistance; by which he may be able to administer all affairs with such impartial justice and clemency, that the poorest subjects he hath may be as dear unto him as they are unto thee; and recover their rights, or be preserved in them from the power of those who would oppress them.

Ver. 3. *The* mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness.] So shall all parts of the kingdom be most happy, living in peace, and enjoying the blessed fruits of it; while all the judges of the land, both great and small, make it their study to maintain them in their just rights and liberties.

Ver. 4. *He* shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.] And his authority is not abused to the oppression of the poor, and the making those more miserable who have nothing but beggary left them for their inheritance; but employed for their defence and preservation, and for the crushing of those that by fraud or force are injurious to them.

Ver. 5. *They* shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endureth, throughout all generations.] Which righteous administration shall redound to his everlasting honour, and win him such reverence and observance from his people, as shall make him a lively emblem of the great King Christ; whose happy subjects shall never cease to worship and praise him day and night to the world's end.

Ver. 6. *He* shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth.] For he shall not endeavour to be formidable to them like a tyrant, whose government imitates the thunder, storms, and tempests; but descend most graciously to the meanest, and rule them in so soft and gentle a manner as shall make his authority no less acceptable and beneficial than the rain is to the after-grass, or dripping showers which fall in the summer heat, to refresh the parched earth.

Ver. 7. *In* his days shall the righteous flourish, and *abundance* of peace, *so long* as the moon endureth.] The wicked shall have no preferment in his days, but virtuous men shall grow to a great height, and flourish as the plants do after those cherishing showers; whereby such lasting peace and tranquillity shall be established, as nothing can exceed but the blessed times of the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom shall have no end.

Ver. 8. *He* shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.] Nor shall his empire be confined within the bounds of Judea, but according to the promise made to our forefather Abraham, (Gen. xv. 18.), and renewed to his children, (Exod. xxxiii. 31. Deut. i. 7. xi. 24. Josh. i. 3. 4.), he shall extend it from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the river Euphrates to the border of Egypt, (1 Kings. iv. 21. 2 Chron. ix. 26. Ezra, iv. 20.), and be the most illustrious type of that kingdom of Christ which shall spread itself throughout the world.

Ver. 9. *They* that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.] The most barbarous nations shall come and do him homage; and they that refuse it shall be humbled, and forced at last to submit, and prostrate themselves with the lowliest reverence at his feet.

Ver. 10. *The kings* of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.] The kings of the most distant countries, they of Tarshish, (1 Kings. x. 22.), as well as Cyprus and Crete, and the rest of the isles, shall honour him with their presents; and so shall they of Arabia, as far as the Persian Gulf, approach him with gifts.

Ver. 11. *Tea, all kings* shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.] Yes, so many kings and nations shall make their obeisance, and subject themselves unto him, that it shall foreshadow the large extent of the kingdom of Christ, who shall be universally acknowledged, worshipped, and obeyed, by all kings, and by all nations of the earth.

Ver. 12. *For* he shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also, and them that hath no helper.] Nor shall they be induced to these submissions so much by the greatness of his power, the vastness of his riches, and the insignificance of his court, as by the fame of his justice, mercy, and compassion, (wherein he shall resemble the Lord Christ;) For no sooner shall any miserable wretch, who hath no friend in the world, implore his protection, but he shall instantly succour, defend, and relieve him.

Ver. 13. *He* shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.] He shall take pity upon such helpless creature, and add no heavier burden
unto that of their lamentable poverty; nor shall he be prodigal of their lives, but as tenderly secure them as those of his greatest subjects.

Ver. 14. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. He shall preserve them from being ruined, either by the fraud or violence of those who are too subtle or too mighty for them, and love them so dearly, as never to satisfy his own ambition, covetousness, or revenge, with the expence of the precious treasure of their blood.

Ver. 15. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall be praised.] Whereby his reign shall be long and prosperous; and the longer he reigns, the richer presents shall be brought unto him, (as there shall be to Christ from the eastern countries), together with their perpetual prayers for his continued prosperity; and the highest praises and commendations which shall ever be in men's mouths, of his just and gracious government.

Ver. 16. There shall be a bundful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.] Which God shall bless with such plenty, that a bundful of corn sown in the earth, even upon the top of barren mountains, shall spring up so thick, with ears so plump and full, that when they are shaken with the wind, they shall make a noise like the cedars of Lebanon; nor shall the city be less fruitful than the country, but become as populous and well stored with all good things as the earth is with grass, or flowers in the spring.

Ver. 17. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.] His memory and fame shall never die, but be propagated from father to son as long as the sun shall shine; and when they would wish well to another, they shall say, God make thee as happy as Solomon; for all people that hear of him shall look on him as the most excellent prince that ever was, except the King Messiah, whom all nations shall magnify and exalt, and above all things desire his blessing.

Ver. 18. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things.] For which good hope, and for all his other benefits, I renew my thanks (1 Chron. xxix. 10.) to the great Lord and Sovereign of all the world, who hath graciously chosen Israel for his peculiar people; let him be most heartily blessed and praised, whose bounty is superabundant, and incomparably beyond all that can be said or thought of it.

Ver. 19. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen.] Let his super-eminent perfections be forever celebrated with our praises; and not with ours only, but let the whole world be possessed with a sense of the surpassing greatness of his wisdom, power, and love, and join together with us in his praises. Let it be so, let it be so; let us all consent to say again and again, The Lord be praised, the Lord be praised.

Ver. 20. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.] This was the last psalm which David, the son of Jesse, composed, not long before he died; (and was all of his that the collector of this book could find before he published.)

END OF THE SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS.

THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALM LXXXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.—Here begins a new collection of seventeen psalms, most of them very disconsolate and full of sad complaints, which make up the third book of this volume, as the Hebrews divide it. They were most of them composed by Asaph, (and but one of them by David), though who he was is not resolved by interpreters, who suspect indeed there might be another author of some of these psalms, but have no other Asaph to name but Asaph the singer, who was famous in the days of David, 1 Chron. vi. 39. xvi. 5. 2 Chron. v. 12. And accordingly Apolinarius thus descants upon the title: The divine invention of David failing in the composing of songs, Asaph arose, and by the

Divine Spirit resounded this hymn. But it seems to me, that there is another person of this name mentioned in the holy books, (who may be more probably entitled to this work), called Asaph the Seer, (see Psalm 1.), who lived in the days of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxv. 30. and whose son, I suppose, was then recorder, 2 Kings, xviii. 37. Isa. xxxvi. 3. Some of them, indeed, (as I shall take notice in due place), may be thought rather to belong to another Asaph in after times; but for the present psalm (and most of the rest) I can find no person so likely to whom it may be entitled, as him now named; who composed it, I conceive, either when he saw the miserable havoc which strangers made among them in the days of Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii. 17. 18. 19. xxix. 8. 9.; or, when Senna-
cherib invaded them, notwithstanding the reformation which Hezekiah had made; or, which is most probable, upon the occasion that David wrote the 37th psalm, to comfort himself and good men when they saw the lewer sort of men among them thrive and prosper, and the pious sometimes sorely afflicted; quite contrary to the sanctions of their laws which promised all good things to those that observed it, and threatened the evil to those that broke it. This extremely afflicted his spirit, and staggered his faith, till he considered the matter more deeply, and then he broke out into this meditation, saying,

Ver. 1. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. I will never hereafter, whatsoever confusions I behold, question the justice of God's providence, but constantly affirm, that he is not merely just, but very good, yea, hath a most singular love to his faithful people, who, notwithstanding the evils they endure, will never consent to do any evil.

Ver. 2. But as for me, my steps were almost gone: my steps had well nigh slipped. Time was indeed, when I, even I, who have had such long experience of his care over me, began to doubt and stagger in my faith; nay, was in danger to tumble headlong into unbelief.

Ver. 3. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. The reason was, that having a just indignation against the folly, or rather madness of wicked men, it first vexed me to see them, notwithstanding their ill deservings, in a very flourishing condition, and then tempted me to think it very hard, that some men should not equal, if not exceed them, in such happiness; especially when I saw no likelihood that it would end, but that they continue in their prosperity.

Ver. 4. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. For as they carry on all their designs smoothly, and meet with no rub in their way, nor are in any danger (so great is their power) to be bound over by human justice, to answer for their crimes, how many soever they commit; so they are not afflicted with sore diseases by the hand of God, nor brought to their graves with pains and torment; but after a long life, in firm and vigorous health, depart easily out of the world.

Ver. 5. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Their life is nothing so laborious and toilsome as that of many honest, but poor and wretched men; and they escape untouched, or are little hurt by such calamities, as are common to all mankind.

Ver. 6. Therefore pride compassed them about as a chain; violence covered them as a garment. Which makes them so unsufferably proud, and vain concealed of themselves, that they not only tyrannize over their neighbours, but openly boast of the power they have to do them mischief; and glory in all the violence and cruelty, whereby they maintain and increase their pompous greatness.

Ver. 7. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than their heart could wish. In which they pamper themselves to such an excess, that in their very countenance they express the haughty swelling of their minds and hearts; which are strangely puffed up, by their being raised (not only beyond the expectation of all other men, but) far above all that they themselves at first imagined or could design.

Ver. 8. They are corrupt; and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They mock at all those who scrupulously tie themselves to the rules of justice, or tell them of the danger they run by their violation; for they threaten to undo all those that oppose them, and publicly declare, in the height of their arrogance, that they will not be bound by any laws.

Ver. 9. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth. No, not those of God himself, who, (with all the invisible powers of which men talk,) they say, is but a name, which they do not dread; and therefore no wonder if such blasphemers of his majesty spare neither high nor low, but let their tongues loose, to abuse and calumniate whomsoever they please upon earth.

Ver. 10. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And yet, as bad as they are, there is none of them but hath his followers and admirers, whom he first invites, and then retains, like beasts, by filling their bellies; which abundantly contents them, though others be squeezed and oppressed, to give them this poor satisfaction.

Ver. 11. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High? Nay, they drink in their opinions, and join with them in their impiety, saying, How can God know what we do here? or if he do, why should we think that he, who is so high, troubles himself about our affairs?

Ver. 12. Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. For behold, there are none that contemn him more than these men; and yet he is so far from inflicting any punishment on them, that none enjoy such a continued course of prosperity as they, whose wealth and power increase every day.

Ver. 13. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. And verily, if these men discourse aright, I have taken a great deal of pains to little purpose; while I have studiously endeavoured to keep my heart pure from so much as ill designs, as well as to refrain the doing of any evil actions, from the charge of which I can purge myself.

Ver. 14. For all the day long have I been plagued, and cast down every morning. And yet I am plagued perpetually by the restless malice of these wicked doers; which, as constantly as the sun rises, falls on me a deal sooner than on other men.

Ver. 15. If I say, I will speak thus: behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. But, whatever confused and foolish thoughts came,
on a sudden into my mind, I concluded, upon more mature deliberation, that if I said as these men do, I should basely betray the cause of all them who are truly dear unto thee;

Ver. 16. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me:* And therefore resolved, with myself, before I pronounced my sentence, to study this point more seriously, which at first sight appeared so hard, that it grievously perplexed me.

Ver. 17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end.* And retiring myself into the holy places, to consult with thee, and with those to whom thou communicatest thy secrets, I was presently sensible how short their felicity is; unto which death having put an utter end, it is followed with a dismal after-reckoning in another world.

Ver. 18. *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction.* I next considered, that all of them do not stand so firm as they imagine, but merely flatter themselves with vain hopes of continuing in their station to the end of their days; for being raised to the highest preferments, they find them to be very slippery places; from whence, to the amazement of themselves, and of all spectators, they come tumbling down into a most horrible ruin.

Ver. 19. *How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.* Oh what an astonishing change is this! which is the most frightful, when on a sudden the divine vengeance seizes on them, and when they least expect it, an end is put to their greatness; nay, they are quite destroyed, in a most terrible manner, as if they had never been.

Ver. 20. *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awaketh, thou shalt despise their image.* So that it is but a dream of happiness wherein they live, and they pride themselves in a mere imaginary glory, which not only vanishes away, when thou, O Lord, dost arise to judge them; but becomes as contemptible, in that very city wherein they appeared in all their pomp and splendour, as the fine things which a man sees in his sleep are when he awaketh.

Ver. 21. *Thou my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.* And therefore when my spirit boiled with vexation, and grew sore at the sight of their prosperity, (ver. 2. 3.) when I was so vehemently provoked to passionate complaints, feeling the sharpest touches of grief and anger.

Ver. 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was a beast before thee.* I now ingenuous acknowledge, it was for want of such manly and religious thoughts as these, which should have been in my mind, when I thought of thy administrations, if I had not been dull and stupid, as void of sense as the beasts, which look only at things before their eyes, and have no regard to what is to come, or is not seen.

Ver. 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast adorned me by my right hand.* For if I had looked beyond my senses, I might have seen that I am under the care of thy good providence, and that thou hast been my guide and my supporter, even when I had these brutish thoughts, and didst not suffer these brutish thoughts to destroy me.

Ver. 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.* And therefore I ought in all reason still to conclude, that thou wilt direct me to behave myself so wisely, that I shall never fall into their snares; but, after I have suffered a while, be preferred to those dignities from whence they fall; and, which is more, be so graciously accepted by thee, as to continue in them unto immortal glory.

Ver. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* This I expect from thy almighty goodness, who art the sole object of my hope. For thou knowest there is none in heaven, whom I depend upon for help and protection, but thee alone; none upon earth, whose favour I seek, but only thine, which shall perfectly content me.

Ver. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* It is possible I may still be pressed with such sore affections, that not only my bodily strength, but also my courage, may begin again to fail me; but then I will recover myself, and fortify my soul by flying unto thee, O God, for safety; in whose love I will always think myself happy, and enjoy everlasting satisfaction.

Ver. 27. *For lo, they that are far from thee, shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a-wandering from thee.* For there is nothing more certain, or more remarkable than this; that they who, by forsaking thee, have put themselves far from under thy care, will never be able, by any other means, to save themselves from perishing; for thou hast already made such men a terrible example of thy displeasure; and utterly destroyed those, who, quitting thy service, have devoted themselves to the worship of other gods. 2 Chron. xxviii. 16. 19. xxix. 7. 8. 9.

Ver. 28. *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.* And therefore I will learn by their miscarriages, that it is the best and safest course for me, to adhere to my good God, and to make my humble addresses to him alone. I have done so hitherto, and no danger shall tempt me hereafter to quit this hold, and to confide in any thing, but only in the Sovereign of the world, who never fails those that depend upon him, and will, I hope, be so gracious unto me, that I shall have abundant cause to publish and proclaim to all others the works of his providence, in preserving the good, and in throwing the wicked down, at last, to the ground.

**PSALM LXXIV.**

**Maschil of Anaph.**

**The Argument.**—The desolation of Jerusalem and of the temple, as well as the rest of the country, made by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, was the sad occasion of this psalm. For it is altogether improbable, that it hath respect to the days of An-
tiochus Epiphanes, as some fancy; because, as Theodoret pertinently notes, (to omit all other reasons,) we read nothing in any history of his burning the temple, or so much as of his laying the city waste; which are both here most sorrowfully bewailed by Asaph. Who was not, therefore, that Asaph in David’s time, (unless we should grant him to have written by the spirit of prophecy, and predicted what should be in after-times, as a great many think), because there was no such temple in those days, nor had been, as is here described: nor was it Asaph the seer in Hezekiah’s days, (of whom, see argument of the foregoing psalm), who saw no such desolation made by Sennacherib, (for he did not take Jerusalem, nor shoot so much as an arrow into it), nor, in all likelihood, prophesied of the destruction here spoken of; because the description of it in this psalm is so plain, that we may most reasonably think the author of it had it before his eyes, and did not merely see it by the spirit of prophecy; which is not wont to foretell things in so clear a manner, but more obscurely and darkly.

I conclude, therefore, it was some other Asaph who composed this psalm, in the time of the captivity, and in the middle, or rather toward the conclusion of it; because he complains, ver. 9. that they had no prophet (as there was in the beginning of the captivity, particularly Jeremiah) to tell them how long it should last. And considering that in the second verse he speaks of himself as one that dwelt still in the land of Israel, pointing to Mount Sion as a place near to him, I take him to have been some pious man of the posterity of Asaph, who was suffered to remain there with the Chaldeans.

And if it were fit to suppose him to have written this psalm very young, and to have lived to a great age, when I have no proof of either; I should guess him to be Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, in the days of Nehemiah; who desired Artaxerxes to write to him, to furnish him with timber out of Lebanon, for the rebuilding some of those places, which the psalmist here complains were destroyed. Among which the porch of the court of the sanctuary remained unbuilt even unto those times.

Howsoever, from the mention of Mount Sion in the second verse, it is manifest, Grotius forgot himself, when, in his notes upon ver. 6. he applies this psalm to the destruction of Shiloh; which he supposes Asaph to have here bewailed. For Mount Sion had then never been in their possession, as it was afterward, and had lain so long waste (ver. 3.) when Asaph wrote this psalm, that it looked like a perpetual desolation. Besides, the tabernacle was not burnt when Shiloh was destroyed, but remained, though without the ark, till the days of Solomon, 2 Chron. i. 3. see Psal. lxviii. And of the meaning of Maschil, see Psal. xxxii.

Ver. 1. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture. O God, the Sovereign Judge of the world, who hast justly expelled us out of our land, and continued our banishment so long, that little hope appears of our being restored to it again; behold the anguish of our souls wherein we cry unto thee for mercy: for we are confounded to see thee so highly incensed against those, who were once under thy most indulgent care; as if thou wert resolved never to be reconciled to us any more.

Ver. 2. Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed; this Mount Sion, wherein thou hast dwelt. Thou hast not forgotten, we know, though it be very long ago, with the expence of how many miracles thou didst make our ancestors thy peculiar people: for which reason, though we be exceedingly undeserving, we beseech thee to let all the world see, thou wilt not utterly abandon the poor remainders of that nation, which thou didst acquire at so great a price; that kingdom, which thou didst rescue out of the most miserable slavery, to be thy own possession; and this Mount Sion, whereon (after thou hadst by many wonders brought us into Canaan, and rooted out the old inhabitants) thou wast pleased at last to settle thy abode among us.

Ver. 3. Lift up thy feet to the perpetual desolations: even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.] Make haste, good Lord, to come and visit the ruins of our country and city, which have lasted exceeding long, and will never be repaired without thy powerful help; which we implore against the authors of them; who, to all the other mischiefs they have done, have, with a peculiar spite, not only defaced, but utterly destroyed thy dwelling-place.

Ver. 4. Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregation; they set up their ensigns for signs.] They are thy enemies, therefore, as well as ours, whose fury and rage so transports them, that they roar rather than shout; whilst they triumph in those places where thy people were wont to meet to praise thy name: there they have set up their banners in token of their victory; and brag as if their gods were superior unto thee.

Ver. 5. A man was famous, according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.] Every one of them laid about him, and bestridden himself with all his might, as if he hoped to get renown by the mischief he did; which was committed with no more remorse, than if they had been lopping off boughs in the thickets of a forest, where they may be spared.

Ver. 6. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.] Just so think I see (as if it were now a-doing) how they hacked and hewed with axes, and knocked down with hammers, the curious carved work of the temple; whose elegance would have moved any but barbarians, to have preserved it with as great a zeal, as they employed to beat it in pieces.

Ver. 7. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary; they have defiled, by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground.] But so mad was their rage, it was not satisfied with this; but set fire unto thy holy place: and what that did not consume, they pulled down; till they had utterly profaned the habitation.
consecrated to thy majesty, by laying it level with the ground.

Ver. 8. They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land.] Nor did all this give a stop unto their fury; but they rather grew the more outrageous: for, designing quite to destroy our religion, both in this and in future generations, they left not so much as one place, wherein we might meet to say our prayers, or hear the law throughout the land.

Ver. 9. We see not our signs, there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.] And which is, the saddest thing of all, thou seemest to have left us too; and we see no token of thy divine presence with us: so far we are from beholding any miraculous works, as our fathers did, for our deliverance, that there is not so much as a prophet to be found to give us any advice, or speak a word of comfort to us; not a man among us, that can tell when these calamities will have an end.

Ver. 10. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?] What a reproach is this, O God? which hath quite tired our patience and made us cry unto thee to make haste to avenge thyself of these insulting enemies: stop their blasphemous mouths, O God; and let them not say any more, as they have done too long, that thou art not able to deliver us.

Ver. 11. Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.] For we are confounded, and know not what to say, while thou thus withdrawest thy powerful presence from us; that mighty power which was wont to do such wonders for us: exert it again, we beseech thee, and stretch it out for the destruction of those, who have spoken of it so contumeliously.

Ver. 12. For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.] Why should I despair of it? since the great God, whom they deride, hath many ages ago undertaken the government and protection of us; working for us such deliverances in this land, which now lies waste, as astonished all the world.

Ver. 13. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.] Thou art that God, to whose power the raging sea is subject; which at thy command retired, and opened a way for us to pass through; but came back again with its wonted violence, and overwhelmed the Egyptians; who, like so many sea-monsters, thought to have devoured us.

Ver. 14. Thou brakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.] Pharaoh, that fierce tyrant, as terrible as the vastest whales, thou didst utterly destroy there; with all his stern captains and commanders; whom the sea spewed up, (Exod. xix. 30.), to find their tombs in the bellies of the wild beasts and birds, which people the neighbouring wilderness.

Ver. 15. Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood; thou driedst up mighty rivers.] Where, when our fathers wanted drink, thou madest water to gush out of a rock, (Exod. xvii. 6. Num. xx. 9.), which followed them in a full stream, till they came to the borders of Canaan: and then thou driedst up the waters of Jordan, at a time when they ran violently, and (as if many rivers had been joined in one) it overflowed all its banks, Josh. iii. 15. 17.

Ver. 16. Thy dry is thine, the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun.] And still there are such instances of thy power, which the whole world, if they would but mind, have always before their eyes. For as thou didst sometimes change the dry land into a river, and a river into dry land; so thou dost continually change the day into night, and the night into day: having settled the moon to govern the one, and the sun to govern the other, in their turns.

Ver. 17. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter.] By thy Almighty wisdom also it is, that the motion of the sun not only makes the days and nights, but the different climates of the earth, and the seasons of the year; which are sometimes hot, and sometimes cold; sometimes flourishing, as we see in the summer, with all manner of fruit; and sometimes stripped, as we see in the winter, of all its ornaments, that afterward it may be the more fruitful.

Ver. 18. Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.] And we have endured a very tedious winter; wherein all things have looked most roulfully. May it please thee now to return, like the sun, unto us, and let thy enemies know thou hast not forgotten how they have reproached thee, O Lord! (whom they ought to have honoured as the mighty Creator of all things), but will vindicate thy glory, by punishing those insolent people, who, foolishly puffed up with their victories, have despised and derided thy omnipotent majesty.

Ver. 19. O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked; forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.] Deliver, we beseech thee, thy church, which, like a turtle-dove, can do nothing but weeply mourn, and make her silent complaints unto thee, from those violent men, who, like birds of prey, seek utterly to destroy her: let them not take away its life and being; but, though we be at present deserted by thee, yet hear our cries, and at last relieve a poor helpless company, who flee unto thee, and depend upon thee alone for safety.

Ver. 20. Have respect unto the covenant; for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.] Though we are unworthy to be regarded by thee, yet have regard unto thy own promises; wherein thou hast engaged thyself unto our fathers, to give to them and their posterity the land of Canaan: which is so far from being now inhabited by thy people, that every blind corner of it is a den of thieves and murderers; who have filled it with rapine and cruelty.

Ver. 21. O let not the oppressed return ashamed; let the poor and needy praise thy name.] O let not thy poor afflicted servant, who implores thy aid against these barbarous oppressors, be denied his suit; and go away ashamed, to see himself disappointed of his
hope; but let him, and all the rest of thy miserable people, who were never in greater need of thy help, be restored to praise thy goodness in their ancient possessions; from whence they have been thus long banished.

Ver. 22. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause; remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.] Appears, O God, in our behalf; and thereby vindicate thyself from reproach: let me again beseech thee, to shew that thou art not omnifindal of all the scoffs, which prosperous fools belch out against thee every day.

Ver. 23. Forget not the voice of thine enemies; the tumult of those that rise up against thee, increaseth continually.] It is time to punish all the insulting language of thy enemies; for the insolent brags and furious threats of those that oppose thee, increase still more and more, and rise up to a greater height of audacious impiety.

PSALM LXXV.

To the chief musician, Al-taschith. A Psalm and Song of Asaph.

The Argument.—I take this psalm to have been made by Asaph the seer, mentioned 2 Chron. xxxix. 30. (see Psal. lxxiiii.) after the great deliverance which, by the strange destruction of Sennacherib’s army, God gave the good king Hezekiah. For whose use Asaph composed this psalm, and delivered it to the chief master of music in the tabernacle; that he might therein make his public profession of his obligations to Almighty God, and his resolution to serve him, and to depend upon him: as he advises all men else to do, if they would not be undone; or if they hoped for any good, of which he is the sole and absolute dispenser.

If Al-taschith be more than a note, that this psalm was to be sung like to the 57th, and those that follow; it may signify as much as, thou slayt not, or wilt not destroy; and be applied either to Sennacherib, who, the prophet told them, should not accomplish his design of destroying them, as he had done other nations, (2 Kings, xix. 17. 2 Chron. xxvii. 14.), or to God, who had not given him commission, as he pretended, to destroy Jerusalem, (2 Kings, xviii. 25.), but would defend it, (2 Kings, xix. 34.), and not suffer it to be laid desolate.

Symmachus gives a more spiritual sense of the word, and calls this a triumphal song concerning immortality. Because it contains, as Theodoret explains it, a prediction of the righteous judgement of God in the destruction of the wicked, and rewarding the lovers of virtue: which should admonish us, not to suffer any godly thoughts we have in our mind to perish, but to preserve them whole and entire, that we may inherit immortality.

What is to be understood by a psalm-song, see in the argument of Psalm lxvii.

Ver. 1. Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks unto thee do we give thanks; for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.] Unto thee, O God, the righteous Judge, who art the sole author of this great deliverance, do I and all my people give most solemn thanks: nor can we ever thank thee enough, but we must again and again renew our acknowledgements unto thee; whose Almighty power is still ready, at hand, we clearly see by the wonders thou hast done, to succour all those who gratefully commemorate thy benefits.

Ver. 2. When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly.] And I will not content myself with these verbal praises alone; but as soon as I shall meet with a fit opportunity, and we can have our solemn assemblies again (which by this invasion have been interrupted, 2 Chron. xxxii. 1.); I will perfect the reformation which I have begun; and see that equal justice be done to all my people; as well as that they be preserved in thy true religion.

Ver. 3. The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved; I hear up the pillars of it. Selah.] The whole country hath been in a miserable confusion; while their hearts melted with fear of an utter desolation: but as then I supported their spirits, and encouraged the great men and officers to do their duty, (2 Chron. xxxii. 6. 7. 8.), so I will hereafter establish such magistrates and judges, as shall bring all into better order.

Ver. 4. I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the born.] I have told them my mind already, and do still solemnly proclaim and declare, that I will proceed with the utmost severity against the contemners of thy laws; and therefore I advise them not to be so madly rude and insolent: for the proudest of them all shall know, that it is safest for them to be more modest, than to glory, as they do, in their impiety; or to boast of the power they have to be injurious to their neighbours.

Ver. 5. Lift not up your born on high: speak not with a stiff neck.] Do not vaunt of this, I once more advise you, nor bear yourselves high, as if you would out-brave heaven itself; be not refractory and stubborn, nor arrogantly say, that you will have your ways, and that none shall curb you.

Ver. 6. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. For which way soever you turn yourselves, whether to the east, or to the west, or to the mountainous desarts that lie on the north and south of us; in vain do ye think to escape the righteous judgement of God.

Ver. 7. But God is the Judge; be puttest down one, and settest up another.] Who being the Sovereign Lord and Governor of the world, easily lays those low that proudly exalt themselves against his authority; and lifts up those that humbly submit themselves unto him.

Ver. 8. For in the band of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and be poureth out of the same: but the drags thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall ring them out, and drink them.}
For he never wants power to inflict the most dreadful punishments; which (like an intoxicating wine, full of stupefying ingredients, that loosens the very joints, and takes away all a man’s strength to resist), never fail to have their effect: and the godly may taste of them, nay, suffer sorely for a time; but the heaviest and most grievous punishments (like the dregs at the bottom of such wine) shall fall to the share of all the wicked of the land; who shall be forced to endure the utmost expressions of the divine vengeance upon their sins.

Ver. 9. But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.] And this I, who am his minister to execute his judgements, will not cease to declare, as long as I live, that none may pretend ignorance for their excuse; and I will sing praises unto God, (who delivered Jacob from all evil), not only for his late miraculous preservation of us, by his vengeance on Sennacherib, (whom he hath made an example of his wrath to all proud contemners of him), but for making me the instrument of so happy a reformation.

Ver. 3. All the bones of the wicked also will I cut off; but the bones of the righteous shall be exalted.] For this is my resolution, not merely, as I said, to praise him, but to pull down the haughty spirit, and cut short all the power of the wicked, that they shall not be able to do such mischief as they desire; and to raise the righteous into such authority, that they shall not fear what their most insolent enemies can do unto them.

PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief musician on Neginoth. A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

THE ARGUMENT.—It is visible to every eye, that the psalmist here commemorates some notable victory over very powerful enemies, whereby God delivered (when it was in great danger) the whole country, particularly Jerusalem; which is called here Salem, ver. 2., by an usual form of speech among the Hebrews, who are wont, in names of places, to cut off the former part; instead of Abel-Sittim, saying only Sittim; and Nimrim, for Beth-Nimrim; Lechi, for Ramath-Lechi; Sheba, for Beer-Sheba, and many such like; as Bochartus hath shewn in the second book of his Phaleg. chap. 25. and in the first part of his work concerning the animals named in scripture, book 2. chap. 25.

And there is as little reason to doubt, that the particular deliverance here aimed at is that from Sennacherib’s army; which Asaph the seer, mentioned 2 Chron. xix. 39. (see Psal. lxxxiii.), was not content to celebrate in the former hymn, which he made for the use of the king, but added this also for his own use, and all other pious persons; who hoped would join in it, especially when it was sung in the temple, as he directed the master of the music, after the same manner as Psal. iv.

Some of the Greeks seem to have perceived something of this; for, though there be no such title in the ancient Hexapulus of Origen, yet, in after times, Theodoret tells us, he found in some copies this inscription, which still continues, An Ode against the Assyrian, which Apollonarius follows.

Of a Psalm-Song, see Psal. lxvii.

Ver. 1. In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel.] God hath so illustriously demonstrated himself among us (in this unexpected and terrible execution) to be the Sovereign Ruler and Judge of the world, that he must shut his eyes that doth not see it: His power, and all his other glorious perfection, which are conspicuous everywhere, are in no country so magnified as they are in Israel.

Ver. 2. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion.] Our enemies themselves, who reviled him, (2 Chron. xxxii. 17, 19.) and despised Jerusalem, (ib. ver. 10.), are now sure convinced, that there this mighty Lord maketh his abode; in the top of that mountain where he hath chosen to fix his dwelling-place.

Ver. 3. There brake be the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.] Before the walls of which he hath slain, with an invisible dart, the fiery archers, (who have not shot so much as one arrow into it, 2 Kings. xix. 31.) and made the shields, and swords, and the rest of their military preparations, altogether useless and unprofitable.

Ver. 4. Thou art more glorious and excellent then the mountains of prey.] Whereby thou, O Zion, art become more glorious than all the mountains, where the fiercest beasts of prey, or the most desperate robbers have their resort; who never made such slaughters.

Ver. 5. The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep; and none of the men of might have found their hands.] For they, whose courage made them fear no danger, but confidently promised themselves the spoils of Jerusalem, are given unto us for a spoil: they lay down to sleep, but never awaked, (2 Kings. xix. 35.) not a man among the most mighty of them was able to strike a stroke, or do any thing to defend himself against that hand which cut them off.

Ver. 6. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a deep sleep.] But the most experienced horseman, as well as they that rode in chariots, sunk down dead, at the sudden check, the severe rebuke, which they received from thee, O God of Jacob, whom they reproached, 2 Kings. xix. 22, 23.

Ver. 7. Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? Thou, and none but thou, art to be dreaded: and what king is he that is able, for so short a time as a moment, to resist thy power? which in an instant can destroy all those who incur thy heavy displeasure.

Ver. 8. Thou didst cause judgement to be heard from.
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We have an example of it before our eyes; for when we made our solemn appeal to thee, (2 Kings, xix. 3. A. 15, 16.), thou wast pleased to pronounce a sentence of condemnation from heaven upon our enemies; which struck such a terror into those that survived, that they who before were full of rage, and made a tumultuous noise, (ver. 27. 28.), were as still as lambs; and durst not stir a foot, but only to return from whence they came, ver. 28. 36.

Ver. 9. When God arose to judgement, to save all the meek of the earth. Selab.] They were afraid to continue their attempts against us, when God, who had long suffered their insolence, sent an angel to chastise it, and to do execution upon them; and thereby delivered the helpless people of this land, who had patiently borne their horrible oppression.

Ver. 12. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. Which may well be a warning to all fell tyrants, not to be so fierce and outrageous, which will only present thee with a fairer opportunity to glorify thyself, and raise thy praise to a greater height; as thou hast now done, by suppressing the Assyrians' fury; who, if they have any reliques of wrath, which may boil up again in their hearts; thou shalt chain it up, and not suffer it to break forth to our further disturbance.

Ver. 11. Plead, and stand up for thy servants; let all the earth be filled with thy glory. Let this excite you all, who are thus marvellously delivered, to make more liberal promises of grateful sacrifices, as well as to perform those which you have already vowed, to the great Lord, your most gracious God; who so far excels all others, that the nations round about us, who bear this name of this, shall reproach you (if you be forgetful of his benefits) by the presence which they shall make to him, (2 Chron. xxxii. 23.), who ought to be feared by all his friends, and is most terrible to his enemies.

Ver. 12. He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth. For he can easily, with a sudden stroke, not only take down the proud stomach, but take away the life of the fiercest captains and commanders, (2 Chron. xxxii. 21.), yea, make the greatest monarchs (who keep the world in awe) quake and tremble at his dreadful executions.

PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

The Argument.—A psalm composed by Asaph, sent by him to that song-master, who was over the children of Jeduthun; in which I imagined at first sight, that he represented the sad condition of Hezekiah, and the motions of his heart towards God in his sickness, 2 Chron. xxxii. 24. Isa. xxxviii. 1. But, upon farther consideration, it appears from the latter part of it, that he bewails the calamity of all the nation; either when Sennacherib overran the country; or else in the captivity of Babylon. If we refer it to the latter, then it was not Asaph the seer, whom I mentioned before, Psal. lxxiii., that made this psalm, but some other in after-times, (see Psal. lxxiv.), who laments the long continuance of their captivity, which looked like an utter forsaking by God; but he comforts himself at last with the remembrance of what God had done formerly for them, when he delivered them out of the Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 1. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.] I have incessantly made my prayer to God, and I will still most earnestly inter his favour: to him who hath justly afflicted us, and can alone relieve us, have I again and again renewed my importunate suit; which I hope will at last prevail with him for deliverance.

Ver. 2. In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord; my soul ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.] I have not negligently discharged this duty; but as the distress is great wherein we are, so I have restless implored help from the Lord: in the night, when men are wont to bury their troubles in sleep, I have with unwearying diligence spread out my hands unto him, (in token that all my dependence is upon his power alone), resolving to admit of no consolation, till I obtained a gracious answer from him.

Ver. 3. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selab.] I remembered, indeed, how kind God had been unto us in former times; but this only gave me the greater trouble, when I compared it with our present miseries; and the more I mused on it, the more my spirit was disturbed, and miserably afflicted.

Ver. 4. Thou hast clothed mine eyes with slumber; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.] Insomuch that I could not close my eyes, to take a wink of sleep; nor open my mouth (such was my perturbation and astonishment) to express the heaviness of my grief.

Ver. 5. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times, All that I could do, was to recount thy merciful providences over our forefathers in times past; and ponder seriously what wonders thou didst for them many ages ago.

Ver. 6. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.] I called to mind all the songs I had indited, to celebrate the memory of those ancient benefits; and spent whole nights in silent meditations, and diligent inquiries, which I revolved to and fro in my mind, why he who had taken such care of our ancestors had so long rejected us.

Ver. 7. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will be be favourable no more? Will the Lord, thought I, abandon us for ever? Is he so incensed against us, that he will never be reconciled, nor intend to shew us any more favour?

Ver. 8. Is his mercy clean gone for ever? is his promise failed for evermore? Is his infinite mercy,
which is the fountain of all his benefits, quite exhausted? and will he never hereafter speak a word of comfort to us?

Ver. 9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.] Hath God, whose property it is to shew mercy, quite laid aside all thoughts of exercising his clemency towards us? or have we so highly provoked him to anger, that he hath no regard at all unto our miseries?

Ver. 10. And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.] But having thus complained, and said within myself, This is the thing which sorely afflicts me, to see such alterations in the proceedings of the Most High, that the same hand which formerly protected us, now severely scourges us;

Ver. 11. I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember thy wonders of old.] I presently considered, that there might be a change again; and resolved to comfort myself with the remembrance of the former works of the Lord; and to go back as far as the miracle thou didst for us, (in bringing us up out of the land of Egypt,) when our deserts were as small as in these days.

Ver. 12. I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.] Of all the ensuing wonders I will think, rather than on our present miseries: I will not omit one of them; but, instead of these complaints, make them the constant subject of my discourse.

Ver. 13. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? From which I cannot but conclude, that the method of thy providence, O God, is not only perfectly holy and just, but quite out of our reach; nor is thy power inferior: but as thou dost not proceed in the common way of our thoughts, so none can resist what thy incomparable majesty thinks fit to effect.

Ver. 14. Thou art the God that dost wonders; thou hast declared thy strength among the people.] For thou art the mighty God, who canst do miracles as easily as the most ordinary works; and hast made all the world sensible, that thy power exceeds both the strength and opinion of all other creatures.

Ver. 15. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.] Having delivered thy people, descended from Jacob, and miraculously preserved by Joseph from the Egyptian bondage, by a long series of stupendous judgements upon Pharaoh and his servants, Exod. vi. 6. Deut. vi. 21. 22. vii. 8;

Ver. 16. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee: they were afraid, the depths also were troubled.] Which were followed presently with a greater wonder, when the waters of the Red Sea felt thy power, O God; they felt thy power to the very bottom of them, which so disturbed them, that they retreatted, as if they had been suffraged at thy presence, and left a plain way for thy people to march through upon dry ground;

Ver. 17. The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad.] But returned again upon the Egyptians, (who pursued after us), accompanied with a terrible storm of rain, and thunder, and hailstones, which flew about their ears, and brake the very wheels of their chariots.

Exod. xiv. 24. 25.

Ver. 18. The voice of thy thunder was in the heavens; lightnings lightened the world, the earth trembled and shook.] The noise of this thunder filled all the air thereabout; and so did the lightning that flashed in their faces; which, together with a dreadful earthquake, made the very inhabitants of Canaan tremble.

Josh. ii. 10. 11.

Ver. 19. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.] We might well say, then, that thy way is quite out of our reach, (ver. 13.), who madest a passage through the sea, a broad path through the boisterous waters; which, as none ever trod before or after, they cannot trace the footsteps, which the waters have overflown and obliterated, Exod. xiv. 26. 27.

Ver. 20. Thou leadest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.] Nor did thy care of thy people end there, but by the ministry of thy servants, Moses and Aaron, thou didst conduct them with the same tenderness that a good shepherd doth his sheep, through a horrid wilderness; in which thou feddest them, till they came to Canaan. (And thither the same power can, and the same goodness will, I hope, restore us; though now we seem neglected by thee, as our fathers were, for a time, in the land of Egypt.)

P S A L M LXXXVIII.

The Argument.—When God gave his law to the Israelites, he commanded them not only to be careful to study it themselves, but to inculcate it upon their children, (as the psalmist here remembers, ver. 5.), that they might propagate the knowledge of it to all future generations, Deut. iv. 9. vi. 7. 8. &c. xi. 18. 19. &c.: And particularly to instruct them in their reason of the feasts; which were appointed for the commemoration of several benefits, which he would not have forgotten, Exod. xiii. 8. 14. In prosecution of which end, as Theodoret well observes, this psalm was indited by the prophetic grace, (as his words are): that they and all their posterity might preserve in mind the wonderful works of God. An epistle of which (for the help of their memory) he here presents them withal; from the time of their coming out of Egypt, till David's promotion to the throne.

Where this narration concludes, it makes it probable this psalm was composed by that Asaph, so often mentioned as one of the principal singers in those days; who, setting before the people's eyes, as in a table, the benefits their fathers had received, with their shameful ingratitude, and the punishments inflicted upon them for it, teaches and instructs them who succeeded, (for which reason some will have it called Marchil, see Psal. xxxii.)
to learn greater gratitude and fidelity to their
benefactor; for fear they should incur his higher
displeasure, if they did not beware by such sad
examples.

Ver. 1. GIVE ear, O my people, to my law; in-
cline your ears to the words of my mouth.] Attend
reverently, O my countrymen, for whom I have a particular affection, unto the admonition which
now I intend to give you; listen diligently, I beseech
you, to the following instruction.

Ver. 2. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will
utter dark sayings of old.] It is no vulgar lesson
which I would have you learn, nor will I be sparing
in my instruction; but I will abundantly inform you
in the most remarkable passages of God's providence
in former times, which are more worthy your know-
ledge, than the skill of resolving the darkest riddles.

Ver. 3. Which we have heard and known, and our
fathers have told us.] And I will not report uncertain
or doubtful things to you, or things done in another
nation; but such as are of unquestionable credit,
which you have heard and known to be recorded in
your holy books: and our forefathers, who were eye-
witnesses of them, have faithfully registered and
transmitted unto us;

Ver. 4. We will not bide them from their children,
sheewing to the generation to come the praises of the
Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that
be: batō done.] Who will not be so treacherous as to
lose the memory of them in our days, but diligently
propagate them to posterity; endeavouring that all
future generations may understand, how much the
Lord deserves to be praised, for the mighty and stu-
pendous works which he hath done in former ages.

Ver. 5. For be established a testimony in Jacob,
and appointed a law in Israel, which be commanded our
fathers that they should make them known to their chil-
dren.] And indeed, when God gave us the law, he
strictly charged our forefathers, and made a particu-
lar injunction about it, which he frequently repeated,
(Deut. iv. vii. xi see the argument), that they should
be careful to leave the knowledge of these things as
a sacred legacy, or inheritance unto their children.

Ver. 6. That the generation to come might know them,
even the children which should be born; who should
arise and declare them to their children.] In order to
the conveying them, by their hands, to the next gen-
eration, who were then unborn; who should be taught
also, when they were grown up, to deliver them
with the same diligence to their descendants, and so
preserve the memory of them to all succeeding gene-

Ver. 7. That they might set their hope in God, and
not forget the works of God, but keep his command-
ments.] To the end that they might learn, by such
wonderful instances of his powerful goodness, to ad-
here to him, and confide in him alone, and by the
constant commemoration of his benefits, be provoked
religiously to observe his precepts.

Ver. 8. And might not be, as their fathers, a stubborn
and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their
hearts aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with
God.] And take warning by the punishments in-
jected on them, not to imitate the ingratitude of their
forefathers, who were not only a refractory gen-
eration, but so sullen, that they fell off from God to
the worship of idols, presently after they came out of
Egypt; for they did not lay to heart what he had
done for them, and so were never rightly disposed to
his service, or if in a good fit they were inclined to
it, they soon revolted from him.

Ver. 9. The children of Ephraim being armed, and
carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.] What
could be more shameful, than their base refus-
al to go and engage the Canaanites, when they were
so well appointed for the fight; and were command-
ed by God, in whose power they had no confidence,
to go up and take possession of the land? (Deut. i.
26.), unless it were their foul cowardice when they
did engage them against his command, (Deut. i. 42.
44.), and the Ephraimites themselves, though a va-
lient tribe, and excellent archers, ran away, and were
chased in a shameful manner by their enemies.

Ver. 10. They kept not the command of God, and
refused to walk in his law.] For they broke their
word with God, (who therefore would not be with
them, Numb. xiv. 43.), and would not be governed
by his will, but by their own.

Ver. 11. and forgot his works, and his wonders that
he had shewed them.] Never thinking of the illus-
rious works which their eyes had seen, and so dis-
trustling his power, notwithstanding all the miracles
whereby he had demonstrated the greatness of it to
them.

Ver. 12. Marvellous things did be in the sight of
their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Lown.] Nor
were the next generation any better, though the
memory was then fresh of that heap of wonders
which their fathers saw him do publicly; not in a
corner, but in all the land of Egypt, yes, in and
about the principal city of the kingdom.

Ver. 13. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass
through, and he made the waters to stand as an heap.
From whence when he had delivered them, and they
were in great distress at the Red Sea, he made it give
way to them, that they might walk through it on dry
ground; the fluid water swelling into little hills,
(Exod. xv. 8.), which stood like a solid wall on
either hand, to secure them in that dangerous passage,
(Exod. xiv. 21.)

Ver. 14. In the day-time also be led them with a
cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. Through
which he conducted them, as he did at all other
times, by a glorious cloud; whose dark side served
also in the day-time, for a shadow from the scor-
ching rays of the sun, and its bright side in the night,
for a torch to guide them when they travelled, or if
they rested, to light them in the tents.

Ver. 15. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and
gave them drink as out of the great depths.] And
when they wanted water in the wilderness, he brought
it out of the rocks (which he commanded Moses to
to smite more than once) first at Rephidim, (Exod. xvii. 6.), and then at Kadesh, (Num. xx. 8. 11.), and they had it in such plenty, both for themselves and for their cattle, as if it had been a great pond or lake.

Ver. 16. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.] And yet it was no standing, but a flowing water, which ran continually out of the dry rock, as out of its fountain, in several streams, or rather like unto rivers, which followed them in their travells.

Ver. 17. And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness.] But all these miraculous works did not alter their depraved nature, which broke out into new and greater provocations, in that very place, where, without the singular providence of their most high Benefactor, they had all been starved.

Ver. 18. And they tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust.] For they were not content with the bountiful provision which he had made for them, (Exod. xvi.), but muttered within themselves against him; and wished, if he was so powerful and kind as was pretended, that he would give them a new proof of it, by sending them meat to satisfy their wanton appetite.

Ver. 19. Ten, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?] And at last, they openly declared that distrust of his power which was in their hearts, saying, Is God able to make us a feast here in this barren wilderness? Num. xiv. 4. 5. &c.

Ver. 20. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can be give bread also & can he provide flesh for his people?] It is true, he hath brought water out of a rock for us in great abundance; (which perhaps was lodged there before in the caverns of it, and might have flowed out of itself), but can he give us more substantial bread, (not such light stuff as this manna is, which he also hath sent us, Num. xi. 6.), here where no corn grows? and make an ample provision for all this multitude, of such flesh as this place doth not afford?

Ver. 21. Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel.] Which rude and insolent language highly incensed the divine displeasure; so that he sent lightning from heaven, (Num. xi. 1.), to consume those whom he had before cherished; and he resolved also to punish them more severely, before he had done with them, (ver. 33.);

Ver. 22. Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.] Because they had so mean an opinion of him, that they durst not confide in him, and commend themselves to his good providence, to preserve and conduct them safe to Canaan.

Ver. 23. Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.] No, not after such extraordinary benefits as they had received from him; for he had undertaken in a miraculous manner (as is fit to be more particularly remembered) to dispense food to them from above, and to make the clouds their granary, whose doors he opened to them.

Ver. 24. And he had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.] And instead of rain, (to make the earth with long labour become fruitful), to send showers of manna out of the air, (Exod. xvi. 4.), which was a kind of corn ready prepared for them, Num. xi. 8.9.

Ver. 25. Man did eat angels’ food; he sent them meat to the full.] There was not a man among that vast multitude, but was fed with that strong and hearty, or rather princely food; brought to them from the habitation, and by the ministry of angels. This was their daily entertainment, as long as their travels in the wilderness lasted; and they had it in such abundance, that none of them could pretend they were not sufficed, Exod. xvi. 16. 17. 35.

Ver. 26. He caused an east-wind to blow in the heaven; and by his power he brought in the south-wind.] And therefore it was not to satisfy their hunger, but to reprove their unbelief, that he was pleased to comply with their desires; and, when the wind blew violently out of the east, turned it by his power into the south:

Ver. 27. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.] Which brought a great cloud of quails, (a delicious bird) from the coasts about the Red Sea, which (either tired with long flight, or beaten down with the wind), came pouring down like showers of rain; and lay on the ground, as thick as the dust or the sand on the seashore, from whence they came, Num. xi. 31.

Ver. 28. And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.] There was no need of labour, or of any art to catch them; neither needed they go far to take them up, for they dropped down in the midst of their camp, and lay also many miles round about in such heaps, that they who would, might fetch enough to serve them for a whole month, Num. xi. 20. 31.

Ver. 29. So they did eat, and were well filled; for he gave them their own desire.] So they had not only a taste of his liberality, but were glutted and crammed with them; for he satisfied their longings to the full.

Ver. 30. They were not estranged from their lust; but while the meat was yet in their mouths.] And they were not hindered from eating as much as they pleased; nor was this diet become at all nauseous to them, but they greedily feasted on these birds to the end of the month; and at that very time had these sweet morsels in their mouths, (Num. xi. 33.).

Ver. 31. The wrath of God came upon them, and smote the fittest of them, and slew the dawn the chosen men of Israel.] When the divine vengeance seized on them by a very great pestilence, (Num. xi. 33.), which swept away the strongest and goodliest persons that were in Israel.

Ver. 32. For all this they sinned still; and believed not for his wondrous works.] But these punishments wrought no more change in their hearts, than his benefits; for they added new sins to all the former; and were not moved by any of his wonderful works, to
believe that he was able to bring them into the land of promise, Num. xiv. 2. 3. 4.

Ver. 33. Therefore their days did be consumed in vanity, and their years in trouble.] For which cause he resolved they should never come thither, but be consumed in the wilderness, (Numb. xiv. 28. 33.) where, though they travelled up and down very much and long, yet it was to no purpose; for they were never the nearer to their journey's end, nor were ever free from one plague or other, till they were utterly destroyed.

Ver. 34. When he shewed them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God.] They relented indeed sometimes; and when God cut off some of them, the rest began to deprecate his displeasure, (Numb. xiv. 39. 40.) and, by promising amendment, most earnestly sought to recover his favour;

Ver. 35. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer.] And professed that they would trust in God hereafter for safety and deliverance; who they acknowledged was superior to all other gods, and had been their mighty Redeemer.

Ver. 36. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.] But all this was little more than speaking him fair, while they lay under his correction hand; and they did not sincerely intend to do as they promised, when it was removed.

Ver. 37. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.] For their hearts were not rightly disposed, nor firmly resolved to adhere unto him; as appears by their frequent revolts from their engagements, which they never faithfully observed, but as constantly broke as they renewed their covenant with him, Numb. xvi. 3. xx. 4. xxi. 5. 7. xxv. 1. 2. &c.

Ver. 38. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.] Yet he was so full of compassion, that after he had threatened utterly to destroy them, (Num. xiv. 11. 12.) he remitted very much of the severity of the sentence, and did not cut them off at once, (ib. ver. 16. 17. 18.) but very often spared them when they deserved to be punished, or when he punished them, did it less than their deserts.

Ver. 39. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.] For he considered how frail they were, and that they could not continue long, (though he did not snatch them away,) but would moulder of themselves into dust, and vanish like a blast of wind, which makes a bustle and noise for a little time, and then is dispersed and heard of no more.

Ver. 40. How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and griev'd him in the desert! ] How many times, before this terrible threatening, did they provoke him to anger in the wilderness! (Num. xiv. 22.) and afterward did things exceeding offensive to him in other parts of the desert! Num. xvi. xx. xxi. xxv.

Ver. 41. Yeas, they turned back, and tempted God, and limited the holy One of Israel.] Being so vilely ungrateful, as to talk of returning into Egypt, (Num. xiv. 4.) or requiring, upon every occasion, new proofs of his power; nay, questioning whether it could do all things, though he had wrought so many wonders; and appointing him who had so often shewn himself to be incomparably greater than all other gods, what he should do, (as I said before, ver. 19. 20.) if he intended to have them believe on him.

Ver. 42. They remembered not his band, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.] For they quite forgot, (this was the reason of their naughtiness, ver. 11. 12. which is fit again to be repeated,) or never laid to heart, the mighty things he had done for them; especially that memorable time, when he, by his power alone, delivered them from the tyranny of Pharaoh, who most miserably oppressed them.

Ver. 43. How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.] They did not seriously ponder the evident demonstration he gave of his uncontrollable power, in the miraculous judgments which he sent upon the Egyptians; even upon the court of Pharaoh, and the principal city of the kingdom.

Ver. 44. And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.] When, for instance, he left them no water to quench their thirst; by turning the river Nile, (Exod. vii. 17. 19. 20.) with all the streams that were derived from it, and all their ponds and pools of water, into blood.

Ver. 45. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.] And sent an infinite swarm of the most pestilent (and to them the most odious) sorts of flies, Exod. viii. 21. 22. which bit the Egyptians, as they used to do their dogs; as not long before he had sent such an army of frogs to invade all places, (Exod. viii. 3. 8. 9. &c.) and so to spoil their meat and drink, and every thing else; that if this plague had lasted, they must have left their country, or not have lived.

Ver. 46. He also gave their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.] After which he exposed the fruits of the earth, for which they had taken long pains, to be devoured by various kinds of locusts; with which the whole country was so overspread, that nothing else but they were to be seen upon the face of the earth, (Exod. x. 5.)

Ver. 47. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore-trees with frost.] Which had been miserably harassed before by storms of hail, both small and great; whereby not only the grapes and such like fruit were smitten down, but the trees themselves (for instance, the vines, and the wild fig-trees) quite killed, and corrupted at the very root, Exod. ix. 18. 19. 25.

Ver. 48. He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to bot thunder-bolts.] For there was a dreadful thunder, and lightning mixed together with it; which let no living creature escape, but destroyed even the cattle and the flocks, which were left abroad in the field, Exod. ix. 22. 23. &c.
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Ver. 49. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.] Many other ways he plagued them, which were tokens of his severest displeasure; by a grievous murrain, by fiery boils, by a most dismal darkness, (Exod. ix. 10.), till at length he sent evil angels, (who had frightened them in that darkness, Wisd. xvii. 3.), as the ministers of his heavy wrath.

Ver. 50. He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence.] Which irresistibly and speedily seized on them, wheresoever he found them; and spared not their lives, but took away the first-born of all their cattle by a pestilential disease, Exod. xii. 30.

Ver. 51. And smote all the first-born in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:] As well as the first-born of all their children, (the prop of their families, in whom the hope of future succession was principally laid), throughout the dwellings of the posterity of Cham, the father of the Egyptians, (Gen. x. 6. Exod. xii. 30.)

Ver. 52. But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.] And by that means brought forth his people from among them, (Exod. xii. 31.), as peaceably as a shepherd doth his sheep out of their folds, (not so much as a dog moving his tongue against them, (Exod. xi. 7.), and then directed them the way they should go in the wilderness, Exod. xiii. 18. 21.), where he graciously provided for them.

Ver. 53. And he led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.] He conducted them securely, even through the Red Sea, without any apprehension of danger, (Exod. xiv. 19. 22.), but overwhelmed Pharaoh and his followers, in that very path which they travelled in safety.

Ver. 54. And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain which his right hand had purchased.] And never ceased his care over them, (notwithstanding all their provocations), till he brought them into his holy land; and (in the issue) to this Mount Sion; which not their prowess, but his mighty power, by the hand of David, won for them, 2 Sam. v. 6. &c.

Ver. 55. He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.] And after he had expelled the old inhabitants, who were not able to stand before them, (Josh. ii.), he distributed by lot to every tribe their portion of land, which they should inherit, (Josh. xiv.), and settled them in a quiet possession of it, Josh. xxi. 43. 44.

Ver. 56. Yet they tempted and provoked the Most High God, and kept not his testimonies.] Yet, after so many and so great benefits, they behaved themselves no better in that good land than they had done in the wilderness; but as soon as Joshua and the elders were dead, (Judg. ii. 7. 10.), they disbelieved the threatenings of their law, and would make a trial whether they were true or no; provoking the great Lord of all the world, by slighting his commandments, which he had so strictly enjoined them to observe.

Ver. 57. But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. They imitated their forefathers, both in their frequent apostasies from God, and in their fainness to their promises, when they pretended to repent of them, (Judg. ii. 13. 18. 19. iii. 7. 8.), having depraved minds and hearts, which (like an ill-made bow, that never sends the arrow to the mark) would turn aside into crooked ways, and not be directed according to the will of God.

Ver. 58. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.] For they highly incensed him by their altars and images, (Judg. vi. 25.), which they built after the manner of the heathen, (Num. xxii. 41.), in the high places; where they worshipped a number of false gods, (Judg. x. 6.), to his great offence and dishonour.

Ver. 59. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:] Which was so notorious, that the Judge of the world could not but take notice of it, and severely punish it, by abandoning that people, for whom he hath done such wonders, into the hands of the Syrians, the Moabites, the Midianites, Philistines, and the children of Ammon, (see the book of Judges), who made them as contemptible unto others, as they were loathsome unto him.

Ver. 60. So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which was placed among men:] In so much that at last he quite forsook the city of Shiloh, where, in his tabernacle, he had been graciously pleased to be present with them, (1 Sam. iv. 4.), and would never return unto it any more, (Jer. vii. 12. and see argument of Psalm lxxxviii.)

Ver. 61. And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand.] Nay, he let the ark of the covenant, the special token of his presence with them, from whence his power was wont to appear most gloriously for them, not only fall into their hands, but be carried away captive by the Philistines, (1 Sam. iv. 11. 22. v. 1.)

Ver. 62. He gave his people over also to the sword, and was wroth with his inheritance.] Whose sword slew a great number of his people, (1 Sam. iv. 10.), so exceeding angry was he with those, whom he had formerly taken into his special care above all other nations, Deut. xxxii. 8. 9.

Ver. 63. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.] For it was by his divine vengeance, more than the Philistines' valour, that they lost abundance of brave young men, the very flower of their army; by which means many of their virgins were constrained to remain unmarried, and they that found husbands, were fain to omit all tokens of joy, in a time of public sorrow.

Ver. 64. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.] For some of their priests, who were peculiarly consecrated to God's service, were slain in this battle, (1 Sam. iv. 11.), and their wives oppressed with grief, did not long.
survive, to make any public funeral for them, (1 Sam. iv. 10.)

Ver. 65. Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man, that stougeth by reason of wine.] The Lord himself also (who was wont to fight for us) seemed no more concerned in all these calamities, which befell both us and our religion, than a mighty commander is at that which is done to his army when he is asleep, or overcome with wine; till at last, like such a great warrior, (who being awaked calls for his arms, and charges the enemy with greater fury,) he vindicated his honour in a terrible manner, and made a very great destruction among them, 1 Sam. v. 9. 11.

Ver. 66. And be smote his enemies in the hinder parts; be put them to a perpetual reproach.] For besides the fall of Dagon before the ark, he smote several cities of the Philistines, with a grievous sort of haemorrhoids; whereof many died, and the rest languished under most miserable torments, (1 Sam. v. 6. 5. 12.) the monuments of which they themselves were forced to make, and send back with the ark, to his great glory, and their eternal reproach, 1 Sam. vi. 3. 4. 9.

Ver. 67. Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph; and chose not the tribe of Ephraim.] Yet he would not return to Shiloh again, (which was in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph,) nor have the ark of his presence placed there any more.

Ver. 68. But chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which be loved.] But first it was brought to Kirjathaim, (1 Sam. vi. 24.), a city of the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 6. where he resolved hereafter to have his special residence; and so from thence, (after a short stay at the house of Obed-Edom,) unto Mount Zion, (1 Chron. xiii. 6. xvi. 1. 3. 29.), which he preferred before the hill of Kirjathaim, (1 Sam. vii. 1.), or any place in all the country.

Ver. 69. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which is built established for ever.] There Solomon built him a stately temple, which, as it was a high and lofty fabric, so was not moveable like his former habitation; but remained perpetually fixed, like the earth on which it stood.

Ver. 70. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep folds.] For as he had rejected Shiloh, and chosen Zion for the place of his dwelling, so he had likewise rejected Saul, and chosen David (the father of Solomon) to be the king of his people; a man, who served him as faithfully in that office, as he had done his father in keeping of his sheep.

Ver. 71. From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.] From that mean employment he took him, and raised him to the highest charge and dignity, that the care he had employed in looking after the ewes, and their lambs when they should fall, he might exercise in governing his people, and endeavouring that they, whom he had chosen for his own peculiar inheritance, did no way miscarry.

Ver. 72. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.] And he did not deceive his expectation, but governed them with equal integrity and prudence; never designing any thing but their good, and dexterously accomplishing whatsoever he designed.

Psalm LXXIX.

A Psalm of Asaph.

The Argument.—This psalm was penned, in all probability, upon the same occasion with the 74th; viz. the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: see what I have said there in the argument of that psalm, and it will appear altogether unlikely, that this should have respect to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes; as many imagine, and among the rest, Theodoret; which is the more strange, because the same reason he gives there why the 74th psalm doth not belong to those times, (which he repeats again upon Psalm lxxv. 17.), lies as strongly against the application of this psalm to the fury and rage wherewith that prince fell upon the Jewish nation. Whose miserable calamity under Nebuchadnezzar we find bewailed by Jeremiah, who then lived, (Jer. x. 25.), in the very words of the sixth and seventh verses of this psalm; which is some indication that they both belong to the same matter: but whether Jeremiah took them from Asaph, or Asaph from him, I cannot certainly determine. The latter is most likely; because this psalm seems to have been written after that desolation had for some continued.

We read indeed, in the first book of Maccabees, (vii. 16. 17.), two other verses of this psalm (viz. 2. 3.) applied to the slaughter of threescore of the devouring sort of Jews, presently after Antiochus’s death. But that author quotes them, it is plain, as words which had been written in former days, and by him only made use of to his purpose; which was to shew, that the same cruelties were in great part acted over again, which their fathers had seen at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1. O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.] O God, the Supreme Judge of the world, thou art not ignorant, we know, of our calamity, for it comes by thy order; but give us leave to represent unto thy majesty, the sad condition of the people and place which was once very dear unto thee; for profane nations have not only invaded our (or rather thy) country, to which thou hast a peculiar title, but polluted thy own house, which was separated to thy service alone; and laid it, together with Jerusalem, in ruinous heaps.

Ver. 2. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven; the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.] Under which thy servants the priests, and other holy men, whom they have slain, could not have the honour to be buried, nor obtain the common civility of a grave; but the dead bodies of those whom thou lovest, they have
barbarously exposed to be devoured by ravenous beasts and birds.

Ver. 3. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem: and there was none to bury them.] For they valued the shedding of their blood no more than the pouring out of water; which flowed in such abundance about Jerusalem, that they left not men enough alive to take care of the interment of the dead.

Ver. 4. We are become a reproach to our neighbours: a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.] And we that remain lead a most despicable life, being not only scorned and abused, but openly derided, and made the sport of the Edomites and other nations, which formerly stood in awe of us.

Ver. 5. How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?] And, which is saddest of all, we have long complained of this, and find no relief; but only in our most passionate cries to thee, O Lord: the effects of whose just anger and jealousy we groan under, (because we have forsaken thee, and been unfaithful to our covenant with thee), but hope it will not always last; nor proceed to make an utter end of us.

Ver. 6. Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.] Pour it out rather (in as full a measure, and with as little pity, as they did our blood, ver. 3.) upon the Babylonians; who, though they have conquered many kingdoms, do not acknowledge thee at all, nor ascribe their successes to thy power, but to their idols, whom they serve and honour with that worship which is due to thee alone.

Ver. 7. For they have devoured Jacob, and have clave out his dwelling-place.] They have been the instruments indeed of thy vengeance; but have executed it with such cruelty, that, not content with the conquest of us, they have sought out our total extirpation; having depopulated our country, and made that pleasant land a wilderness, which thou gavest to Jacob and his seed for their habitation.

Ver. 8. O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.] O let not his virtue, and the covenant thou madest with him, be forgotten, when thou reckonest with us for the sins of our forefathers; the punishment of which we beseech that we may bear no longer: spared our deliverance, good Lord; and how unworthy soever we be, let thy tender compassion prevail with thee to save us from utter ruin, which is very near; so few, so broken and spent we are, unless seasonably prevented by thy mercy.

Ver. 9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.] Send us that seasonable help, O God, from whom alone we expect it, and have heretofore very often received it; for it will tend much to the honour of thy almighty goodness, (which in former times was much celebrated, but of late hath been exceedingly disparaged), to save us now, when none is able to preserve us; upon that account be pleased to pass by our sins, and to interpose for our deliverance, lest thou suffer together with us.

Ver. 10. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by the recompensing of the blood of thy servants which is shed.] While the idolatrous nations utter this insolent language, (which is exceeding grievous, nay, insupportable to us), If their God be so great in himself, and so kind to them, as they pretend, why doth he not take their part, and appear for their deliverance? O that thou wouldst put them to silence, by taking such an open and remarkable vengeance on these blasphemous nations for the blood they have shed, that not only we, but all the world, may see, thou hast a care of us thy servants.

Ver. 11. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee, according to the greatness of thy power: preserve thou those that are appointed to die.] Let the sighs and groans of those who lie in prison be as prevalent with thee as these prayers; and magnify thy power, by preserving the lives of those whom they have condemned to die.

Ver. 12. And render unto our neighbours seven-fold into their bosom, their reproach wherein they have reproached thee, O Lord.] And when thou hast done with the Babylonians, reckon with our neighbours also who have insulted over us, and derided us, or rather, have spoken so reproachfully of thee, O God, that they justly deserve not only to be paid home in their kind, but to be made seven times more contemptible than we have been.

Ver. 13. So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks for ever; we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.] So we thy people, being conducted again to thy land, and happily restored to live under thy government there, will never cease to give thanks unto thee, for thy benefits bestowed upon us: and be careful to transmit the memory of them to those who shall come after us, that all future generations may perpetuate thy praises.

PSALM LXXX.

To the chief musician upon Shushanrim-eduth. A Psalm of Asaph.

The Argument.—This psalm is something of kin to the former; deprecating the displeasure of the Almighty in a time of great calamity. Which, as all that I have met withal think, was either in the captivity of Judah and Benjamin by Nebuchadnezzar; or of the ten tribes by Simeon; but it seems to me rather to have been penned between these two, in the time of Hezekiah; who had written a letter, you find, (2 Chron. xxx. 6.) to the remnant that were escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria; especially to Ephraim and Manasseh, the tribes nearest to them, that they would come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and keep the passover with them; which summons, several of them obeyed, ver. 11. 12. and kept the
feast as long again as they were wont, ver. 23.
And when this was finished, they all went through
the country, and threw down all the high places
and altars that they found, not only in Judah, but in
Benjamin also, Ephraim and Manasseh, 2 Chron.
xxxi. 7.

But after this happy settlement, you read there, xxxii. 1.
that the land was invaded by Sennacherib, and sore-
ly distressed; to the great discouragement no doubt
of those who had joined in the reformation: which
moved Asaph (mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30. see
the argument of Psal. lxxvii.) most earnestly to be
seek God, (ver. 2. of this psalm,) that he would be
pleased to stir up himself before Ephraim and
Manasseh, as well as Benjamin, (who was so link-
ed to Judah, that part of Jerusalem and of the
temple stood in that tribe,) and let them see, by a
remarkable deliverance, that their zeal for the pu-
ri ty of their religion was acceptable to him.

Another reason indeed there may be given (which I
have not omitted in my paraphrase) why these three
are joined together, rather than any other, because
they were the tribes (as we read in the 2d of Num-
bers) who, when they were in the wilderness, al-
ways marched behind the tabernacle when it mov-
ed; and had that part where the propitiatory was,
from whence God sent his oracles, and the tokens
of his power, just before them. But then there
is this to be added, to make it probable that this
psalm was not penned in the time of the captivity,
because as then there was no ark; nor did God sit
between the cherubins, (concerning which phrase,
the learned reader may see 2 Sam. iv. 4,) as he is said here to do; nor were
Ephraim and Manasseh then mixed with them, that
we read of: so, first of all, it is too full of elegan-
cies for that time of utter desolation; and, secondly,
the Greek expressly calls it, A Psalm concerning
the Assyrian, (who is the wild boar, I suppose, that
broke into God's vineyard, mentioned ver. 13;) and,
lastly, Hezekiah, I observe, applies himself to
God (in the times of that distress by the king of
Assyria) in the very language of the psalmist; and
begins his prayer just as Asaph doth here, to him
that sits between the cherubins, desiring him to in-
cline his ear to his requests, 2 Kings, xix. 15. 16.
Isa. xxxvii. 16. 17.

It was delivered to the chief master of music, to be
sung as the 60th psalm, upon the instruments of
six strings, which were wont to be used in solemn
thanksgivings, (see the argument of that psalm); for
he nothing doubted God would hear their prayers,
and destroy Sennacherib; or perhaps it was order-
ed afterward to be sung in that manner.

Ver. 1. GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel; thou that
leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwell-
est between the cherubims, shine forth.] O thou, who
art the ruler and protector of thy people Israel, who
didst long ago give a famous instance of thy power,
in preserving Joseph, when he fell, like an innocent
lamb, among a company of wolves, (Gen. xxxvii.
18. &c.), and conducting him to the highest prefer-
ment; reject not our humble petitions, which we put
up unto thee in the like distress; but shew that thou
favourest us, by some illustrious token of thy pre-
\n
Ver. 2. Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manas-
seh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us.] Let the
posterity of Joseph, who beheld heretofore so many
enemies fall before thee, when they attended upon
the ark of thy presence in the wilderness, (Numb. ii. 18.
20. 21.), and have lately been very zealous in thy ser-
vice, (2 Chron. xxx. i. xxxi. 1.), see thy power to be
as great as ever, (though for some time hath not ap-
ppeared at all for us,) and that thou art as forward
due time to grant us a glorious deliverance.

Ver. 3. Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face
to shine; and we shall be saved.] Restore us, O God, to
our former happiness; and for that end restore us in-
to thy favour, and then there will soon be an end of
our calamities.

Ver. 4. O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou
be angry against the prayer of thy people? For what
can the greatest armies (2 Kings, xviii. 17.) do against
thee, who art the supreme Lord of all, the absolute
commander of the hosts of heaven? Whose help we
have most importantly implored, and long waited
for, as men impatient to see our enemies so prevalent;
though hitherto thou hast been so exceeding angry
with us, that thou hast not heard the prayers of thy
people;

Ver. 5. Thou feedest them with the bread of tears,
givest them tears to drink in great measure.] But
hast-turned our joyful feasts unto fasting and weeping,
and our plenty into scarcity of all things, but only of
tears; which we pour out in large measure, when we
think of the danger we are in to perish by famine
and by thirst, 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.

Ver. 6. Thou makest us as strife unto our neighbours;
and our enemies laugh among themselves.] Our neighbours,
the Edomites and others, either pick quarrels with us,
or strive among themselves who shall make the great-
est booty of us: while our enemies that besiege us,
mock at our inability to help ourselves, and at our
confidence which we place in thee, 2 Kings, xviii. 22.
23. 2 Chron. xxxii. 15.

Ver. 7. Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause
thou face to shine; and we shall be saved.] Convince them,
O Lord, that it is not vainly placed, by restoring us a-
gain to our former happiness; which it is easy for thee
to do, who hast all the hosts of heaven at thy com-
mand, if thou wilt but be pleased to favour us, (as
we again beseech thee wilt,) and then no harm
shall befal us.

Ver. 8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou
hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.] We were
once very dear unto thee, when thou didst transplant
us, like a choice vine, out of Egypt into this country;
from whence thou didst drive out the ancient inhabi-
tants, that we might be settled in their place.

Ver. 9. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst
cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.] Thou preparedst the way for us, making our terror to fall upon them before we came, (Josh. ii. 9. 10, 11,) so that we easily expelled them: and being there firmly established, like a vine deeply rooted in a fruitful soil, we increased and multiplied, till we peopled all the land;

Ver. 10. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.] And as a rich vine covers the hill, on the side of which it is planted, or over-tops the lofty cedars which support it; so we obscured the splendour of the greatest kingdoms, and made mighty kings become tributaries to us, 1 Kings, iv. 24.

Ver. 11. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.] For our empire extended itself (just like such a luxuriant vine, which spreads its branches every way) from the mid-land sea to the river Euphrates, 1 Kings, iv. 21. (See Ps. lxxii. 8.)

Ver. 12. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way, do pluck her?] But now, alas! thou hast withdrawn thy protection from us, and we are left like a vineyard without its hedges: All our strong-holds and fenced cities are taken, (2 Kings, xviii. 3,) so that we lie open to be made a prey to every one that hath a mind to spoil us.

Ver. 13. The bear out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild ass of the field doth devour it.] The Assyrian king, like a wild bear, that breaks into a vineyard, treads down all under his feet, and seeks to root us up: There is no savage beast can make greater havoc among the vines, than his barbarous soldiers have done throughout all the land; which they have eaten up, 2 Kings, xix. 29.

Ver. 14. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.] Our only hope is, that thou, the great Lord of hosts, on whom the event of wars, as of all things else, depends, wilt be reconciled unto us, and drive him out again; deny us not this request, we beseech thee; but though we be destitute of all help on earth, yet send us some from heaven; and though very unworthy, yet graciously take us into thy care, and repair the breaches which they have made.

Ver. 15. And the vineyard which thy right hand hast planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself:] Be favourable to the remnant of us, which, by thy powerful preservation, is still left; like the root or stock of a vine, which may sprout out again, (2 Kings, xix. 30. 31;) and especially to our king, whom thou hast endowed with zeal and courageous resolution for thy service, (2 Chron. xxx. 32,) and for our defence, xxxiv. 5. 6. 7. 8.

Ver. 16. It is burnt with fire; it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.] Great numbers of us are destroyed already, and may be compared to the numerous branches of that remaining stock, which, being cut off, are burnt with fire: And all the rest of us must perish, if thou wilt not be reconciled unto us, but still persevere in thy anger towards us.

Ver. 17. Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself:] Which we beseech thee turn away; and be the mighty helper of our sovereign, who is dearly beloved by thee; of that excellent prince, whom thou hast endowed with zeal and courageous resolution for thy service, and for our defence and preservation, (ver. 15.)

Ver. 18. So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.] Which shall be an everlasting obligation upon us, never to revolt from thee to our former idolatry: Do but free us from these deadly enemies, and we will worship thee alone; and never cease to praise thee, and acknowledge that we owe our very lives to thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 19. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts: cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.] Hear us, O great Lord, who hast all the angels in heaven at thy command; hear us, we once more beseech thee, and restore us perfectly to our former happiness; and in order to it, restore us to thy favour; and let there be a speedy end of all these calamities.

Psalms LXXXI.

To the chief musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph.

The Argument.—There was a special command of God, as the psalmist here takes notice, ver. 4, for the making a joyful sound with trumpets upon all the solemn days, especially their new moons, (Numb. x. 10,) but more especially upon the first day of the seventh month, which is called by this peculiar name, above all other days, a day of blowing the trumpet, I. e. from morning unto evening, Numb. xxix. 1. and a memorial of blowing trumpets, Lev. xxiii. 24. For this solemn day, I suppose, this psalm was composed; and the reason is apparent why they were to blow with trumpets longer on this day than any other, because it was the first new-moon in the year, (for, according to their old computation before they came out of Egypt, their year began on this day, as appears from Exod. xxiii. 16. xxxiv. 22, where the feast of in-gathering their fruits is said to be in the revolution, or the end of the year,) and God intended, it is possible, to awaken them (as Maimonides conjectures) to prepare themselves, by strict inquiry into their lives, and by hearty repentance, for the great day of atonement, which was the tenth of this month.

But of what this blowing trumpets or cornets was a memorial, is not easy to resolve; the Hebrews themselves being at such a loss about it, that they are forced to go as far back as the deliverance of Isaac, and the offering a ram in his stead, for the reison of it. The clearest account of which, it seems to me, may be fetched from this psalm, which plainly intimates, that the blowing of trumpets at that time related to something which ensued upon their happy deliverance out of Egypt. Which, though it began upon the first day of the first month, according to their new computation, (which took its original from that deliverance, in
memory of which God ordained the feast of the passover to begin on that day, Lev. xxiii. 6.), yet they had not a complete body of laws delivered to them by Moses, till the first day of the seventh month, which was the feast of blowing trumpets.

Moses received indeed several laws in the third month, Exod. xix. 1. 3. &c. on the third day whereof (ver. 11. 16. 19. 20.) God himself appeared on the top of Mount Sinai, with the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud and prolonged, (to which I believe this feast hath respect,) and spake the ten commandments; after which Moses delivered to them a body of civil laws, Exod. xxxi. xxxii. xxxiii. But they did not know the manner of the divine service for which they came out of Egypt into the wilderness, till Moses had been twice forty days, one after the other, in the mount; and likewise (as several of the Jews understand those passages in Deut. ix. relating to this matter) had forty days longer bewailed their sin, in making the golden calf. Which six score days, if we add to the time between their coming out of Egypt, and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, and to the six days which passed before Moses was called up into the cloud, it will fall out exactly to be the first day of the seventh month, when he began to give orders for the building of the tabernacle, and making all things belonging to God's house, according to the direction he had received in the mount. I am sure this was the precise time of their setting up the altar, and beginning to offer burnt-offerings after their return from the captivity of Babylon, before the foundation of the temple was laid. For you read, Ezra, iii. 6. it was upon the first day of the seventh month; in the middle of which they also kept the feast of tabernacles, as Moses had appointed, in memory of their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, under the government of the Almighty; unto which the psalmist here hath respect in the next words, which we translate in the time appointed, that is, at the full moon, (as 1:2 Dieu hath demonstrated,) on which the feast of tabernacles was kept in this seventh month; at which feast Solomon dedicated his temple, 1 Kings, viii. 2. where it is called the feast, and may well be meant here in the last words of the third verse of this psalm, our solemn feast-day; unless we take both the new-moon feast, and the full moon (i.e. feast of tabernacles) to be meant; and translate it, on the day of our feast. The same first day was also kept holy by Nehemiah with great solemnity, viii. x. 8. 9. 10. where you find how the book of the law was distinctly read to the people on this day, and the sense of it explained; so that they came the next day again for farther instruction, ver. 13.

Now, that they might be more mindful of those divine benefits which in this month they commemorated more than in any other month in the year, Asaph (in the days of David, it is likely) composed this psalm, and directed it to the master of music, to be sung (as the 8th psalm, upon Gittith) in the beginning of it, upon the feast of trumpets. And he introduces God himself (before whom they were summoned, as I said, by these trumpets, to appear) in the end of this solemnity; and complaining of the forgetfulness of his benefits, in giving them such a deliverance out of the Egyptian slavery; and of their hard-heartedness in preferring their own inventions, and the miseries they brought thereby upon themselves, before his counsels, and the happiness he intended for them. Which happiness is expressed in the last verse, by satisfying them with honey out of the rock; concerning which the learned may consult Bochartus de Sacrifici Animal, part 2. l. 4. c. 12.

Ver. 1. Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.] Sing praises aloud unto God, to whose almighty power alone we owe the deliverance which we now commemorate; shout with the voice of triumph in honour of him, who was so good unto your forefathers.

Ver. 2. Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp, with the psaltery.] Offer to him your cheerful hymns; and to complete the melody, and express the greatness of your joy, let some with timbrels, others with the pleasant harp, and others with the psaltery, celebrate the memory of his mercies.

Ver. 3. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed on our solemn feast-day.] And let the priests especially (Numb. x. 8.) take care to blow with the trumpets at the sacred solemnity, on the first day of the seventh month, the principal moon in the year, (which is attended with another feast at the full moon of this month,) that all the people may call to mind the trump of God, (Exod. xix. 16. 19.), which our fathers heard at his dreadful appearance on Mount Sinai, to give his law unto them.

Ver. 4. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.] For thus hath the Lord decreed in that law, where the God of our father Jacob requires this service of us, Lev. xxiii. 24. &c.

Ver. 5. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.] This he appointed unto the children of Joseph, as well as the rest of the tribes of Israel, for a perpetual memorial of his benefits, when he, going out over all the land of Egypt, (Exod. xi. 4. xii. 23. 29.), and destroying all the first-born, forced them to let us depart into the wilderness, where we heard to our great astonishment, (for we were never before acquainted with it), the voice of God.

Ver. 6. I removed his shoulder from the burden, his hands were delivered from the pot.] Who, considering with himself what a title he had to our service, (having taken off the heavy burdens which the Egyptians laid upon our backs, and rid our hands of those sordid and dirty employments wherein they made us labour).
Psalm LXXXI.

Ver. 7. Thou callest in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder; I proved thee at the waters of Meribab, Selab.] Admonished us to this effect, saying, You cried to me by reason of your cruel servitude under Pharaoh's task-masters, (Exod. ii. 23.), and I delivered you out of it, (iii. 8.), and again answered your prayers when you cried unto me in a new distress at the Red Sea, (Exod. xiv. 10, 13.), but confounded the Egyptians with thunder and lightning out of the cloudy pillar, (Exod. xiv. 24, 25; Psalm, lxxxvii. 18.) After all which I might well expect you should depend upon me, but presently found you full of distrust and infidelity at the waters of strife, (Exod. xvii. 7.), where I gave you a new proof of my power.

Ver. 8. Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee; O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; Of which if you will still enjoy the benefit, then give ear, O my people, and I will solemnly declare my will, and give a severe charge unto you, O ye Israelites, if you resolve to be obedient to my admonitions.

Ver. 9. There shall be no strange god in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.] Then this is the principal thing upon which all the rest depends, you shall not suffer any other gods to be acknowledged among you, but only me, (Exod. xx. 23.), nor shall you worship the gods of other nations, (Exod. xxiii. 13, 24, 12.)

Ver. 10. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.] For I, and I alone, am the living Lord, the eternal God, who gave a being to all things, and who are your peculiar benefactor, having brought you out of the Egyptian bondage, (Exod. xix. 4, xx. 2.) And if you will be faithful and obedient to me, enlarge your desires as far as you please, and I will satisfy them, for all the world is mine, Exod. xix. 5, xxiii. 25.

Ver. 11. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.] But notwithstanding their seeming compliance with him, and the fair promises they made him, (Exod. xix. 8, xx. 19, xxiv. 3, 7.), he presently complained, (Exod. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9, as I hear him still do at this day), my people would not be obedient to me, and Israel would not rest contented with me alone:

Ver. 12. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.] So provoked by their long stubbornness, I took no further care of them, but left them to do as they pleased, saying, Let them follow their own inventions.

Ver. 13. Ob that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!] But it had been better for them to have adhered to me, who, out of my tender affection to their good, still wished, even when they were so refractory, that my people Israel had been so wise as to have followed my directions, and been led by my advice, and not their own foolish imaginations.

Ver. 14. I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.] Then I should in a short time have quelled all their enemies, and by one victory after another, have quite destroyed those adversaries which (since I brought them into Canaan) have often miserably afflicted and oppressed them, Judges, ii. 3, 14, 15, 19, 20. iii. 1, &c. iv. 2.

Ver. 15. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.] And all that maligned their prosperity, and set themselves against the design of the Lord to make them victorious over their enemies, should have been so daunted, that they should have dispersed their inward hatred, and been forced at least to a counterfeit submission; but his people should have seen blessed days, and enjoyed a substantial and durable happiness without any interruption.

Ver. 16. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.] He should have made their country exceeding fruitful, and fed them with the richest wheat; and I myself, saith the Lord, would have blessed thee with such plenty, that in the deserts thou shouldst have found the sweetest refreshments, and without any care of thine, the bees should have laboured honey for thee, in the rocks, and holes of trees, and such like places, Deut. xxxii. 13. Judges, xiv. 8. 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26.

Psalm LXXXII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

The Argument.—Though there had been a notable reformation made by Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, &c.), of those corruptions which had been growing in the supreme court of judicature, at Jerusalem, as well as the lesser in other cities, ever since the times of David and Solomon, (who took care to see justice done, 1 Chron. xvii. 14. 1 Kings, iii. 9, 28.), yet it appears, by the frequent complaints of Isaiah, that when Hezekiah (in those days that prophet lived) came to the crown, there was a general deprivation again, and that notwithstanding the amendment he had made in matters of the divine worship, (2 Chron. xxx, xxxi.), and his resolutions and endeavours, no question to reform the abuses which were in their civil judicatures, (as I have expounded Psal. lxxv. 2.), they continued still exceeding corrupt. Insomuch that Isaiah calls their judges, rulers of Sodom, Isa. i. 10. (when he finds no fault with their religious services, ver. 11, 12, &c.) and says, “their princes were rebellious, companions of thieves, loving gifts, and following after rewards,” ver. 23.

Where it is evident he describes the judges in the highest court of all, who are called by the name of princes in several places, particularly in Jeremiah; who being condemned by the priests, and prophets, and people, as a man worthy to die, Jer.
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Psalm LXXXIII.

xxvi. 8. 9. was brought before the princes, ver. 10. 11. at whose bar he cleared himself so well, that they acquitted him, ver. 16. And as there they are called princes, with respect to their superiority over the people, so here in this psalm they are called Elohim, gods, in respect to the fountain of their power, which was from the Most High, who honoured them with his own name, which is so frequent for those of the supreme court, that some, not reasonably, understand those words, Judges, ix. 1 3. which we render, "Cheers the heart of God and man," in this manner, Wine alike cheers both princes and people, judges and clients, the meaner persons (called in this psalm Adam, Man, ver. 6. 1 7.) as well as the greatest, who in opposition to them are called gods, Whom Asaph (who lived in the time of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 20. see Psalm lxxxiii.) admonishes to be more careful in their duty; and to remember that God observed them, and would judge them.

Ver. 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; be judgest among the gods.] Remember, O ye judges, whose ministers ye are, (2 Chron. xix. 6.) and consider, that you are not so powerful, but God, who hath put you in his place, and honoured you with his name, (Exod. xxii. 18.) is far greater; and as he is present in your court to observe what you do, so will call you to a strict account, and severely punish you, if you judge amiss.

Ver. 2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.] How dare you then pronounce an unrighteous sentence? Is it not time to leave off your partiality? and no longer to favour a bad cause, because the man is rich and great, and can either give you a large bribe, if you will judge it for him, or do you a mischief, if you give sentence against him?

Ver. 3. Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.] Your duty is to do equal justice to all men that come before you; and to take a particular care, that the poor and the fatherless do not suffer because they have no money to give, nor any friend to solicit, for the defence of a righteous cause; and that the men of low condition, and such as are reduced to very great want, be not condemned, when they are injudiciously prosecuted by those who are above them.

Ver. 4. Deliver the poor and needy; rid them out of the band of the wicked.] See that you protect and deliver him, that is quite exhausted and miserably oppressed with poverty; let them not become a prey to violent men, who have no conscience, and put it out of their power to undo them.

Ver. 5. They know not, nor will they understand; they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course.] These are the constant admonitions which the men of God give the judges; but, alas! hitherto they have little prevailed. For they will not study the laws of God; or if they do, will not think it their interest to be governed by them; but are blinded by bribes, or by their corrupt affec-

tions, to do any thing that they would have them, insomuch that the foundations of the kingdom, which are justice and truth, are shaken; all things are in confusion, and in danger to come to utter ruin, Isa. v. 2 3. 24. x. 1. 2. 3.

Ver. 6. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High.] Hear therefore the sentence of God upon you, (whose words these are,) I have put my majesty upon you, and, though you be no more than other men in yourseives, have by my constitution raised you to such a dignity on earth, as my celestial ministers have in heaven.

Ver. 7. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.] Yet this shall not privilege you in your unjust proceedings; but since you have no regard to me, nor to your office, I will have as little regard to you; for you shall perish like one of the common men, without any respect to your honour, and be thrown down from your seats, like the tyrants and cruel oppressors that have been before you.

Ver. 8. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations.] Let us see this sentence fulfilled, O God, the righteous Judge; and do not suffer the insolent iniquity of these men any longer; but redress all those evils wherewith such men have filled not only this nation, but all the world, which belongs to thee, and thou wilt one day sure vindicate mankind, as the just owner of them, from the tyranny of those impious governors, who now abuse them, as if they had an absolute dominion over them.

Psalm LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

The Argument.—It is the common opinion, that the combination of powerful enemies, against which they here implore the divine assistance, was that mentioned in 2 Chron. xx. in the days of Jehoshaphat. The reason is, because the Children of Lot, (ver. 8.) viz. the Moabites and Ammonites, (whose ground of whose quarrel with the Jews is set down in Judges, xi.) seem to have been the principal in this confederacy, and the other but assistants, as it is plain they were in that invasion, 2 Chron. xx. 1. And then the author of this psalm, must be either Jehaziell, one of Asaph's posterity, (upon whom you read there, ver. 14. the spirit of the Lord came, or some other in those days, whose proper name this was. Which is much more probable than their conjectures, who think the author was Asaph, in the days of David, who subdued indeed the Moabites and Edomites, and other neighbouring nations; but we do not read of any confederacy they made against him, much less that they sent as far as Assyria for help, or that they began the war, as the people here mentioned did.

The same may be said, against the application of it to the conquests made in the days of Uzziah over several people here mentioned, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6. 7. 8.; or to the invasion made by Sennacherib king
Psalm LXXXIII

Ver. 1. *Keep not thou silence, O God; behold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.* O God, the supreme Judge of the world, whose power is so great, that the united forces of all men on earth, or angels in heaven, are not to be compared with it, (2 Chron. xx. 6, 13,) who with one word of thy mouth canst dissipate this great army, do not refuse now to answer our prayers in this sore distress; O do not shut thy merciful ears to our cries, nor quietly see us perish, most mighty God.

Ver. 2. *For lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.* For we are surprised with a sudden invasion of numerous enemies, (haters of thee and thy worship, as much as of our nation,) who make a dreadful noise, like the waves of the sea, (2 Chron. xx. 2,) and proudly promising themselves a victory, insinuate as if they had already won it.

Ver. 3. *They have taken counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.* They have, with equal malice and subtility, on a close design against thy people; and with great secrecy consulted how to destroy, not only us, whom thou hast wonderfully protected as thy jewels, but thy temple also, and the secret place wherein thou there dwellest.

Ver. 4. *They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.* Come, say they one to another, let us agree, and join all the power we have together, not merely to make a conquest of them, but for their utter extirpation, (2 Chron. xx. 11,) that there may be no mention in the world of such a people as the commonwealth of Israel.

Ver. 5. *For they have consulted together with one consent; they are confederate against thee.* And accordingly, ten several nations are combined heartily in this design; and how different soever their inclinations are upon other accounts, they have all entered into a solemn league, and made a covenant of mutual help, and of employing their joint endeavours, totally to subvert that government and religion which thou hast established.

Ver. 6. *The tabernacle of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarens.* Those warlike nations, the Edomites, and Ishmaelites, who dwell in tents, are engaged in this enterprise; and so are the Moabites, and others descended from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael.

Ver. 7. *Gebal and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.* With whom are united our neighbours the Gebalites, (Josh. xiii. 5,) the Ammonites, our old enemies the Amalekites and Philistines, and they that dwell in and about the famous city of Tyre.

Ver. 8. *Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot, Selab.* And, to add to their strength, they have called the powerful nation of the Assyrians into their association: on whose assistance the Moabites and Ammonites (the authors of this war) do principally rely.

Ver. 9. *Do unto them as unto the Midianites: as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kishon.* The greater need we have of thy assistance, with the greater earnestness we beseech thee to make them an example of human weakness, by defeating them, as thou didst that vast army of the Midianites and their confederates, (Judg. vi. 5. vii. 12,) whom Gideon overthrew with no greater power than three hundred men, (Judg. vii. 21. 22. compared with 2 Chron. xx. 23,) and as thou didst in former times to that famous captain Sisera, (who fell by the hand of a woman, Judg. iv. 21,) and to Jabin his king; who together with his army, was swept away in the brook of Kishon, Judg. iv. 21. 24. v. 21.

Ver. 10. *Whose persisted at Endor; they became as dung for the earth.* A great slaughter there was of them near Endor, (compare Judg. v. 19. with Josh. xvi. 11,) where their carcasses lay and rotted, and served instead of dung to fatten and enrich the earth.

Ver. 11. *Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zabbab and Zalmunna.* Let their princes and commanders fall like Oreb and Zeeb, (Judg. vii. 25,) and their kings not be able to save themselves by flight, but be taken and slain, like Zebah and Zalmunna, Judg. viii. 21. 22.

Ver. 12. *Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.* Who came with a design, (Judg.
Psalm LXXXIV.

To the chief musician upon Gittith. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

The Argument.—It is uncertain to what times this psalm belongs: They seem to have most reason on their side, who think it was composed upon the same occasion with the 42d and 43d, when David, forced from Jerusalem by the rebellion of his son Absalom, most passionately longed to be restored to the place of God’s worship. But it may as well, or better, in my judgement, be thought to have been composed by some pious Levite in the country, when Sennacherib’s army had blocked up the way to Jerusalem, and hindered them from waiting upon the service of God at the temple: where he judged the lowest ministry, that of a porter, (as we read, ver. 10,) to be far more honourable, than the highest preference among pagan nations. And thus I shall take the liberty to expound it in my paraphrase: pointing the reader to such places in the history of that sad time, as I think will explain some passages of this psalm; which, after their freedom was restored, by the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, the author of it delivered to the master of music in the temple, to be sung as the 8th psalm. See there.

Ver. 1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! It is impossible to express the affection I have to thy dwelling-place, O Lord, who art attended there by the ministry of the heavenly host, (Isa. xxxvii. 16,) and needest none of our services.

Ver. 2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. But we cannot live with any satisfaction, while we are absent from thee; for I am ready to faint away in ardent longings, to tread again in the courts of the Lord’s house; where my tongue and my hands, as well as my mind, would gladly be employed in the praises of our God; who in this excels all other, (1 Kings, xix. 4. 16. 18,) that he lives for ever.

Ver. 3. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallowetha nest for herself, where she may lay her young; even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. It grieves me, O mighty Lord of all the heavenly hosts, whose subject I am, and infinitely engaged to thee, to see the very birds, who know nothing of thee, enjoy that liberty which is denied me; who am here lamenting my distance from thee, when the sparrows and the ring-doves have their constant residence at thy house; and there live so undisturbed, that they build their nests, and bring forth their young, in the rafters of it.

Ver. 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they shall be still praising thee. Selah. O how happy are they who partake of such a privilege! who live so near thy house, and frequent it so much, as if it were their own! their delightful employment is, with never-ceasing praises, to pay their thankful acknowledgments unto thee.

Ver. 5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee: in whose heart are the ways of them. And happy also is that man, (how mean soever his outward condition be,) who, relying upon thy divine protection, (Exod. xxxiv. 24,) goes up three times a year to the solemn feast at Jerusalem; or when he is debarred that liberty, as I now am, is one of those devout persons, whose hearts are more in the highways that lead thither, than at their own home.

Ver. 6. Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. Who travelling through the troublesome valley of Baca, where there is no water, pass it as cheerfully, as if it
abounded with pleasant springs; and depending on
God, as the fountain of what they want, receive from
him the blessings of plentiful and seasonable showers,
to refresh them in their journey:

Vers. 7. They go from strength to strength; every one
of them in Zion appeareth before God.] So that the
whole company go from stage to stage, with an un-
wearyed vigour, till they all present themselves be-
fore God, to receive his blessing in his temple, upon
the hill of Zion.

Vers. 8. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give
me, O God of Jacob, Silah.] O mighty Lord, who
commandest all the heavenly hosts, which attend in
that holy place, (and are far more numerous than the
armies that invade us, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7.), make
me one of that happy number; and restore me, O
God, who deliverest Jacob out of all his troubles, to
the liberty of waiting upon thee there.

Vers. 9. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon
the face of thine anointed.] Look graciously upon me,
O God, who hast hitherto been our protector against
the most powerful enemies: and accept the prayer of
our sovereign, who petitions thee still to be our de-
defender, 2 Kings, xix. 19.

Vers. 10. For a day in thy courts is better than a thou-
sand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my
God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.] For one
day spent in thy courts, is far more pleasant than a
thousand in any other place; and I had rather lie at
the gates of thy house, than live in the most splendid
condition in idolatrous countries.

Vers. 11. For the Lord is a sun and shield: the
Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will be
with-held from them that walk uprightly.] For though
our happiness be sometimes clouded, yet the Lord,
like the sun, will dispel the darkness of affliction;
and, having brought us out of a disconsolate condi-
tion, defend and secure us in a better, (2 Kings, xx.
6.): the Lord will give those favour with others, and
advance them to great honour, (2 Chron, xxxii. 22.
23.); he will never be sparing of his blessings, but
heap them abundantly on those who sincerely do his
will in all things, 2 Kings, xviii. 5. 6. xx. 3.

Vers. 12. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that
trusteth in thee.] O most mighty Lord, who com-
mandest all the host of heaven, happy is that man,
who by his integrity preserves this hope and con-
dience in thee, though for the present he be restrained
from the delightful enjoyment of thee, in thy
temple.

PSALM LXXXV.

To the chief musician. A Psalm for the sons of
Korah.

The Argument.—It is thought by many, that this
psalm was composed by some of the sons of Korah
after David’s banishment from Jerusalem by his son
Absalom, (called a captivity, as we read Psal. xiv.
ult.), and his happy restoration to his kingdom;
though not to such a settlement as they desired. But

it may be as well, or better, applied to the miracu-
lus providence, which drove Sennacherib out of the
land, (who had taken many captives, Isa. v.
13.), and restored them to the happy liberty, whose
loss they bewailed in the psalm foregoing.

Which way soever we understand it, the composure
is such, that it might be much better used by them
after their return from the captivity of Babylon,
than at any other time; when they were infested
with many enemies, who disturbed the peaceable
enjoyment of their country and religion. And
therefore, it is possible, it might be reviewed, if
not made in those days, and delivered to the chief
master of music in the temple, to be sung present-
ly after the foundation of it was laid, (Ezra, iii.
10. 11. &c.); but the work hindered from pro-
ceding by the opposition of their enemies. And
so I shall interpret it.

Vers. 1. Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy
land; thou hast brought back the captivity
of Jacob.] Thou hast been exceeding kind unto us,
O Lord; and we most thankfully acknowledge the
favour thou hast done us, in delivering us, the pos-
terity of Jacob, out of our sad captivity, and re-
suming us to the land, in which thou thyself hast
chosen to dwell, Ezra, i.

Vers. 2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people,
thou hast covered all their sin. Silab.] Our sins kept
us from it, in banishment, a long time; but now thou
hast graciously pardoned, both our idolatry, and all the
other crimes for which we justly suffered.

Vers. 3. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou
hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.]
Thou hast put an end to the sore punishments, which
in thy heavy displeasure thou inflictedst on us; and
turned thy severity, which, like fire, had almost
consumed us, into great clemency and mercy towards
us.

Vers. 4. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause
thine anger towards us to cease.] Complete, good Lord,
our deliverance, which thou hast thus graciously be-
gun, and let not our ingratitude provoke thee to con-
tinue this new vexation and trouble that is befallen
us, Ezra, iv. 4. 5. 11. 23.

Vers. 5. Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt
thou draw out thine anger to all generations?] Which
forced us to sigh, and to say in the anguish of our souls,
Will there never be an end of our miseries? Is it not
equal, that the foregoing generation hath felt the sad
effects of thine anger, but it must extend itself to us also,
and our posterity?

Vers. 6. Wilt thou not receive us again, that thy
people may rejoice in thee?] Will it not be more for thy
honour, not only to preserve this feeble life which
thou hast bestowed on us, but to give us a perfect re-
coverey? that thy people may have nothing to damp
their joy, and entire satisfaction, in thy goodness to
them.

Vers. 7. Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us
thy salvation.] Make us so happy, good Lord; and,
though we deserve indeed to be more miserable than
we are, yet let thy mercy prevail with thee to grant us a complete deliverance.

Ver. 8. I will bear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly.] I will wait patiently upon the Lord, the Judge of the world, for a gracious answer to these prayers; hoping that he will not condemn us to further punishment, but settle his people, who devoutly worship him, in a prosperous tranquillity, provided they return not again to their old idolatry.

Ver. 9. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.] He will be so far from desiring those who fear to offend him, that I am confident the time approaches, when he will finish what he hath begun to do for us, in rebuilding our temple, (Ezra, v. 2. 8. vi. 7. 8. &c.) and restoring our country to its ancient dignity and splendour.

Ver. 10. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.] For, methinks, I see goodness and fidelity, justice and concord, (which are the principal glory of a kingdom,) meeting together, like ancient friends, which have been long absent, and embracing each other.

Ver. 11. Truth shall spring out of the earth: and righteousness shall look down from heaven.] And as truth and honesty, with all other virtues, shall grow and flourish among us, (like flowers and herbs in the spring, after a tedious winter;) so God shall faithfuly fulfill his promises to us, and exercise a most gracious providence over us.

Ver. 12. Yes, the Lord shall give that which is good: and our land will yield her increase.] Yes, the Lord will do us good beyond our expectation, and reward our fruitfulness in good works, with such a large and plentiful increase of the fruits of the earth; as shall demonstrate the bounty of Heaven to us.

Ver. 13. Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps.] He will govern us with great justice and mercy, having his faithful promises always before his eyes; from that rule he will never swerve, but stedfastly proceed by it, as the constant method he will hold in his divine administrations.

A Prayer of David.

The Argument.—The title satisfies us that David was the author of this psalm; which the collector of this third book found, I suppose, after the other two were made up and published, and so placed it here, among those which belong to the same subject. For though it was composed by David, when he was so persecuted, either by Saul or Absalom, that he was stript of all he had, and left in a most forlorn condition, (ver. 1.) yet Theodoret thinks it was made with a prospect of the attempt which the Assyrians made upon Jerusalem, and the hope which Hezekiah then placed in God for deliverance. Which notion it is likely he had from the Jews; who say, that this prayer was made use of by Hezekiah, in the time of that sore distress: for the first words of this psalm are the same with his in 2 Kings, xix. 16. and the eighth and ninth verses may very fitly be accommodated to that history, (as I have there observed,) but the rest a great deal better to David.

Ver. 1. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me for I am poor and needy.] There cannot be a fitter object of thy mercy, O Lord, than thy poor supplicant, who beseeches thee graciously to condense to his request; for else he is utterly undone, being quite destitute of all human help.

Ver. 2. Preserve my soul, for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant, that trusteth in thee.] And yet my life is in imminent danger, unless thou dost preserve it; as many reasons make me hope thou wilt: for as thou the righteous Judge hast been long my benefactor, and I am perfectly inconstant of that my enemies charge me withal; so I myself have been a reliever of others in their need, and besides, am a faithful servant of thine, who depends entirely upon thee, and hath no confidence in any thing, but only thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 3. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.] Whose merciful help I have also implored with most important and incessant prayers; which is another reason of my hope, that thou wilt take compassation upon me, O Lord.

Ver. 4. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.] And turn the present sorrow of thy servant unto joy and gladness; for I have placed my hope entirely in thee, O Lord, and expect nothing but from thee alone.

Ver. 5. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plentifuls in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.] Who art no less bountiful (which is another exceeding great encouragement to me) than I am indigent; ready also to pardon those that have offended thee; yes, to shew abundant kindness to every one of them, in their greatest distress, when with unfeigned devotion they call upon thee.

Ver. 6. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer: and attend to the voice of my supplications.] As I now do, O Lord, most humbly beseeching thee, with repeated in-treaties, to give a favourable answer to these prayers and supplications; whereby I deprecate thy displeasure, and sue unto thee for favour.

Ver. 7. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee; for thou wilt answer me.] Which I beseech thee let me the rather obtain, because my distress is so great and so urgent, that thy power will now be the more magnified in delivering me; as heretofore thou hast been wont to do, upon such earnest petitions as these are unto thee.

Ver. 8. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.] For nothing is too hard for thee; nor art thou unwilling to do more kindnesses for us, because thou hast done so many already; but, as appears by thy unparalleled works, dost incomparably excel (whatever strangers think, a Kings, xviii. 25.) all
those that are worshipped in the world as gods, who are not able so much as to help and preserve themselves.

Ver. 9. All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. Which shall move all our neighbouring nations, (2 Chron. xxxii. 33,) as all the rest shall do in the days of that great King which we expect, (Rom. xv. 9,) to acknowledge thee, O Lord, to be their Creator; and with humble veneration to submit themselves unto thee, and to honour thee with their highest praises.

Ver. 10. For thou art great, and dost wondrous things; thou art God alone. For they shall clearly see, by the magnificence of thy marvellous works, that thou art infinitely superior to all these powers whom they adore; and that, in truth, there is no God, but thou thyself alone.

Ver. 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name. Which I so firmly believe, that I desire nothing more than to be perfectly instructed in all thy will, which I will sincerely observe: knit my heart, O Lord, in such pious affections to thee, that it may never in the least dissent from thee, nor be disturbed with any vain cares, but entirely bent to study this alone, what is pleasing unto thee.

Ver. 12. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore. Whom I am bound to praise, both as the supreme Lord of all, and as my most bountiful benefactor, with all the powers of my soul; and accordingly, I do now most thankfully acknowledge thee, and will never cease to honour thee, and to do thee service, as long as I have any being.

Ver. 13. For great is thy mercy towards me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. For the benefits thou hast bestowed on me are as inestimable, as they are innumerable: I owe my very life to thee, which hath been often snatched out of the extremest dangers; wherein I had inevitably perished, if thou hadst not mercifully delivered me, 1 Sam. xxvii. &c.

Ver. 14. O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before them. Behold, O God, a new opportunity to glorify that mercy; for proud and ambitious men (2 Sam. xv. 1. &c.) have made an insurrection against me, and raised a most formidable army, (2 Sam. xv. 12. 13,) to take away that life which thou best so miraculously preserved; having no regard to thy providence, nor refraining any means whereby they may satisfy their unjust desires.

Ver. 15. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious: long-suffering, and plentiful in mercy and truth. All our comfort is, that thou, not they, dost govern the world; who art no less compassionate, than thou art powerful; readily forgiving offences, bearing long before thou punishest them; chusing rather to heap thy benefits upon us, and never failing to perform thy faithful promises.

Ver. 16. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of Zion bandmaid. In confidence of which, I humbly:


PSALM LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song, for the sons of Korah.

The Argument.—It is as uncertain when this Psalm-Song (see lxxvii.) was composed, as which of the sons of Korah was the author of it. But it is manifest enough, that it was written in commendation of Jerusalem, situate in the holy mountains of Sion, (where David built his palace, and afterward settled the ark,) and of Moriah, where Solomon built the temple. There are those that think it was composed upon the anniversary of the birth or coronation of some great prince, such as Hezekiah; in whose days this city was made more famous, by the glorious deliverance which God gave it, from the power of the king of Assyria's army. But this is a mere conjecture; and I shall follow the vulgar opinion: according to which, the beginning of this psalm must be looked upon as very abrupt, but expresses the greater rapture of joyful admiration, wherein the psalmist was.

Ver. 1. His foundation is in the holy mountains. Great is the strength and beauty of this place, which is founded by God in the high mountains; which he hath peculiarly chosen for the seat of his kingdom, and of his priesthood.

Ver. 2. The Lord loveth the gates of Sion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Though the Lord loves all the habitations of his people, yet none are so dear unto him, as those within the gates of Jerusalem; a principal part of which is Sion.

Ver. 3. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. There is no city in the world, of which such glorious things are foretold, or of which any thing can now be said, comparably to what we can truly boast of thee, that art the city which God himself hath separated for his own habitation.

Ver. 4. I will make mention of Rabab and Babylon, to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. I do not deny

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the due praises which belong to other places and countries; but rather am wont to make honourable mention among my acquaintance and familiars, of Egypt and of Babylon, and of those who are nearer to us, the Philistines, Tyrrians, and Arabians; bidding them observe, that such a notable person was born among them.

Ver. 5. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her.] But what is this to Zion! of whom it shall be said in future times, that (not such a single person, but) this and that man, a great many worthies, and far more eminent both in learning and arms, but especially in piety, were born in her, for she hath no meurer instructor than the Most High, who shall settle her in a flourishing estate, by educating and forming her inhabitants to the most excellent qualities.

Ver. 6. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.] So that when he himself, whose eyes nothing can escape, shall look over the register of those nations, and count the famous men they have produced, he shall find only some one great man, and he comparatively of no great value, was born among them.

Ver. 7. As well the singers as the players on instruments, shall be there; all my springs are in thee.] But in thee, O city of God, he shall find multitudes of excellent persons, all eminent in their kind, even among those of lower rank, as well as in the higher. And there shall be a constant succession of such, as there is of water in the spring.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief musician upon Mhlabath Leannoth. Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

The Argument.—Who this Heman was, is uncertain. Not he who was the famous singer in David’s time; for he was of the tribe of Levi, (1 Chron. vi. 31. xv. 17.) whereas this was descended from Zerah, who was one of the sons of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 6. where we find indeed, not only Heman, but Ethan, (to whom the next psalm is ascribed), mentioned as two of Zerah’s sons: but we cannot reasonably think that they were, in those early times, the authors of these two psalms; because Ethan plainly makes mention of David, and the promise which God hath passed to him of a perpetual kingdom.

It remains, therefore, that these two here mentioned, were of the posterity of those sons of Zerah, (and thence called Ezrahites), and had the names of their noble ancestors given them, to perpetuate the memory of those who were so famous for wisdom, 1 Kings, iv. 31.

But in what time they lived, cannot be certainly determined. It is probable, when Jeconiah, otherwise called Jehoiachin, (or after him Zedekiah), was taken, and carried captive to Babylon, togethther with abundance of the nobility, and the principal commanders and artizans, 2 Kings, xxiv. 14. 15. 16. In some of which ranks I suppose this Heman was; who being cast into a dark prison (which hath made some fancy Jehoiachin himself to have made it), ver. 6. 8. or otherwise as miserably treated as if he had been in a dungeon, bewails his private calamity, as Ethan in the next psalm doth the public.

Why it is called a Song-Psalm, see upon the title of Psalm lxvii. It was to be sung by the sons of Korah interchangeably, which is the meaning of Leannoth, upon a flute, or pipe, (see Psal. liii.), to the known tune of Maschil, see Psal. xxxii. Some passages in it may be applied to our Saviour’s death and burial in his grave, which the prophet Isaiah compares to a prison; and so is used by our church upon Good-Friday.

Ver. 1. O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee. O mighty Lord, by whose gracious care and good providence I have been hitherto preserved, and on whom all my hopes of safety still depend, I have not failed in this sore affliction to implore thy mercy, with most earnest cries, without any intermission.

Ver. 2. Let my prayer come before thee; incline thy ear unto my cry.] Let them at last prevail, I beseech thee, and do not reject my petition, accompanied with sad moans and doleful lamentations, but vouchsafe a favourable answer to it.

Ver. 3. For my soul is full of troubles; and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.] For my soul is overcharged with great variety of long-continued evils, which have brought me so low, that there is but a step between me and the grave.

Ver. 4. I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath no strength.] All that know my condition look upon me as utterly lost; and I have no reason to think otherwise, being quite spent, and having no power at all to help myself.

Ver. 5. Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more; and they are cut off from thy hand.] I am no longer one of this world, from whose society I am quite separated; there is little difference between me and those who, being slain in a battle, and cast all together into one common grave, are no farther regarded, or those whose families are so wholly extirpated, that there are none left to preserve their memory.

Ver. 6. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness in the deeps.] For thou hast thrust me down into a deep and dismal dungeon, (which I can compare to nothing but a grave), wherein I lie neglected, and see no hope of being delivered.

Ver. 7. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thy hand hath afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.] My spirit is ready to sink under the weight of thy displeasure; while my calamities fall upon me so fast, and so heavily, (like the mountainous waves of the sea), one
after another, that it is impossible to express the soreness of my affliction.

Ver. 8. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them; I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.] I am not allowed to have any familiarity with my friends or acquaintance, no more than if I were in another world: and as for other men, they abominate to come into such a loathsome place, where I am kept so close, that I have no means of getting out.

Ver. 9. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out mine hands unto thee.] Nor can I do any thing but weep, till I am almost blind, by reason of the miseries I endure; only I cease not to look up unto thee, O Lord, continually, who art my only companion in this solitary and helpless condition, imploring thy aid with fervent prayers, and longing expectations, saying,

Ver. 10. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead rise and praise thee? Selah.] Make haste, good Lord, to deliver me, if thou intendest any kindness to me, otherwise I shall presently perish; and then, without the greatest miracle, there is no help for me; for can I with any reason expect, that thou shouldest do wonders for me among the dead, when thou wouldest do nothing for me while I was alive? and raise me out of my grave, when thou wouldest not bring me out of prison?

Ver. 11. Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?] Now is the time to declare thy love thou bearest to me, and to perform the promise thou hast made to them that faithfully serve thee; for if thou dost defer thy relief, I die; and what can I hope for, when I am rotten in my grave?

Ver. 12. Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?] Shall thy power be apparent there, where nothing is seen? and wilt thou convince men how good and how just thou art to thy servants, in the place where they are no more remembered?

Ver. 13. But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.] Thus, O Lord, I cry unto thee in the anguish of my soul, which keeps me awake to present my prayers unto thee, before the morning-light.

Ver. 14. Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why dost thou turn thy face from me?] Though, alas! they have no effect; but I see myself deserted, notwithstanding all my prayers, in these miserable straits, wherein I lie sighing, to think what the reason should be, that thou deniest me thy help, and takest no notice of me.

Ver. 15. I am afflicted, and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.] Which is the more strange, because I faint away under my misery, which hath continued many years, and under the sad prospect I have before me of more dreadful calamities, which so astonish me, that I know not what to do with myself.

Ver. 16. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.] Only becast thou again my forlorn estate, which grows still more deplorable; I suffer not merely the effects of thy anger, (ver. 7.), but of thy severest and most terrible displeasure, wherewith I am so overwhelmed and oppressed, that I am scarce able to fetch my breath.

Ver. 17. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.] Which way soever I turn myself, I find that I am environed with them, and they increase continually, like floods of water coming from several places, and at last meeting all together, to inclose and swallow me up.

Ver. 18. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.] And there is no friend, no neighbour, comes near me, to give me the least consolation; but all they whose sweet society was wont to help to mitigate my sorrow, are either dead, or kept from my sight, or hide themselves, for fear of being thrust down, together with me, into this doleful place.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

The Argument.—The author of this psalm was near of kin to him that made the former, (see the argument there), and they lived, I suppose, in the same time. Only Heman bewailed some private affliction, which was befallen himself; whereas Ethan (after a thankful acknowledgement of the benefits God had bestowed upon them, and especially of his promise made to David, by Samuel and Nathan, of settling the kingdom upon him and his posterity for ever) laments most sadly the public calamity, by the subversion of the royal family and government, in the days of Jehoiachin, or of Zedekiah. Whose miserable fate seems, in the conclusion of this psalm, to be bewailed with the greater passion, because it looked like a breach of God's promise to David, and gave the Babylonians, and other nations, who assisted in their destruction, occasion to say, that notwithstanding all the promises they boasted of, and the fidelity of their God in their performance, there was now a period put to David's family and kingdom.

That is the clearest account I can give of the meaning of the last clause of the last verse but one, where we read that they "reproached the footsteps of his anointed." The word we render footsteps, signifies properly the heel of a man's foot; and from thence is translated to signify the end of any thing, as in Psal. cxix. 33. Which notion of it, in my judgement, best suits with all that goes before in this psalm, concerning the stability of David's kingdom, which their enemies now boasted (as we would express it in our present language): they saw upon its last legs. And the truth is, it was never restored to that family, till Christ the son of David came, to whom some passages in this psalm are applied by the Jews themselves, in both the Besorith, and in other books, to which Aben-Ezra and R. Solomon consent.

Why this Psalm is called Maschil, see Psal. xxxii. But why any should fancy, as some have done, that
it was made by Jehoiachin, after he came out of
prison, (2 Kings, xxv. 27-28,) I cannot conceive,
unless the words moved them to think that he,
who in the foregoing psalm speaks of himself as
in a dungeon, gives God thanks here for his de-
liverance.

Ver. 1. **I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for
ever: with my mouth will I make known thy
greatness and faithfulness to all generations.** The
innumerable calamities that befall us, shall blot out the
memory of the innumerable benefits which the Lord hath
formerly bestowed on us; but I will sing of them
without ceasing; and endeavour to make all posterity
believe, notwithstanding our present desolation, that
thou art faithful and constant to thy word.

Ver. 2. **For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for
ever: the faithfulness shall thou establish in the very
heaven.** For I am confident thy mercy, which is
immovable, and endures for ever, will raise us out of
these ruins; thy promises being as firm and steadfast
as the heavens; in which we see an image of the
unchangeableness of thy nature, and of thy will.

Ver. 3. **I have sworn unto David my servant.** Which thou didst
declare by thy prophet, saying, (1 Sam. xvi. 13. 2
Sam. iii. 9. 10. v. 2. vii. 15. 16. 28,) I have chosen
David, my faithful servant, to be the governor of my
people; and have made a covenant with him, con-
formed by an oath.

Ver. 4. **Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build
up thy throne to all generations.** Selah.] That not only
he, but his children after him, shall be settled in the
throne; which, though it totter some time, or be
thrown down, shall be raised again, and continued throughout
all succeeding generations.

Ver. 5. **And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O
Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of thy
saints.** For which stupendous kindness, if we should
forget to praise thee, or in this our calamitous condition
distrust thy power and fidelity to make it good,
the heavenly inhabitants will not fail to do it, but in
their holy assemblies confess them both, with their
solemn praises.

Ver. 6. **For who in the heaven can be compared unto
the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be
likened unto the Lord?** For there are none of the
powers of the air, they know, (much less any upon
earth), that can resist the Lord, and hinder the ful-
filling of his will: the mightiest among themselves,
they are sensible, are not to be compared to his ma-
jesty, to whom they are but ministers.

Ver. 7. **God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of
the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that
are about him.** And when they assemble, in the
greatest numbers, and make the most glorious court,
stand in great fear and dread of him; attending, with
awful reverence, what commands he will be pleased

to lay upon them.

Ver. 8. **O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord
like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?**
With whom I will join, O Lord, the commander of
all these heavenly hosts, and celebrate thy name on
earth, as they do in heaven, saying, Where is he-a-
mong them all that can equal thee? O most powerful
Lord, whose faithfulness is as ready to fulfil thy
promises, as the angels are to execute thy commands?

Ver. 9. Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the
waves thereof arise, thou stilltest them.** The sea itself,
which submits to nobody else, is under thy govern-
ment; who, when it is a calm, makes it swell, as
if it would overflow the earth; and reduce it, when
it is in its greatest rage, to a perfect stillness again.

Ver. 10. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one
that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy
strong arm.** There the Egyptians, who had been
wounded before with many other grievous plagues,
were utterly overthrown; and with the like irresistible
power the Canaanites were scattered, at the entrance
of thy people into the promised land.

Ver. 11. The heavens are thine, the earth also is
thine: as for the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast
founded them.** For thou art the owner of all things
both in heaven and earth, and hast the justest right
to dispose of them to whom pleaseth, because the
world, and all the inhabitants of it, are thy crea-
tures.

Ver. 12. The north and the south, thou hast created
them: Tabor and Hermon shalt rejoice in thy name.**
Whether we cast our eyes to the southern or northern
parts of the earth, to the west towards Tabor, or
eastwards towards Hermon, they all acknowledge
thee their Creator: and rejoice in thy bountiful provi-
dence, which enriches them with all things needful
for them.

Ver. 13. Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand,
and high is thy right hand.** And thy power extend-
ing itself throughout the whole, always effects in
every place whatsoever thou desigdest; and that
with an irresistible force, whether it be to punish
evil-doers, or to preserve and exalt them that do well.

Ver. 14. Justice and judgement are the habitation of
thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.**
But none shall be able to say thou dost them any
wrong; because thou dost not rule the world merely
by thy absolute power, but hast pleased thy principal
glory in justice and equity, mercy and fidelity; from
which thou never swervest.

Ver. 15. Blessed is the people that know the joyful
sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy
countenance.** Happy are the people who live
under thy righteous and merciful government; and
hear the trumpet sound, which signifies the royal pre-
sence of thy majesty among them, and calls them to
attend upon thee, (Numb. x. 10;) they shall spend
their days most cheerfully, O Lord; being secure of
thy favour, which will let them want nothing that is
good for them.

Ver. 16. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day:
and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.** They
shall not barely rejoice, but triumph, and that con-
tinuously, in thy love to them; and, walking in thy
holy laws, shall, by thy goodness, be highly exalted,
and made superior to all their enemies.
Ver. 17. For thou art the glory of their strength; and in thy favour our born shall be exalted.] For they were not their conquests to their own value, or forces, though never so great; but it is thou who givest illustrious victories to the smallest armies, and therefore, by thy favour, we hope that our empire, which is now broken, shall be raised again to its former splendour.

Ver. 18. For the Lord is our defence: and the holy One of Israel is our King.] For the Lord is still our protector, though our prince be taken, and made unable to defend us; he whom Israel adores, and acknowledges infinitely to transcend all other beings, is our King and Governor.

Ver. 19. Then thou speakest in vision to the holy One, and saithst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.] Who then didst reveal thy mind, in a vision, to the holy prophet Samuel, (1 Sam. xvi. 1.) when the Philistines defied Israel, and grew terrible to them, (xvii. 10. 11. 24.) saying, I have provided myself a valiant champion (1 Sam. xvi. 8.) to be your deliverer, (2 Sam. iii. 18.) I have designed a person of singular worth, from among the common people, (1 Sam. xvi. 11.) to be promoted to the kingdom.

Ver. 20. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.] I have observed David, (1 Sam. xvi. 1.) and find him a man that will faithfully serve me; go, and anoint him with the holy oil; for I intend him for the governor of my people.

Ver. 21. With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.] With whom I will always be powerfully present, for his assistance, (1 Sam. xvii. 50. &c.) and never desert him, as I did Saul, (xviii. 12. 24. 28.) but my mighty power shall extraordinarily strengthen him in all his enterprises, (1 Sam. xxx. 6.) 2 Sam. viii. 14.

Ver. 22. The enemy shall not ensnatch upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.] The subtlest of his enemies shall not be able to circumvent him; nor the most malicious, how powerful soever, oppress him.

Ver. 23. And he shall tread down his foes before his face, and shall pluge them that hate him.] But after all their vain attempts, I will not only protect him from their crafty violence, but subdue all his adversaries under him, and destroy those that hate him, 2 Sam. vii. 9.

Ver. 24. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his born be exalted.] He shall ever find me, not only faithful to my promise to him, but kind above his expectation; and, by my powerful assistance, and his confidence in it, his authority shall be highly exalted, 1 Chron. xiv. 17. 2 Sam. vii. 9. 18. 13.

Ver. 25. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.] On one hand he shall conquer the Philistines, and those that live upon the coast of the sea, (2 Sam. viii. 1.) and on the other hand the Syrians, as far as Tigris and Euphrates, 2 Sam. viii. 9. &c.—x. 16. 19.

Ver. 26. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.] For he shall entirely depend on me in all his distresses, and fly to me for succour, as a child to his parent; saying, with more than usual love and confidence, Thou art my Father, as well as my omnipotent God, from whom alone I expect protection and deliverance.

Ver. 27. Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.] Which I will never fail to afford him, till I raise him to the prime dignity, among all those whom I call my sons; and set him so high above all other kings in the world, that he shall be a most eminent type of my Son Christ, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Ver. 28. My mercy also will I keep for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.] Nothing shall alter these kind intentions toward him; but I will always have a love for him, and faithfully perform my covenant with him:

Ver. 29. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.] Which is, that his family shall never be extinct; but notwithstanding the changes which all things are subject unto here below, have the royal power continued in it, as long as the heavens endure, 2 Sam. vii. 16. 28. 29. Luke, i. 32. 33.

Ver. 30. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgements;] If his successors indeed shall depart from the law which I have given you by my servant Moses, and not judge my people righteously:

Ver. 31. If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;] If they profanely neglect or corrupt my religion, and observe not the rest of the rules of life which I have enjoined them:

Ver. 32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.] Then will I execute the threatenings which are in my law (Lev. xxvi.) upon them; and punish their transgressions with sore diseases, and their idolatries with several plagues, (2 Sam. vii. 14.)

Ver. 33. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.] But I will not so chastise them, as never more to do good to his family, (2 Sam. vii. 25.) but I will still have a kindness for it, and faithfully keep my promise with it, 1 Kings, xi. 34.—36. xv. 4. 2 Kings, viii. 29. &c.

Ver. 34. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.] I will not violate the covenant I have made with David, 2 Chron. xxxi. 7.; nor retract the promise which I have solemnly passed to his family.

Ver. 35. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.] For I have unalterably sworn by my own incomunicable excellencies, that I will as soon cease to be what I am, as deceive him.

Ver. 36. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.] His family (as I said, ver. 29.) shall never be quite extinct; but always remain in my favour, and hold the royal dignity as long as the sun shineth.

Ver. 37. It shall be established for ever as the moon,
and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.] The moon may as well fall from her orb, as his authority fall to the ground, and rise no more: Let that be a witness of my fidelity, when you look upon it, (Jer. xxxiii. 20. 21.), and conclude, that after all the changes and eclipses his kingdoms may suffer, it shall stand as fast as that and all the rest of the heavenly bodies.

Ver. 38. But thou hast cast off and abhorred; thou hast been worship with thine anointed.] But all these promises, alas! so sacredly confirmed and oft repeated, have not secured it from a dismal subversion: For thou hast rejected, with the greatest contempt and indignation, our sovereign; one of the posterity of David, and his lawful successor in the kingdom, 2 Kings, xxiv. 30. xxv. 7. Lam. iv. 20.

Ver. 39. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown, by casting it to the ground.] Thou seemest not to regard the covenant made with thy faithful servant, (which thou promisedst not to break, ver. 34.), and instead of raising his family higher than all other kings, (ver. 47.), hast suffered it to lose all its authority; which, together with the royal diadem, is wilfully trodden under foot.

Ver. 40. Thou hast broken down all his high- places; thou hast brought his strong-holds to ruin.] Thou hast broken down all the walls of Jerusalem, (2 Kings, xxv. 10.), and made all his fortified places a mere desolation:

Ver. 41. All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.] So that he hath no defence against those who have a mind to make a prey of him, (2 Kings, xxiv. 2.), and is now scorned and derided by those who formerly dreaded him.

Ver. 42. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries: thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.] Thou hast made his adversaries (whom thou promisedst to depress, ver. 23.) far stronger than himself; they have executed all that they designed, and now triumph in his ruin.

Ver. 43. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle. His forces have done him no service; but being shamefully routed, durst never rally again, to make any opposition to their enemies.

Ver. 44. Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.] Thou hast put out that splendour which we thought should have been perpetual, (ver. 37. 38.), and hast utterly overturned his kingdom.

Ver. 45. The days of his youth hast thou shortened; thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.] Thou hast made a speedy end of the reign of Jehoiachin, who in his youth was made a slave, (2 Kings, xxiv. 8. &c.), and hast suffered Zedekiah to be most disgracefully

condemned as a rebel, to lose his eyes, and remain a prisoner all the days of his life, 2 Kings, xxv. 7.

Ver. 46. How long, LORD, wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?] O what a sad condition is this, in which thou seemest wholly to neglect us! But, O Lord, wilt thou never appear for us again, and put a period to our miseries? Wilt thou let thy anger burn, till we be utterly consumed?

Ver. 47. Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? Our natural weakness pleads for some mercy, and emboldens us to beseech thee, that, since we must only die unavoidably, but a short time will bring us to our graves, thou wilt be pleased to let us spend that little time in more ease, and not live as if we were made for nothing else, but only to be miserable and to die.

Ver. 48. What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?] For where is the man, whose constitution is so firm, that he shall not yield to death? For what ability have we, though our enemies should not thus destroy us, to defend ourselves from the power of the grave?

Ver. 49. LORD, where are thy former loving-kindnesses, which thou swarrest unto David in thy truth?] Our natural differences are there between our times, and those when thou wast so exceeding good to David! and swarrest, most faithfully, to continue to him for ever thy loving-kindnesses, which we beseech thee now restore unto us.

Ver. 50. Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people.] Shew, O Lord, that thou dost not forget the scoffs and jeers, whereby our enemies augment the sufferings of thy servants: There is nothing I lay to heart so much, as all the reproaches of many and mighty nations.

Ver. 51. Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD, wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.] Who are thy enemies as well as ours, and have blasphemed thee, O Lord, and mocked at thee, as if our slavery were the effect of thy inability to protect us; and as if there were an end of the family and kingdom of David thine anointed, which thou saist should last for ever.

Ver. 52. Blessed be the LORD for evermore. Amen, and amen.] But let them laugh on; neither their scoffs, nor our calamity, shall hinder us from praising the Lord, and speaking good of him continually; in assured hope that he will at last deliver us. Let it be so, we beseech thee; let it be so, as we desire and hope, that we may ever praise thee for our happy redemption.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS.
THE FOURTH BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALM XC.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

The Argument.—Here begins the fourth book of Psalms; in this differing from the rest, that as those of the first book are most of them ascribed to David; and those of the second, in great part, to the sons of Korah; and those of the third, to Asaph; so there are few of these, whose author is certainly known, and therefore, I suppose, were all put together in one and the same collection. The first of them, indeed, being made by Moses, the Hebrews have entertained a conceit, (which St Hierom and St Hilary also follow,) that he was the author also of the ten next immediately ensuing. But, as there is no reason for that, (it will appear in due place), so I can see no cause why we should fancy David, or some of the children of Moses in his time, or a singer of that name, (as Aben-Ezra conjectures,) to have composed this present psalm; when not only the title expressly gives it to that Moses, who was the man of God, (as their lawgiver is called, Deut. xxxiii. 1), or that famous prophet, by whom God spake to them; but the Chaldee paraphrase, and the very matter of the psalm, sufficiently shew, that it was a meditation of his, when the people offended so highly against God in the wilderness, (especially by murmuring at the relation the spies brought them of the good land, Numb. xiv.), that he shortened their lives to seventy or eighty years at the most; and suffered them not to arrive at the age of their ancestors, or of Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, whose lives he prolonged to an hundred and twenty years.

Which grievous punishment Moses prays God they may lay to heart seriously, and so recover his favour, (ver. 12. &c.), who is the eternal God, as he tells them, (in the beginning of the psalm), and had been, in a particular manner, kind to their progenitors in former generations.

This is the substance of the psalm; which the collector of this book thought fit to place in the very beginning of it, because of the great antiquity of this psalm, and the dignity of its author.

Ver. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.* O Lord, who sustainedst and governest the whole world, thou hast been the constant protector of our nation for many ages; having afforded all things necessary for the defence and security of our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they had no certain dwelling-place, but were strangers in the land whither we are going; and supported us in the land of Egypt; where, in a time of dearth, thou madest an ample provision for us; as thou hast also done hitherio, in this barren desert.

Ver. 2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou badst formed, the earth and the world; even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.] Where, though we have no towns nor houses, we ought to think ourselves safe, and to trust in thee, who art the same mighty God thou ever wast; (not only before we and our forefathers were made, but before the mountains arose out of the waters, and thou commandedst the rest of the earth and this beautiful world to appear); and ever wilt be, whatever changes there be here, without any alteration.

Ver. 3. Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men.] We have highly offended thee, indeed, and so did our first parents, who became thereby most wretched and miserable creatures, and were doomed by thee to return to the dust out of which they were formed, as all their posterity must do, whosoever thou summonest them to obey that sentence thou hast passed upon them.

Ver. 4. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.] And should we have a reprieve for a longer time than our first father Adam and some of his successors had, who lived near to a thousand years, we should be wretched still; especially when we compared ourselves with thee, in whose account the longest life is as inconsiderable as one day, and that when it is spent and gone; nay, as three or four hours, which pass away in sleep.

Ver. 5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.] But alas! in these ages thou carriest men away suddenly, as a violent torrent doth those things it meets withal in its passage; they vanish like a dream when we awake, and are as grass, which in the morning is grown higher and stronger than it was;

Ver. 6. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.] But how flourishing and fresh soever it then appears, is cut down before night, and loses all its beauty; such is the frailty of man, who is now in vigorous health, and anon languishes, and falls to the earth.

Ver. 7. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.] This, I am sure, is our condition, who have so provoked thee to anger by our sins, that we perish in an instant, (Numb. xvi. 35. 36.), and are perpetually disturbed with dreadful apprehensions of thy heaviest displeasure, Numb. xvii. 12. 13.

Ver. 8. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.] After many threatenings, thou hast proceeded as a righteous Judge, to call us to a severe account for all our
foul crimes, though never so secretly committed; and make it appear by our punishments, to all the world, (Numb. xiv. 20. &c.), that we are a perverse generation, though we pretend to thy service.

Ver. 9. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.] For we constantly feel some effect or other of thine anger, whereby our lives decline exceeding fast; and many times before we can say What is this? are at an end.

Ver. 10. The days of our years are threescore years, and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.] We fall short of the days of our forefathers, being now all doomed to perish in the wilderness, and not to exceed, commonly, the age of seventy, or (if men be of a vigorous constitution) at most, of eighty years; the best part of which also is spent in toilsome travels, (Num. xx. 14. xxi. 4. xxxi. 11. Deut. ji. 2. &c.), and much sorrow and vexation, to see the strongest among us cut down like grass in a moment, or at least making great haste unto their graves.

Ver. 11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath:] And yet, alas! who is there that seriously considers and lays to heart the dreadful effects of thy displeasure, which irresistibly falls upon us? (Numb. xxiv. 1. 3. &c.) or with such a pious fear as it ought to excite, takes any care to prevent more terrible punishments than those we have felt already?

Ver. 12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.] Lord, do thou touch us with a sense of thy judgements, that we may not presume thus foolishly to offend thee, as our fathers have done; but, making a just account of the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, may wisely apply ourselves to make the best use we can of them, in repenting of our sins.

Ver. 13. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.] And then be pleased to turn thy severity into kindness towards us; let it suffice, good Lord, that we have endured so many and long punishments, and now at last revoke or mitigate the sentence thou hast passed upon us, who, though very disobedient, are thy servants.

Ver. 14. O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days! O let us see some appearance of thy love to us, which may satisfy and cheer our languishing souls, like the morning-light after a tedious night; and, instead of sighs and groans, fill us with shouts of joy, all the remainder of our days.

Ver. 15. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have such evil.] Compensate our past troubles with future comfort; and make our happiness to equal, if not exceed, the misery we have suffered.

Ver. 16. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.] Declare to all the world, that thou hast not quite forsaken us thy servants, but wilt still work wonders for us, and do more glorious and magnificent things for our children, though we have sinned against thee, Numb. xx. 17. 18. &c. xxxi. 2. Deut. ii. 25. iii. 24.

Ver. 17. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it.] Let them inherit, by the special favour of the Lord our God, that lovely and pleasant land (Gen. xlix. 15. Deut. viii. 7. &c.) which he hath promised to give us; and for that end, direct and prosper our arms, that what we shall attempt in vain, if we be left to ourselves, may successfully be achieved by thy assistance, (Deut. viii. 17. 18. &c. xxxi. 6. 7. 8.) O prosper thou our undertaking, and make our arms victorious.

PSALM XCI.

The Argument.—The author of this psalm is not known; but the occasion seems to have been some great pestilence, in which the psalmist commends an humble confidence in God, and ardent love to him, as the best security, both in that and in all other dangers. Maimonides thinks, (as others of the Rabbins also do), that the psalmist hath a peculiar respect to the incursions of evil spirits, ver. 5. 6. as in the following verses, 7. 8. to those mischiefs which may come from the hand of evil men. And as far as those spirits had any hand in the pestilence here spoken of, his opinion is true, and his words in general are very significant, that the psalmist here "treats elegantly of that great providence which protects and keeps us from all evils, both universal and particular," &c. Thus he discourses in his More Nevochim, part iii. chap. 51. where we have the reason of that name which is given to this psalm by the Talmudists, who call it A Song of evil spirits. See Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in the word ΙΧΘΥ in the

Now, there is no pestilence so likely to have given occasion to this psalm, as that in the latter end of David's reign, who, having numbered the people, and not made those acknowledgments to God which the law in that case prescribed, (Exod. xix.), had this sad choice given him by the prophet God, whether he would be punished for his negligence by famine, or, by the sword of his enemies, or by pestilence. And submitting to the last, (which God sent a destroying angel to inflict, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. 16.), was taught, it is not unlikely, by that prophet, called David's Son, to recommend himself to the divine protection, in the words of this psalm. For that David himself was the author, as some conceive, is not so probable, because there is no such confession of his sin, and depreciation of the divine displeasure, in this psalm, as we read he made on this occasion, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1 Chron. xxi.; unless we will imagine, that he made this psalm after that plague, to direct and excite all
others, to make God their refuge, as he had
done in such like calamities.

And this is far more probable, than that it should
be made by Moses, as some of the Hebrews fancy;
for none of the plagues in his time were so great
as that in David's: and the most of them fell
on those whom God had condemned to die in the
wilderness, (as he in the foregoing psalm commemorates;) and therefore he could not promise long
dlife to them upon any terms, as the psalmist here
doeth to the man that confides in God, ver. last.
The ancient interpreters, by Schacel, (which commonly
signifies a lion,) do so unanimously understand
some kind of serpent, and not without reason, (as Bochartus hath demonstrated,) that I have followed
them in my paraphrase of ver. 13. and made
no mention of those beasts of prey, but only of
venomous creatures.

Ver. 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the
Most High, shall abide under the shadow
of the Almighty.] It is an undoubted truth, that he
who always makes the divine providence his sanctu-
ary, and, commending himself to the protection of the Most High, rests in that, and troubles himself no farther, need not fear any danger whatsoever;
but think himself safe and secure in his custody,
who, as he is almighty, so will never fail those that
piously confide in him.
Ver. 2. I will exalt the Lord, He is my refuge,
and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust.] And
therefore I will now encourage my soul to flee unto
the Lord for shelter, saying, I have no confidence
in any thing but him alone; he is a better defence
than the most impregnable fortress, being the So-
vereign of the world, and so good to me upon all oc-
casions, that I will never distrust his kindness.
Ver. 3. Surely shall deliver thee from the snare of
the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.] I doubt
not but he will deliver thee from all unseen dangers;
particularly from this most destructive pestilence,
whose venom catches men insensibly and suddenly, as the snare doth the bird, when it is laid by a cu-
ning fowler.
Ver. 4. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and
under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy
shield and buckler.] He will affectionately defend
thee, as a hen doth her young ones under her wings:
and therefore trust to his benign providence, and de-
pend upon his faithful word, opposing that to all the
dangers which threaten thee, as a soldier doth his
shield and buckler to the darts and thrusts of his
eemies.
Ver. 5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by
night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.] Then
thou needest not to be afraid, either of murderers and
robbers, whose sudden attempts in the night make
them more dreadfull, nor of insurrections and po-
nular tumults, and the open assaults of any adver-
saries;
Ver. 6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in dark-
ness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

No, nor of those infectious diseases which arise
from unknown causes; nor of those malignant fevers
which rage in the hottest season of the year.

Ver. 7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten
thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh
thee.] Whereby, though whole towns and countries
be depopulated, a thousand falling on the left hand,
and ten thousand on the right hand of thee, thou shalt
remain untouched in that mortality.

Ver. 8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold,
and the reward of the wicked.] And only be a spec-
tator of the divine vengeance, in punishing wick-
ed offendors so visiblj, that thou cannot but observe his righteous judgements, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15.
16.

Ver. 9. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is
my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.] Be-
cause I have placed my confidence and hope in thee,
O Lord, who art a sanctuary to which no violence
can approach;
Ver. 10. There shall no evil befall thee; neither shall
any plague come nigh thy dwelling.] Therefore rest
still assured, O my soul, that he will suffer no mis-
chief to befall thee, nor let this plague seize upon
thy family;
Ver. 11. For he shall give his angels charge over
thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.] But give his angels,
who are always ready to obey his commands, a strict
charge to take care of thee, and to preserve thee
whithersoever thou goest.
Ver. 12. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest
thou dash thy foot against a stone.] They shall as dili-
gently attend thee, as a nurse doth her child; guid-
ing, supporting, and defending thee, with such a so-
llicitous affection, that the least harm shall not befall
thee.
Ver. 13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder,
the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under
feet.] No; shouldst thou come among serpents, asps,
and dragons, with all the rest of those venomous
sort of creatures, they shall not be able to do thee hurt;
but thou shalt victoriously trample upon them, and

Ver. 14. Because he hath set his love upon me, there-
fore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because
be hath known my name.] For so hath the Lord de-
clared his will and pleasure to be, when he gave com-
mision to his angels concerning me, saying, Because
he heartily loves me, and delights in me, therefore,
will I deliver him from all present danger, and raise
him above the reach of all future; because he hath
acknowledged me to be the only safe refuge, and re-
lied on my power for his protection.
Ver. 15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer
him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him,
and honour him.] I will grant him all his petitions;
especially when he is in any distress, I will be present
with him, to afford him suitable comfort; and not only
preserve him from perishing, but, after a happy de-
livance, make him great and illustrious.
Ver. 16. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew
him my salvation.] And more than that, he shall have
the satisfaction of enjoying his honour to a great old age: and when his strength fails him, I will not, but still give him evident proofs of my care of him, and kindness towards him.

PSALM XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.

The Argument.—If Adam had made this psalm, presently after he was created, in the evening of the Sabbath, (which is a rabbinical fancy; mentioned in the Midrash upon this place,) sure it would have been set in this fourth book of psalms, before that of Moses; who may more probably be conceived to have composed it, to raise the hearts of the Israelites to the proper business of the Sabbath-day; which was to praise God, when they meditated upon his wonderful works, not only of creation, but of providence in the government of the world. Several instances of which, in rewarding the good, and punishing the wicked, they themselves had seen since they came out of Egypt; and were to see more when they came into the land of Canaan; to keep their Sabbath or rest there, after their long travels in the deserts: with respect to which, some think Moses might call this a psalm for the Sabbath-day.

But there is no certainty of these things; or rather it is certain, that neither of these conjectures are true. For as Adam in paradise had no enemies to rise up against him, nor was troubled with any workers of iniquity, (such as we read of ver. 7. 11.), and there were no psaltersies, harps, and instruments of music, then made, which Moses himself tells us, were found out by Jubal: so those instruments were not employed in the service of God, till the days of David; who may therefore more reasonably be thought to have made this psalm for the Sabbath, than either of the other; after God had given him such rest round about from all his enemies, (2 Sam. vii. 1.) that he concluded he should be able to subdue those who should hereafter adventure to oppose him: such as those mentioned in the following chapters, 2 Sam. viii. 10.

Ver. 1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: Now is the proper season to give thanks unto the Lord, for all the benefits we have received from him; and it is no less delightful than it is profitable, to sing hymns, in the praise of the divine perfections, which infinitely transcend all that can be said or thought of them.

Ver. 2. To shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. This is the sweetest employment in the morning, and no entertainment equal to it at night; to commemorate and declare to all, how bountiful thou art, and how faithful in performing thy promises to those who depend on thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 3. Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psalter; upon the harp with a solemn sound. Which ought to be celebrated with a full concert, not only of our chearful voices, but of all the instruments of music.

Ver. 4. For thou, O LORD, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands. For all are too little, O Lord, to express the joy I have in the acts of thy providence; by whom as the world was made, so it is still governed: It ravishes my spirit, and makes me shout for joy, to think how excellently thou orderest and disposeth all things.

Ver. 5. O LORD, bow great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. Whose administration, though I cannot fully comprehend, yet I admire and applaud the astonishing greatness of thy works; and reverence the unsearchable depth of thy counsels and designs.

Ver. 6. A brutish man knoweth not: neither doth a fool understand this. Of which a stupid man, who looks not beyond his senses, is so wholly ignorant, that seeing himself, and other such like fools, prosper and thrive, while better men are in trouble and affliction, he presently concludes, Thou dost not meddle in our affairs, but leaveth all to chance; for he doth not understand so much as this secret.

Ver. 7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish: it is that they shall be destroyed for ever. That when the leastest men grow rich, high, and powerful, and their interest is such, that by their means all the workers of iniquity, and few other men, are promoted; the reason is, because nothing in this world is of any great value, nor of any long continuance; but after they have flourished a while in an empty glory, they shall be cut down like grass; and, which is more, never rise up again.

Ver. 8. But thou, O LORD, art most high for evermore. And that thou, who rulest all things, though far out of their sight, canst as well punish or reward men hereafter as at present, being the eternal Lord.

Ver. 9. For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. Whom whosoever thou dost not intend to let the wicked escape, though now they flourish; for thou hast begun already to give thy enemies, who have long prospered, a remarkable defeat: they have received such a notable blow, that I am confident they shall perish; and all their partakers, though never so numerous, and strongly linked together, be dispersed and utterly destroyed.

Ver. 10. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. But my power and authority thou shalt raise to a formidible height; and crown that dignity with such undis turbed joy and pleasure, as shall prove the pious are not always miserable.

Ver. 11. Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies; and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me. Nor the wicked always prosperous; for to all other pleasures this shall be added, that I shall see those deprived of all power, who have long watched to do me mischief, or certainly

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hear of the ruin of those malicious men, who set themselves with all their might to destroy me.

Ver. 12. The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; be shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.] Which may be an encouragement to every good man to hope in God, and not question the justice of his providence, if at present he be afflicted; for as he shall overthor all his enemies at the last, so he will make the righteous flourish (not as the wicked do, like the grass, ver. 7. but) in a durable prosperity, like the fruitful palm and the stately cedar in Lebanon.

Ver. 13. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD, shall flourish in the courts of our God.] For they are under the care of the Lord our God, whose house they frequent; and there partake of his divine blessing, for the growth and increase of their happiness.

Ver. 14. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.] Which shall not decay, as the strength and freshness of those trees will do with age; but the older they grow, the more happy fruits shall their piety produce; and they shall abound

wealth and honour as much as they do in that.

Ver. 15. To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.] To demonstrate to all the world, that the Lord is a most impartial governor, whom I have found my firm unmoveable friend; and, assure yourselves, is so just and kind, that he will never let wickedness go unpunished, nor virtue be always unrewarded.

**PSALM XCIII.**

**The Argument. — There is no title in the Hebrew to tell us who was the author of this psalm: nor was there any in Origen's Hexaplu, or in Eusebius, as Theodoret confesses; who found in the Greek copy which he used, this psalm, called, An ode of David, in praise of God: To which hath been since added, in the day before the Sabbath, when the earth began to be inhabited. Which Musculus thinks was not rashly done by the Greeks, but suspects they were moved to it; because they knew perhaps that the Jews used this psalm upon that day. As indeed they did; for the words of the Talmud, in the title Kidishim, confirm his suspicions; which are these, (as I find them set down by De Dieu, upon the foregoing psalm.) The Canticles which the Levites sung in the sanctuary, were as follow; on the first day of the week, the 24th; on the second, the 48th; on the third, the 83d; on the fourth, the 94th; on the fifth, the 81st; on the sixth, the 93d; and on the seventh, the 92d.

Nor is the matter of this psalm more distant from the foregoing, than the sixth day is from the seventh; for it seems to me to have been composed, when some of those potent enemies began to take heart again, and threaten to disturb David’s peace and tranquillity; which, in the foregoing psalm, he had said, he was confident they should never be able to overthrow. Though, in the more sublime sense, it ought to be applied to the stability of Christ’s

**PSALM XCIV.**

**The Argument. — This psalm also wants an insertion in the Hebrew, to tell us who was the author of it; but the later Greeks entitle David to it, and call it, A psalm of bit for the fourth day of the week; which they had (as I shewed in the argument of the foregoing psalm) from the Hebrew tradition in the Talmud; and he hath little acquaintance with the history of David, who doth not see that here is an exact description of the court of Saul, who abused their authority to all manner of oppression and violence, (especially against David), without any fear of God, or
thought that he would call them to an account for it; as he complains in several other psalms, particularly lvi. lvii. lix.

But it might as well be penned by any other holy man, who lived in times of general corruption; when (as Theodoret expresses it) their kings, and their princes, (i.e. judges), loved not to be tied to the law, but pronounced unjust sentences, and committed murders; selling the blood of innocents for bribes; of whom the prophet Isaiah sadly complains, ver. 21. of the first chapter; where, ver. 20. he calls them rulers of Sodom. Certain it is, the psalmist, whosoever he was, desires he may see justice done upon such atheistical oppressors; and desires good men not to be discouraged under their tyranny, but patiently expect an happy issue of all the vexation which they gave them.

Ver. 1. O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.] O eternal Lord, the Sovereign of the world, in whose power it is to punish the highest offenders, and to whom alone it belongs to take revenge on those who oppress thy people, when they should protect them; make thy justice conspicuous in a severe vengeance upon them.

Ver. 2. Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud.] Call them to an account, O thou righteous Judge of the whole earth! and, by making them suffer according to the wrong they have done, let these proud men, who have acted as if they thought none could control them, know they have a superior.

Ver. 3. LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?] We can scarce behold these wicked men without indignation; it tempts us to impatience, O Lord, to see how they prosper and triumph in their injurious proceedings.

Ver. 4. How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?] And to hear their insolent and provoking language; for they care not what they say; but as they intolerably abuse us, so they audaciously blaspheme thee; the whole company of them priding themselves in the mischiefs they do, and scornfully deriding those that tell thy judgements will overturn them.

Ver. 5. They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage:] They have crushed thy people so, that they dare scarce complain of their tyranny; which cruelly afflicts those who are dear unto thee, with all manner of rapines and extortions.

Ver. 6. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.] They have no compassion upon the widow or the stranger; but rather spoil them; may, condemn them to die upon false accusations, (that they may possess themselves of their estates), because they have no patron to defend them; and in the same manner they murder, for it is no better, the poor fatherless children, whom they ought to protect from violence.

Ver. 7. Yet they say, The LORD shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.] And to harden themselves in their wickedness, they say, What do you tell us of the Lord? he knows not, nor minds not, what we do here: though there are such evident demonstrations of the divine providence over Jacob and his posterity, yet for all that, they fancy he doth not regard, nor will call them to any account for their doings.

Ver. 8. Understand, ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wise?] What stupid wretches are these! who think themselves the wisest, but in truth the most brutish of all mankind; whom I would advise, if they have not perfectly lost their reason, to consider this, (and sure they are not such fools, but they may soon understand it.)

Ver. 9. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? be that formed the eye, shall he not see?] Shall not he hear your blasphemies, who gave you the faculty of hearing? and shall not he see all you do, who gave you the power of seeing? Is it possible he could give to others what he wants himself?

Ver. 10. He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not be correct? be that teacheth man knowledge, shall not be knew?] He that taught all nations his will, shall not he correct them when they transgress it? to what purpose did he make man to know the difference between good and evil, but that he should observe it, and expect, if he did not, to suffer for it.

Ver. 11. The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.] Let them devise what ways they please, and flatter themselves with hopes to escape his vengeance, the Lord knows them all, and will make them see one day, that all such counsels and contrivances are but mere folly and vanity.

Ver. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law:] And far better had it been for them to have been punished sooner; for not he that prospers in his wickedness is happy, but he whom thou chastenest, O Lord, when he doth amiss, and thereby teachest to study and obey thy law with greater care and diligence.

Ver. 13. That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.] Which will quiet his mind under all his troubles, and at last procure the removal of them; when absolute destruction and ruin, meantime, is preparing for the ungodly.

Ver. 14. For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance:] For the Lord will never abandon the care of his people, nor leave those whom he owns for his peculiar possession, to be utterly undone by the oppressions which for a time they may endure.

Ver. 15. But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it.] But how much soever his judgements may seem to depart from the rules of righteousness, while the wicked flourish, and the godly are afflicted, they shall return to such a perfect conformity with them, that all honest-hearted men shall be encouraged thereby still to
follow the Lord; and by no means to depart from their integrity, though all things look as if they were meekly carried.

Ver. 16. Who will arise up for me against the evildoer? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Let them learn by my example not to despise; for who is it but he alone, from whom I have expected, and still do expect, to receive protection and help against these malicious men? who make no conscience of what they do, and design my utter ruin.

Ver. 17. Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. Whose power also is so great, that if the Lord had not seasonably interposed for my assistance and deliverance, I had not now been praying to him, but laid in a silent grave.

Ver. 18. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, hold me up. This was my constant support, if at any time my heart even failed me, and I was ready to conclude, I cannot assist any longer; then thy mercy, O Lord, sent me relief, and preserved me from the danger, wherein I was afraid I should have unavoidably perished.

Ver. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul. I have had innumerable perplexed thoughts, and anxious cares, which have extremely disquieted me; but as soon as ever I reflected on thy goodness, justice, and truth, they all vanished; and I felt such consolation from thee, as revived my dejected soul.

Ver. 20. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? And made me say, I will never imagine it possible, that thou shouldst favour the tyrannical proceedings of these unrighteous judges, who not only oppress thy people, but do it in a form of justice, and under the colour and pretext of law, make them miserable.

Ver. 21. They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood. They assemble themselves together, and in full counsel combine to destroy the righteous; upon whom they pass a solemn sentence, though he be perfectly guiltless, to lose his life.

Ver. 22. But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. But this doth not discourage me, whose case this is, let them deprecate they please, and be too hard for all laws; the Lord, who hates unrighteousness, will be my defence; he, who hath long been very gracious to me, I am confident, will secure me from their violence.

Ver. 23. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off. And more than that, retort it upon themselves; for the mischief they intended against me, shall fall upon their own head; he shall cut them off in their own wicked contrivances; though it be not in our power, yet the Lord our God, who hath undertaken the patronage of those that confide in him, shall cut them off.

PSALM XCV.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm likewise is without any title in the Hebrew; but the Greeks call it.

A Psalm of David; because the apostle to the Hebrews cites a passage out of it, under his name, iv. 7. Though that, it must be confessed, is no concluding argument of its being composed by him, because it is usual to call the whole five books by the name of the Psalms of David, when it is certain he did not make them all, but only the greater part.

Whoever was the author, it looks as if it were intended to be a new psalm, or solemn invitation of the people, (when they were all assembled together on the Sabbath, on some public occasion, Grotius, in Heb. iii. 7.—13, thinks on the feast of tabernacles, for which this psalm was composed), to praise the Lord their God, and hear instructions out of his law; and is justly employed still by the church, in the entrance of our morning-service, for the very same purpose. For it plainly relates to the days of Christ, as the Jews confess, and the apostle proves, iii. iv. to the Hebrews; where he demonstrates to them of that nation, that the rest here spoken of, could not be merely that in the land of Canaan, which their forefathers fell short of, by their disobedience to God in the wilderness; but another, far better, into which they, in that day, were to be brought by the Messiah, a far greater Captain of salvation than Joshua. And therefore, it concerned them then, he shews, above all other times, to take care they did not harden their hearts against him, when he came to invite them to a participation of the greatest blessedness, but entertain his holy gospel with a cheerful and joyful obedience to it. Theodoret is of opinion, that it was particularly designed for the times of Josiah, when he made that notable reformation, (which we read of 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv.), and called them from the worship of idols to the service of the true God. But it could never be more properly used by that nation, than when the Lord Christ came to call them to repentance.

Ver. 1. O COME, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. O stir up yourselves, all ye that are come hither to worship the Lord, and with united affection let us cheerfully sing his praises; let us lift up our voices, and triumphantly land the author of all the good we enjoy, and in whom we may safely confide for ever.

Ver. 2. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. Let us approach unto his presence with thankful hearts, to acknowledge the benefit we have received from him, and devoutly proclaim with triumphant hymns, what a joy it is to us, that we may address ourselves unto him.

Ver. 3. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. For the Lord is infinitely powerful, and hath a sovereign authority, not only over all the princes on the earth, but all the angels and principalities in heaven.

Ver. 4. In his hand are the deep places of the earth:
displeased me, that I swear they should wander all their days, and die at last in the wilderness, (Num. xiv. 28. &c.), and never enter into that good land, where I intended to give them rest after all their travels, Deut. xii. 9.

PSALM XCVI.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm also wants a title in the Hebrew: but the Greeks are justified in the former part of their inscription, (which calls it an Ode of David’s), by 1 Chron. xvi. where we find, that at the bringing up the ark from the house of Obed-Edom, to the place he had prepared for it on Mount Sion, David delivered this psalm (together with the 105th) into the hand of Asaph, to express the joy he had in God’s special presence among them; which all their neighbours round about, he foretells, should be made sensible of, as well as themselves.

This psalm indeed is not exactly the same with that, but there is a difference in some expressions; ex. gr. it is called here, A new Song, but not there; which shews it was afterward altered by some divine person, who accommodated it to other uses. And very probably by Ezra, when they came out of Babylon; which occasioned the Greeks to add, in the latter part of the inscription of this psalm, these words, “when the house was built after the captivity.” Ezra, that is, made use of it to express their joy at the re-edification of the temple.

But it never had a complete fulfilling, answerable to the height of it, till the Messiah (who was indeed the temple of God) came to dwell among us; to give eternal salvation to us. Several of the Jewish writers acknowledge that it belongs to his times; and accordingly we not only may, but ought, to have him in our minds, when we say, Sing unto the Lord a new song, (for his new grace, that is, in sending him to give salvation to all nations), and the Lord reigneth, ver. 10. and hath all things put under his feet. See Euseb. in his Demonstr. Evangelica, l. i. c. iv.

VER. 1. O SING unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.] O sing praises unto the Lord, for his new and extraordinary benefits which he hath bestowed upon us; let all the earth join together with us to sing his praises.

VER. 2. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name: shew forth his salvation from day to day.] We can never praise him enough; and therefore cease not to bless his name, and to spread the fame of his almighty goodness towards us; but publish every day, with joyful hearts, the great deliverances he hath wrought for us.

VER. 3. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.] Tell the nations round about, how he hath glorified himself; let none of them be ignorant of the wonderful things he hath done among us.

VER. 4. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be
PRAISED: HE IS TO BE FEARED ABOVE ALL GODS.] For all our praises fall infinitely short of the greatness of the Lord, who is worthy of the highest praise of the whole world; and hath shewn both to us, (1 Chron. xiii. 10.—12. 1 Sam. vi. 20.), and to others, (1 Sam. v. 3. 4. &c.), how dreadful he is above all that are called gods.

Ver. 5. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.] For all the gods of the nations are nothing worth, being able to do neither good nor harm; but the Lord not only made the earth, but the heavens too, which abundantly declare the greatness and splendour of his majesty.

Ver. 6. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.] Whose heavenly court infinitely outshines all the state and pomp, wherein the greatest earthly monarchs live, (Esther, i. 4.). For all the words we have are not able to express the brightness and magnificence, the power and comely order, of so much as his ministers; an image of which we have in his holy place, wherein he manifests himself among us.

Ver. 7. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.] Ascribe, therefore, unto the Lord, O ye people, from whatsoever family ye come, ascribe unto him that incomparable majesty, and supreme dominion and authority, which you give to imaginary gods.

Ver. 8. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.] And rejoice them all; and, acknowledging the Lord alone to be the omnipotent King of all the world, do him honour suitable to the excellency of his majesty: bring him an oblation in token of your subjection to him, and humbly worship him in his temple.

Ver. 9. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him all the earth.] O come and cast down yourselves before the Lord in his sanctuary, where he hath fixed his glorious residence among us: adore his transcendent perfections; and let all the people approach into his presence with a pious trembling, and dread to offend their Sovereign.

Ver. 10. Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.] Go, ye that are already become proselytes unto him, and publish every where, in all countries, that the Lord (Christ) is the Sovereign of the world, who alone can make it happy; for he shall settle those in peace that submit unto his government; and they shall not be so disturbed, as they were wont, with wars and tumults: he shall administer equal justice unto all, and neither suffer the good to be unrewarded, nor the evil to escape unpunished.

Ver. 11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.] Let the whole universe, therefore, be filled with joy at this blessed news; which the angels themselves shall gladly receive, (Luke, i. 30. 32.) much more ought all mankind, wheresoever they are dispersed, on the earth, or on the sea, and the islands thereof, exceedingly rejoice, and fill all places with the loud sound of their joyful praises.

Ver. 12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.] Let the husbandmen, and the shepherds, and all that dwell in the fields, leap for joy, and the woodmen and foresters shout for joy, to see the happy day approaching, when all the idols that are worshipped there, shall be thrown down together with their groves.

Ver. 13. Before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.] Let them welcome that day, and meet the Lord with forward affection, who is coming to them: for he comes to reform the earth, and will govern mankind by righteous and merciful laws, and faithfully keep his word with all those that truly observe them.

PSALM XCVII.

THE ARGUMENT.—Some of the Hebrews conceive (as I observed upon Psal. xc.) that Moses was the author of this, as well as of the rest of these psalms which want an inscription. And indeed he excelled in this faculty of composing hymns, as we learn from Exod. xv. and Deut. xxxii. and might, upon some other occasion, as well as the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, make a song of triumph, after some of those great victories which God gave them over their enemies. Which was a thing in use before his time, as it appears by the fragments of ancient songs recorded in his books; particularly that Veronica made by some poet among the Amorites, after Sihon had taken Hesibon from the Moabites, to whom it formerly belonged, wherein they triumphed over their god Chemosh, as unable to deliver his worshippers, Numb. xxi. 27. &c. And if we could be sure this psalm was made by Moses, I should think it to have been composed after the Israelites had conquered Sihon and his land; over whom they triumphed, as he had done over the former possessors of that country. But the psalm seems so plainly to have been composed in pursuance of what was said in the foregoing psalm, that the Lord reigneth, and is King, not only over Israel, but all the earth, that one cannot but think they had the same author: who shews the truth of that, by the illustrious victories which God, as their King, had given them over all those that opposed them. For the eighth verse makes it manifest, that this psalm hath respect to some conquests they had lately made over the heathen; which, I suppose, were no other than those which David won over divers nations, not long after (1 Chron. xviii. 1.) he had brought the ark to Sion, and delivered the foregoing hymn to be sung, to put the Israelites in hope, and their enemies in fear, of the great things which should ensue upon this special presence of God among them.

Which moved the Greeks to call this, A Psalm of David, after his land was restored unto him; that is,
the was master of all those countries which God anciently designed to be the inheritance of Israel. For that it should relate to the restoring his kingdom to him, after Absalom's rebellion, is not probable, because the mention of idolators, and of their gods, ver. 8, seem to determine it to other countries. In the subduing of which, God, it is likely, fought for them by some such tempset as we read of, (2 Sam. v. 20. 21.24.), whereby their enemies armies were scattered, and so terrified, that they not only fled, but left their images behind them, (such was their haste), and gave the Israelites an easy victory over them.

But whatever was the carnal sense, it belongs, in the diviner meaning, to Christ's triumph over the grave, and all the powers of darkness, at his resurrection and ascension to his throne in heaven; as appears by those words, which the apostle to the Hebrews alludes out of the seventh verse, and applies to Christ's royal power and authority over angels. Which the Hebrew doctors themselves, as Kimchi confesses, take to be there intended; and may be further justified from that exposition which we meet withal in Misdrack Tenchuma, of the words of the prophet Isaiah, lii. 13. "Behold, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." This is the King Messiah, says that Gloss, who shall be exalted above Abraham, and exalted above Moses, and be very high above the angels of the ministry.

Ver. 1. The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof. The Lord, it is manifest, is the Sovereign of the world; under whose happy government, not only we, and they who are already become subject to him in other places, ought to rejoice, but the most distant countries have the greatest reason to be glad thereof.

Ver. 2. Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgement are the habitation of his throne. His majesty is most dreadful, and hath appeared in great terror against those that oppose him; whom, as he will not wrong, so he will certainly punish; for he maintains his authority, and supports his government, by doing exact and equal justice.

Ver. 3. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. Let none therefore resist him, for flames of fire proceed from his presence, which make the battle too hot for his enemies, who can t'rrn no way but they feel them flashing in their faces.

Ver. 4. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw, and trembled. It was his thunder and lightning, the brightness of which the world lately saw, and were so amazed, that shivering pains took hold upon them, as upon a woman in her travail.

Ver. 5. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The hearts of the stoutest kings and captains failed them, and melted like wax before the fire, at this terrible appearance of the Lord; at the appearance of him whose dominion extends over all the earth.

Ver. 6. The heavens declare his righteousness; and all the people see his glory. For he is the Lord of the heavens, which have declared by this dreadful tempest, (excited by his angelical ministers), his severity against his enemies, and made all the people sensible of the incomparable splendour of his majesty.

Ver. 7. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols; worship him, all ye gods. Which may well make them all ashamed (and they shall be confounded by him, if they will not renounce their errors) who worship graven images, (though of gold and silver), 2 Sam. v. 21. and boast themselves in vain gods, who can do nothing for them: let all that are called gods, whether princes in earth, or angels in heaven, bow down to him, as the only Saviour, (Heb. i. 6.), and acknowledge his supreme authority over them all.

Ver. 8. Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord. Jerusalem, the mother city, hath received the news of thy victories with a joyful heart; after whose example, all the other cities of Judah are exceeding glad, O Lord, because thou hast judged righteously, in destroying our idolatrous enemies, and defending thy faithful servants.

Ver. 9. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth; thou art exalted far above all gods. Whose hearts are filled with the greater joy, because thou, O Lord, hast manifested thyself hereby to be the supreme and only Potentate, who ruleth over all the earth, and art infinitely superior to all that have the name of gods.

Ver. 10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: be preserved the souls of his saints, be delivered them out of the bond of the wicked. But do not content yourselves merely with this passion of joy; if you truly love the Lord, hate every thing which you know is displeasing to him; so shall you have the Lord of all things for your continual keeper; who preserves the lives of sincerely pious men, and watches over them with such a careful providence, that when they are in the power of the wicked, he will not suffer them to destroy them.

Ver. 11. Light is seen for the righteous; and gladness for the upright in heart. Be not discouraged, though the world should frown upon you, but rest assured, that God designs you, in due time, more cheerful and happy days; which, if you continue faithful, and serve him with upright hearts, shall as certainly come, as the corn at last springs up, after it hath lain all winter in the ground.

Ver. 12. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. Let all truly good men rely on this, and rejoice in their worst estate, that they serve such a gracious Lord; that they give thanks unto him for his benefits, and gratefully commemorate how kind and gracious he hath been unto them, that it may be kept in perpetual remembrance.
Psalm XVIII.

Psalm XCVIII.

A Psalm.

The Argument.—There is no title here but only this, A psalm; to which the Greeks add, of David; who, it is very probable, was the author; or if he was not, it was made by some holy man, in imitation of what David saith in the 96th, (of many of those expressions this psalm consists), upon occasion of some remarkable deliverance, which God had newly granted to Israel, as an earnest of future blessings, especially of the coming of that great blessing, the Lord Christ, to give complete salvation to his people.

Ver. 1. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done wonderful things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him victory.] O let the new and extraordinary benefits which the Lord hath bestowed upon us, provoke you to sing praises unto him with fresh devotion; for he hath done stupendous things, and by his almighty goodness alone, and incomparable strength, hath wrought salvation for those who were as unworthy to be helped by him, as they were unable to help themselves.

Ver. 2. The Lord hath made known his salvation; his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.] The Lord hath declared, by the wonders he hath done, how mighty he is to save and deliver: he made the Gentile world apparently see, that he is the just rewarder of all those who piously obey him, and will not let the wicked escape unpunished.

Ver. 3. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.] He hath not forgotten his ancient covenant with our forefathers; but so faithfully performed what his mercies moved him to promise, (Luke, i. 54.—72.), that all mankind have seen what our gracious God had done, and partake of his divine benefits.

Ver. 4. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.] Let them all therefore shout for joy, let them cry aloud, and with strong and cheerful voices sing hymns of thanks and praise unto the Lord.

Ver. 5. Sing unto the Lord, with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.] Let nothing be wanting to express your joyful sense of the goodness of the Lord, but let the harp accompany your songs; let the sweet sound of the harp, I say, and the sound of your voices, be mingled together with your psalms.

Ver. 6. With trumpets, and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord the King.] And let the trumpet also, and cornet proclaim with a louder sound, the exceeding greatness of your joy, while you shout with triumphant acclamations to him, and acknowledge the Lord to be your King.

Ver. 7. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.] Let the noise of

Psalm XCIX.

The Argument.—The Greeks entitle David to this psalm; which seems to have been made upon the same occasion, and to the same end, with the three foregoing; only with these two differences: First, that from the consideration of the royal power of the Lord, (who had manifested himself, by some notable conquests over his enemies, to be the only monarch, whose sovereignty extends over all the world), they should mix fear and trembling, together with that joy and exultation to which in the former psalm he had excelled them. And, secondly, that he doth not so plainly, as in those psalms, prophecy of the kingdom of the Lord Christ.

But there are many passages, as Theodoret observes, which may be applied to the appearing of our Saviour, and the infidelity of the Jews. Saint Austin and Saint Ambrose apply to him that passage, upon which the Roman church builds the lawfulness of worshipping images, ver. 5, where the vulgar Latin reading Adorate scabulum pedem ejus, worship his footstool, those two fathers think there is no way to reconcile this with that command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," but by expounding this of the flesh of Christ, which is the footstool, they say, which the psalmist exhorts all men to worship: (so far were those holy men from allowing adoration to any thing that is not God, or hath not a personal union with him). And indeed Christ was represented by the ark; which was the divine footstool, (here spoken of), but not to be adored, no more than the hill on which it stood; concerning which the psalmist speaks, in the last verse, just as he doth of the ark in this; and therefore we ought to understand both passages alike, (the particle in the Hebrew being the same before footstool, and before hill), and translate them thus, Worship at, or before, or towards his footstool, and holy hill; as elsewhere he speaks of worshipping towards his temple, v. 8. cxxxviii. 2. And so Menochius very honestly here expounds this passage in these words, "Worship in his temple, turning your faces towards the ark, on which is the propitiatory,
which is his footstool, since he sits on the wings of the cherubims.

Ver. 1. **THE LORD reigneth, let the people tremble; be sitteh between the cherubims, let the earth be moved.** Let the people fret, and be tumultuous, if they please, it will do them no service; for the Lord is the supreme Governor of the world, whether they will or no, and they had better with a pious fear submit themselves unto him; though the whole earth should be in an uproar, we are safe and secure, for the Lord is attended with innumerable heavenly ministers, who are a guard to his faithful worshippers.

Ver. 2. **The Lord is great in Sion, and he is high above all people.** The Lord, whose palace is in Sion, is transcendently great; there is no power on earth able to oppose him, who infiitie surpasses the united strength of all people.

Ver. 3. **Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.** Let them all, therefore, praise and reverently acknowledge thy mighty and dreadful majesty; for that alone is every way most excellent, and hath no equal, and therefore worthy of all veneration.

Ver. 4. **The King's strength also loveth judgement; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgement and righteousness in Jacob.** For, though none can resist him, yet he is not a King that uses his power to wrong or oppress his subjects, but to do them right, and give them relief, in which he delights; this is thy character, O Lord, who hast established most equal laws among us, and hitherto governed the seed of Jacob with exact justice and singular mercy.

Ver. 5. **Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.** Do you, therefore, above all other people, extol the Lord our God, both in your thoughts, affections, and words; and, turning your faces towards the ark of his presence, prostrate yourselves before his majesty, in token of your absolute subjection to him; for he is incomparably above all other beings, and the proper object of your adoration.

Ver. 6. **Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name: they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.** Thus did Moses and Aaron, two of his principal and most famous ministers, Exod. xxxii. 11. Numb. xvi. 45. 46.; and thus did Samuel, one of his greatest prophets, that were wont to intercede for you, (1 Sam. vii. 8. 9. viii. 5. xii. 19.) These holy men fell down before him, to make their humble supplications to him, and he gave them what they desired.

Ver. 7. **He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar; they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.** He spake to them in a familiar manner, telling them his mind, out of a pillar of cloud, wherein he appeared to them, (Exod. xxxii. 9. 10. Num. xii. 5. xvi. 42.; 1 Sam. iii. 10.) and they, like faithful servants of his, conformed themselves to his precepts, by which he testified his will to them, and worshipped him after that manner that he appointed them.

Ver. 8. **Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God; thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.** Whereby they obtained great favour with thee, O Lord our God; for when they prayed to thee, thou fulfilledst their petitions, passing by, for their sakes, the sins of those who had highly offended thee, but taking a most severe vengeance on all those who contemned their authority, and were contriving how to depose them, Numb. xii. 2. 9. xvi. 3. 31. 35. 1 Sam. vii. 7. 8. 9. &c.

Ver. 9. **Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.** Imitate, therefore, the piety of those admirable men, and raise your thoughts, and affections, and voices, to exalt and magnify the Lord our God, as much as you are able, for you can never do it enough; and in token of your absolute subjection to him, go and prostrate yourselves before him, at his house on the holy hill of Sion; for the Lord our God is incomparably above all other beings, and alone worthy of your adoration.

**PSALM C.**

*A Psalm of praise.*

**The Argument.**—There is no other psalm hath the like title with this; which is called A psalm of praise, or rather of thanksgiving, and acknowledgment for divine blessings, as the word is translated below, ver. 1. and in most other places. For which reason, I suppose, it is, that the Hebrews imagine, (as the Chaldee paraphrase, as well as others of their authors, tells us,) it was peculiarly appointed to be sung, when their sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered, mentioned Levit. vii. 12. 13. The companies, also, or quires of them, who gave thanks to God, are called by this name, Nehem. xii. 31. 38. Which makes it probable, that the Levites sang this song upon that occasion; which the Greeks think was made by David; who invites all the world to join with the Israelites, in the service of him, who was kind and gracious to them beyond expression. Accordingly we Christians now properly use it, in acknowledgment of God's wonderful love to us in Christ; by whom we offer up continually spiritual sacrifices; for redeeming us by the sacrifice he made of himself; for making the world anew, and creating us again unto good works; according to his faithful promises, which we may depend upon for ever.

I do not know but the word may be used here as it is, 1 Sam. xii. 6. for advancing, raising, or preferring them, (as he is there said to have done Moses and Aaron,) making them to be what they then were, a famous people, in a good land; which seems to agree best with the following words, and not we ourselves, (and therefore I have not omitted that sense.) For, to deny that we created ourselves, is altogether needless; but that it is not to be ascribed to our industry or wit, that we
are raised to a happy condition, is a proper expression of humility.

Ver. 1. _Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands._] Let all the people of the earth lift up their voices in triumphant songs, to the honour of the Lord, who deserves all our praises.

Ver. 2. _Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing._] Make the service of the Lord your delight, nay, greatest pleasure; and when you approach into his tabernacle, shout for joy that you are admitted into his blessed presence, to praise him with your cheerful hymns.

Ver. 3. _Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture._] Consider that the Lord, whom you worship, is the Creator and Governor of the world, who gave us our being, and all the good things we enjoy: his we are, and by his power and goodness, not our own, we are become so great and mighty a nation; whom, out of his own mere good-will alone, he hath made his peculiar people, of whom he takes a tender care.

Ver. 4. _Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name._] When you enter, therefore, into the gates of his sanctuary, present him, not merely with the sacrifices of beasts, but with the most acceptable sacrifice of hearty thanksgiving; and as you stand in his courts, attending on him, cease not to sing his praises; thank him, I say, for all his benefits, and praise his incomparable perfections.

Ver. 5. _For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations._] For as his power is transcendent, so is his goodness; as appears by his never-failing bounty towards us, and his steadfast faithfulness to his word; for the mercy promised to our forefathers he hath exactly fulfilled in our days, and will continue to all succeeding generations.

PSALM CII.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—The title tells us who made this psalm; and the matter of it is so plain, that any body may see it is a pious resolution of David to govern himself, and then his court, and then his kingdom, with so much care, that the good might expect all favour from him, but no wicked man, of any sort, have the least countenance or encouragement.

The only difficulty is to know when he composed it; whether before or after he was settled in his kingdom. The first words of it seem to countenance those who think he was possessed of it, and newly entered upon the government, which he thankfully acknowledges. But the words that follow, ver. 2. "O when wilt thou come unto me?" seem to justify their opinion, who think he was now under Saul's persecution; yet, having confidence in God's promises, (which he longed to see fulfilled) made this religious vow of being a good king; and proposed to himself an excellent form and manner of life, when God should be pleased to perform them. To reconcile both these, there is a middle way lies open to every one's view that reads this history. For upon the death of Saul, he was immediately promoted to the kingdom, though not entirely; but resolved then with himself how well he would govern, when God should make him king over all Israel, as he had done over Judah. And so I shall order my paraphrase, supposing him to reign now in Hebron, (2 Sam. iii. 1. 2. 3. 4.), and expecting to reign in Jerusalem, (2 Sam. v. 3. 4. 5.), which I presume he here calls the city of God, ver. 8. because there he intended to settle the ark, as well as to fix his court, when he should be possessed of it.

That passage indeed hath induced some to think, that he composed this psalm after he had made an attempt to bring the ark thither; but failing in it, (2 Sam. vi. 9. 10.), sighs here for its enjoyment. Which I shall not dispute, because I would not prolong this preface unnecessarily. It is sufficient in my judgement to say, that it doth not seem likely he would defer this resolution so long after he was installed in his kingdom. For it required time to prepare a place for the reception of the ark, suitable to the majesty it represented.

Ver. 1. _I will sing of mercy and judgment unto thee, O Lord, will I sing._] I will never forget, but celebrate with perpetual praises, that mercy which hath raised me from a low condition unto the throne, and that just punishment which I see inflicted upon all my opposers; both which I ascribe, O Lord, to thee alone, and not to my virtue or valour; and therefore to thee will I sing my grateful hymns.

Ver. 2. _I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way: O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart._] Nor will I satisfy myself merely with songs of praise, but study, with all diligence, integrity of life and purity of manners: O when wilt thou perfect what thou hast begun for me, and settle me peaceably in my kingdom? then I shall be able to live more regularly than now in this state of war and confusion, (2 Sam. iii. 1.—39.); and so I resolve to do, sincerely endeavouring to make myself an absolute pattern of piety and virtue to all my court.

Ver. 3. _I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me._] No pretended reasons of state and politic ends shall make me so much as project any thing against the law, to which I will ever tie myself; for I abhor the practices of those who decline that rule, to pursue their own private desires; no such corrupt principles shall be entertained in my mind.

Ver. 4. _A forward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person._] I will turn him instantly out of my service, who shall dare to suggest
to me any crooked counsels: I will have no familiarity with him, much less make him my favourite, who makes no conscience how he compasses his ends.

Ver. 5. Whose privy slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off; him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, will not I suffer.] I will be so far from listening to their private whispers, who, by secret calumnies and detractions, endeavour to supplant their fellow-servants, that I will severely punish and banish them from my court; nor will I endure those whose pride make them overlook all others, as if they were another sort of creatures; or whose unsatiable covetousness and ambition make them study their own advancement more than the public good.

Ver. 6. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; be that waketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.] I will look out for trusty persons, men fearing God, and of clear integrity, and in what part of the country soever I find them, make them of my privy-council: and no man shall bear any other office in my court, but he that lives unblameably.

Ver. 7. He that waketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: be that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.] No subtle knave that is made up of shifs and tricks, or that devises cunning cheats to oppress my subjects, shall remain in my service; though he have craftily got into it, under a guise of simplicity, yet no false informer, flatterer, or any other sort of liar, shall continue in my favour.

Ver. 8. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.] As soon as ever I am settled in my throne, I will use my utmost diligence to reform the whole nation, especially the place of thy peculiar residence, which ought to be an example to the rest of the kingdom; taking care that all offenders be severely punished in the courts of justice; and, if there be no other remedy, cutting off those evil members who have got an incurable habit of doing wickedly.

PSALM CII.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

THE ARGUMENT.—A prayer composed by some pious person, (toward the latter end of the captivity of Babyl., or rather presently after their return from thence to their own country, ver. 13. 14.,) who was extremely afflicted, and even overwhelmed with grief and trouble, to see the temple still lie in its rubbish, and the rebuilding of it hindered by many enemies. This was the cause of those sad complaints and lamentations, wherein he takes the liberty to represent their condition unto the Lord; and thereby give some ease to his oppressed spirit; which began to lift up itself in some comfortable hopes, when he considered both the faithfulness of God to his promises, and the honour it would be to him, when the nations round about should see their wondrous restoration happily completed, and thereby be invited to embrace their religion. Which proved a lively emblem of the coming of the Gentiles into the church of Christ; the eternity of whose kingdom is here prophesied of, in the conclusion of the psalm. Which, as Theodoret well expresses it, may serve for any man's use, who wrestles with any great calamity, and implores the divine favour for his help and deliverance. It may be applied also to his sad condition, who groans under the burden of his sins, and cries for mercy; being the fifth among those seven which are called Penitential Psalms.

Ver. 1. HEAR my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.] Reject not my humble supplication, O Lord, but graciously admit the earnest request, which, with lamentable cries, I present unto thy majesty.

Ver. 2. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble, incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call, answer me speedily.] The distress wherein I am is exceeding great; which will move thee, I hope, to moderate thy anger, and not absolutely refuse my petition; but rather to grant me the more favourable audience, and to send me the speedier relief, when I implore it in a time of the sorest calamity.

Ver. 3. For my days are consumed like smoke: and my bones are burnt as an hearth.] For my days are spent as dismally as if I lived and breathed in smoke; and the anguish I suffer is so sharp, that it penetrates to my very bones, and makes them as parched and dry as the fire doth the hearth.

Ver. 4. My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.] My vital spirits are exhausted, and flag like the grass when it is struck with a pestilent blast; for, together with my appetite, I have lost even the thoughts of my necessary food.

Ver. 5. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.] Sickness hath seized upon me to such a degree, that I do nothing but groan and sigh, which hath wasted me away to skin and bone.

Ver. 6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert.] I take no delight in the company of my friends; but seek for lonesome places, like a pelican in the wilderness, where I may bemoan myself, like the bittern in the desert.

Ver. 7. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.] Grief and sorrow banish sleep from mine eyes, and make me like those solitary birds, which spend the night on the top of houses in doleful shrieks and cries.

Ver. 8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me.] This hath exposed me to the scorn of my enemies, who do nothing but upbraid me with my misery; and, not content therewith, are so furiously bent upon my ruin, that they have entered into a combination, and sworn they will destroy me.

Ver. 9. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.] Which hath still more.
increased my affliction, and made me lie down in the ashes; where, while I mourn and weep, they mingle themselves with my bread, as tears do with my drink.

Ver. 19. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth.] Because, in much mercy, he hath been pleased to preserve a miserable nation from utter destruction: and though he be infinitely exalted above all our thoughts, yet the Lord hath graciously condescended to mind the afflicted condition of this distressed country;

Ver. 20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to lose those that are appointed to death.] And to be moved by our groans to deliver us out of a sad captivity; and to revive us, when we had reason to look upon ourselves as dead and hopeless.

Ver. 21. To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praises in Jerusalem:] That we might go, and recount in his temple, the famous things which he hath done; and make the holy city sound with the praises of his power, goodness, and truth, which he hath declared in our restoration.

Ver. 22. When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord:] When all the people shall be gathered together, there to worship the divine majesty; and other kingdoms join with us unanimously in his service.

Ver. 23. He weakened my strength in the way; be shortened my days.] I had hopes to have lived to see this blessed time; and thought I had been in the way to it, (Ezra, iii. 8. &c.), but he hath stopped our vigorous beginnings, (Ezra, iv. 4.), and thereby so sorely afflicted me, that I feel I am like to fall short of my expectations:

Ver. 24. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations.] Though I prayed most earnestly to him, and said, O my God, who hast so graciously begun our deliverance, take me not away before it be completely finished; but let me see thy promise fulfilled, which thou, who diest not, (as we do), I am sure, wilt not fail to make good.

Ver. 25. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.] For it cannot be too hard for thee to raise Zion out of her ruins; who hast, many ages ago, created this goodly fabric of heaven and earth by thy eternal word, (Heb. i. 10.).

Ver. 26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yes, of all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.] And thou dost neither decay, nor alter, in process of time, as thy creatures do; some of which shall perish, but thou shalt eternally subsist; and all of them shall grow old, like our garments with long wearing: even the heavens themselves, which now enwrap the earth, as our cloaths do our bodies, shall be folded up, (Heb. i. 12.), and laid aside, like a tattered garment, when thou shalt command that alteration.

Ver. 27. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.] But thou (and thy word) art still the very same; and shalt always continue so, without any the least variation.

Ver. 28. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.] Yet all.
that I conclude from hence is only this; that, though I do not live to see our perfect restoration, yet, according to thy unalterable purpose, the temple and Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and the children of thy servants, who are in great distress, be peaceably settled there; yea, their posterity after them remain unmovable in thy favour, and enjoy the tokens of thy divine presence among them.

**PSALM CIII.**

*A Psalm of David.*

**The Argument.**—The title tells us this psalm is one of David's; and the third, fourth, and fifth verses may satisfy us, that he composed it, after his recovery from a dangerous sickness, to such a vigorous health as the eagles have, when they renew their plumage. To that he alludes, ver. 5, as Euthymius and St Hierom understand it. The latter of which says, upon Isaiah, xl. that he had often taught, the eagles do no other way return to youthfulness, when they are old, but only *mutatio peninarum,* by change of their feathers. I have expressed this a little more largely than ordinary in the paraphrase, (as I have done in the rest of the psalm,) to fit it the better to their use now, that have escaped the like danger; who should take occasion, when they thank God for such a blessing, to imitate David, in making a thankful commemoration of the rest of his mercies, both to him and to others, both in the present and in past ages. And the more to excite devout souls to this, and that I might make their thankfulness the more affectionate, (if they please to make use of this hymn for that purpose,) I have often repeated the beginning of the psalm, which I think refers to the whole; and likewise put it into a little different form, (of a soul actually praising God), without the least alteration of the sense.

**Ver. 1.** BLESS the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Blessed, for ever blessed, be the Lord of life and health, and all other blessings; blessed be his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness; with my whole heart do I bless him, with my most ardent love, and the devoutest affections of my soul.

**Ver. 2.** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Which shall be every day thus employed, and praise his name with continual pleasure; I will never forget (how shouldst thou prove so ungrateful, O my soul! as not) to acknowledge the inestimable benefits I have received from his bounty; which are more than thought can number.

**Ver. 3.** Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. More particularly, I render thee, O Lord, my most hearty thanks, for thy late mercies vouchsafed to me; blessed be thy merciful kindness, that after a short correction for my faults, thou hast graciously pardoned them, and healed all the sores and grievous wounds which they had made.

**Ver. 4.** Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness, and tender mercies. Blessed be God, who hath saved me from death; and not only spared my life, but surrounded it most graciously with I know not how many benefits, which make it exceeding delightful to me. (I owe my friends, lovers, and acquaintance, my careful attendants, my warm and quiet habitation, the plentiful estate thou hast given me, the liberal provision thou makest for me, with all the rest of thy mercies, to the bowels of thy tender compassions towards me.)

**Ver. 5.** Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. Blessed be thy almighty goodness, that my mouth (which lately disgusted all things, or was restrained from what it desired, or was prescribed that which was disgraceful to it) can now relish its food again, and is satisfied with many good things: I can never sufficiently bless thy goodness, who by this means dost restore my strength, and makest my youth and freshness return like the eagle's. (O that I may with fresh delight and joy be still praising thee! and be lifted up to heaven, (as they are when they have renewed their plumes,) in more vigorous love, and affectionate desires and endeavours, to employ all my renewed strength in thy faithful service.)

**Ver. 6.** The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Nor am I alone obliged to my gracious Lord for his singular favour to me; but, blessed be his name, he relieves all those who suffer wrong, and doth justice upon their oppressors, who are too mighty for them.

**Ver. 7.** He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. Moses, and the rest of our forefathers, are witnesses of this; whom the Lord delivered, in a stupendous manner, out of the house of bondage.

**Ver. 8.** The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plentiful in mercy. And by other methods of his providence towards them, and dealing with them, declared how bountiful his blessed nature is, and how ready to forgive; forbearing long when men deserve to be punished, and soon releasing them from their pain, when they heartily repent of their folly.

**Ver. 9.** He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever. He doth not love, blessed be his name, to be always chastising us for our faults; and when he doth chastise us, he neither loves to prolong our miseries, nor to inflict them proportionable to our deserts.

**Ver. 10.** He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. No, blessed be his holy name, there is mercy even in our punishments; our sufferings are never so great as our sins; but we might justly suffer a great deal more than we do for our faults.

**Ver. 11.** For as the heaven is high above the earth; so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. And were we never so obedient, there is not a greater disproportion between the vast circumference of the heavens and this little spot of earth, than there is between his mercies towards us, and our small services.
Psalm CIII.

Ver. 12. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath be removed our transgressions from us.] To those mercies alone it is to be ascribed, that we are not be- moaning ourselves under innumerable miseries; but he hath quite taken away his wrath from us; and, ad- dored be his goodness, perfectly remitted the punish- ment due to our manifold offences.

Ver. 13. Like a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.] O what bowels of mercy are these! No father can be more indulgent and tender-hearted to his returning children, than the Lord, blessed be his name, is to those who so reform by his chastisements, as to fear hereafter to offend him.

Ver. 14. For be known with our frame; be remembered that we are dust.] He easily relents, and takes compassion on them; considering how frail he hath made them, and how soon of themselves they will moulder into the dust, out of which he took them.

Ver. 15. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so be flourisheth.] For what is man, that the Almighty should contend with him? he looks fresh and fair, but, alas! is as feeble as the grass, and as a flower of the field, whose beauty is far greater than its strength.

Ver. 16. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.] Many ac- cidents snatch him away, even in his prime; just as the biting wind, to which the field-flowers are exposed, blasting them on a sudden, and they spring up no more in the place that was adorned with them.

Ver. 17. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children.] O how much doth this magnify the wonderful mercy of our God! who designs to be everlasting kind (blessed be his goodness) to such short-lived creatures as we are; rewarding the faithful services of a few years with ex- tend life to ourselves, and with many blessings to our posterity in future generations.

Ver. 18. To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them: There is no doubt of this; which hath been verified in those who have sincerely kept their faith with him; and not only promised, but constantly performed the obedi- ence they owed him.

Ver. 19. The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.] For none can hinder thee, O most mighty Lord, from being as kind as thou pleasest; who art the universal monarch, the blessed and only Potentate, to whom not only the greatest men on earth, but the highest powers in heaven, are subject.

Ver. 20. Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, bearing unto the voice of his word.] Let the angels, therefore, who know his greatness, power, and gracious providence, better than I, bless his holy name: let those mighty ones, whose strength surpasses all the powers on earth, and yet never dispute his sacred commands, give praise unto him with all their might, and with the same cheerfulness wherewith they obey his word.

Ver. 21. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye mi- nisters of his, that do his pleasure.] Let the whole com- pany of heaven, all the several hosts of those glorious creatures, who have been employed by his majesty so many ways for our good, and understand how much we are beholden to his love, speak good of his name, and bless his mercy, both to themselves and unto us.

Ver. 22. Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion; bless the LORD, O my soul.] Yes, let every creature, throughout the wide world, proclaim as well as it is able the loving-kindness of the Lord: let none of them be silent, but, all with one consent bless his holy name: And thou, O my soul, be sure thou never forget to make one; O fail not to bear thy part in this joyful quire, that daily sing his praise.

Psalm CIV.

The Argument.—The foregoing and the following psalm being certainly composed by David, the Greeks, and from them several other ancient interpreters, have ascribed this also to the same author. For which they had this farther reason, that it be- gins, (as Aben-Ezra observes), just as the foregoing psalm ends; and celebrates the mighty power and goodness of God, in the fabric of the world; as the 103d doth his benefits to himself, and to the rest of the children of men.

As for the occasion of it, we may look upon it as a probable opinion, that when David thought of build- ing a house for the divine service, and God sent Nathan to forbid him, (2 Sam. vii. 5.), he fell not long after into the contemplation of the majesty of God, who having built this great world as his tem- ple, needed none of his erecting; though he would be pleased to accept one for the burning sacrifice before him, as Solomon afterwards speaks, 2 Chron. ii. 6. To strengthen this conjecture of mine, it may be observed, that he begins this psalm with such an admiration of God's most excellent perfection, as we meet withal in David's prayer, immediately af- ter God had certified him of his love towards him; though he would not let him build him an house, 2 Sam. vii. 22. "Thou art great, O Lord, for there is none like unto thee." In the same manner he saith here, "O Lord my God, thou art very great," as he proceeds to demon- strate from his wonderful works. And first he begins with the heavens, the clouds, and the angels; and then comes down to the earth, the sea, the mountains, valleys, fountains, and other inferior things, which depend so much upon the sun, the moon, and heavenly bodies, that all of them together declare the most admirable wisdom of him by whom they were composed, and should excite all mankind to his perpetual praises. Watch that we may do the more affectionately, when we use this hymn. I have often repeated the beginning of it, as I did in the foregoing.

Ver. 1. BLESS the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clo- thed with honour and majesty.] Stir up thyself, O
my soul, with all thy might, to meditate the praises of
the Lord. For the highest of all our thoughts are in-
finite below thy greatness, O Lord, my most gra-
cious God; who hast shewn in thy most admirable
works, the surpassing excellency of thy majesty;
which we can never worthily celebrate with all our
praises.

Ver. 2. Who coverest thyself with light, as with a
garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.]
The light, which dazzles our eyes with its splendour;
is the royal robe wherein thy invisible and incompre-
hensible brightness appears unto us; and the spacious
heavens are the royal pavilion, which thy sovereign
power hath extended, like a canopy, for thy majesty,
in this great palace of the world.

Ver. 3. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the
waters, who maketh the clouds his chariots, who walketh
upon the wings of the wind.] The floor of whose cham-
bers, which the Lord hath laid in the upper region of
the air, O how highly is it advanced above the top of
the stateliest piles that are raised by earthly monarchs!
whose pompous chariots, (whereof they boast), fall
indefinitely short of those glorious clouds, wherein he
makes himself present to us; as their swiftest horses
are slow-paced, in comparison with the quick motion,
more speedy than the wind, wherewith he visits every
part of his dominion.

Ver. 4. Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers
a flaming fire.] Into which he sends his angels, (and
what king is there that hath such noble ministers?),
sometimes in vehement winds, and sometimes in light-
ning and thunder, whereby they execute his royal
pleasure.

Ver. 5. Who laid the foundations of the earth, that
it should not be removed for ever.] Who hath settled
the massy globe of the earth even in the liquid air,
such firm foundations, that none of those storms
and tempests, which beat upon it from without, nor
any commotions from within, can ever stir it out of
the place he hath fixed for it.

Ver. 6. Thou coverest it with the deep, as with a
garment; the waters stood above the mountains.] It was
all covered over at the first with waters, (Gen.
i. 2.1), which were so deep, that there was no appear-
ance of the highest mountains;

Ver. 7. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy
thunder they hastened away.] Till thy omnipotent word
charged them to retire, (Gen. i. 9.), at which they
started back, and suddenly shrunk away; as an af-
frighted slave doth, when he hears the thunder of his
master’s threatenings, if his commands be not obeyed.

Ver. 8. They go up by the mountains; they go down
by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded
for them.] Immediately the dry land was seen; part of
which (by thy wonderful contrivance, O Lord,) rose
up in lofty hills; and the rest sunk down in lowly
valleys; where thou hast cut channels for the waters
to run into the main ocean, the place thou hast ap-
pointed for them.

Ver. 9. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass
over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.] And
there, though they restlessly toss and swell, yet they
cannot get over the shores wherein thou hast inclosed
them; nor shall they ever recover their former liberty,
to overflow the earth again.

Ver. 10. He sendeth the springs unto the valleys,
which run among the hills.] But still, such is the ad-
mirable providence of the Lord, they climb, through
the hollow places of the earth, up the steepest parts
of it; and there break out in springs; which fall down
into the valleys, to make brooks and rivers, that run
between the hills; which, on either side, send into
them fresh supplies to enlange their streams.

Ver. 11. They give drink to every beast of the field,
the wild ass quenches their thirst.] Which afford, not
only to us, but to all the beasts of the earth, such abun-
dant refreshment, when they are dry, that even the
dull asses, who live in parched deserts, find them out
to quench their thirst.

Ver. 12. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have
their habitation, which sing among the branches.] The
birds of the air also delight to resort thither; where
having wet their throats, they sit and chant their va-
rious notes among the thick boughs of the trees, which
grow upon the banks.

Ver. 13. He watereth the hills from his chambers; the
earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.] As for
the hills, which constantly thus enrich the lower
grounds, he waters them from the regions above;
whence dews distil, and showers of rain come pour-
ing down, by thy marvellous contrivance, O Lord, un-
til the satisfaction of them, and of all the rest of the
earth.

Ver. 14. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth
food out of the earth.] O bless the Lord, my soul,
who by this means provideth the beasts with grass
and hay; and us with all variety of herbs, and roots,
and fruit, and pulse; which he causes to sprout out of
the earth, that we may never want what is necessary
for our food, or for our physic.

Ver. 15. And wine, that maketh glad the heart of
man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which
strengtheneth man’s heart.] But rather take pleasure
and delight in the rich wines, which he produces to cheer
the drooping spirits of miserable men; together with
oil to anoint their heads, and bread to recruit their
strength, when it is spent with toil and labour.

Ver. 16. The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the
cedars of Lebanon which be bath planted.] Blessed be
the Lord, who by this means also supplies with abun-
dant nourishment the largest trees, which are not
planted by the art, nor watered by the care of man,
but by his almighty providence, who makes whole
forests of them grow, as the cedars in Lebanon do,
even upon the most barren and stony mountains.

Ver. 17. Where the birds make their nests; as for
the stork, the fir-trees are her house.] In these trees the
birds, both small and great, build themselves conven-
ient habitations; and some of them, (as the stork,
for instance, who seats her nest on the top of lofty
pines and fir-trees), with admirable artifice.

Ver. 18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild
goats, and the rocks for the conies.] And with no less
safety the wild goats deposit their young, in the tops of those craggy mountains; whither they can climb as easily as the birds fly to the tops of trees: and other feeble creatures creep into the rocks, and there lie secure from the violence that stronger beasts would offer to them.

Ver. 19. He appointeth the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.] By his most wise contrivance, the moon hath her full and her wane; and the sun doth not always shine, but observes a constant time for its going down.

Ver. 20. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.] And then darkness covering the face of the earth, and inviting us to rest, gives the wolves, and other wild beasts of the forest, (such is thy care, O Lord, of all creatures), who were afraid to venture abroad before, security and confidence, to come out of their lurking-places, and seek their food.

Ver. 21. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.] Which the ravenging young lions then meet withal; falling upon their prey with a horrible noise; whereby they express the eagerness of their hunger; which is not so sharp and devouring, but, by the divine providence, it finds full satisfaction before the morning.

Ver. 22. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.] When the sun again appearing, and rousing us out of our sleep, they all return with one consent, and lay themselves down in their several dens.

Ver. 23. Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening.] And so man, refreshed by the night's repose, goes forth, without any danger, about his business in the fields; and continues his labours till the night call him to rest again.

Ver. 24. O Lord! how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.] O eternal Lord! how many and how great are thy works! and with what admirable wisdom hast thou contrived them all! If we look no farther than this earth, what astonishing variety of good things do we behold, wherewith thy bounty hath enriched it!

Ver. 25. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.] And this great and spacious sea, also, which seems to embrace the earth in its arms, is no less full of thy wonderful works: for there swim fish without number; some of which astonish us as much with the art thou hast shewn in their small bodies, as others do with the prodigious greatness of their bulk.

Ver. 26. There go the ships; there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.] There the ships sail as swiftly as the fishes swim, fetching us the riches both of sea and land; and there that great leviathan (in forming whom thou hast shewn thy mighty power) finds room enough to tumble up and down, and sport himself in his absolute dominion over all that the sea contains.

Ver. 27. These wait all upon thee; that thou majesty give them their meat in due season.] O how liberal is thy goodness, which provides convenient sustenance for such a vast world of creatures! every one of which, though they know not their benefactor, is duly and seasonably supplied with the food they seek, by the care thou takest of them.

Ver. 28. That thou givest them, they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.] For they only gather what thou, without any care of theirs, dispensest to them; and thou art not sparing of thy blessings, but hast made a most plentiful provision, which thou scatterest every where for them.

Ver. 29. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.] If it fail at any time, by the suspension of thy heavenly influences, all things look most ruefully; they grow weak, nay die, and are dissolved into the elements out of which they were made.

Ver. 30. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth.] But then thou sendest forth again thy quickening power, whereby new ones are produced, in the room of those that are dead; just as the earth, after a sharp winter hath made it bare, looks fresh and green again at the return of the spring.

Ver. 31. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in his work.] Thus the world is still as full as ever it was; and all future ages shall praise, as well as we, the same power, and wisdom, and goodness of the Lord; which appears so gloriously in all his works, that he himself is still pleased and delighted in the continuance of them; as he was at first in their contrivance, Gen. i. 31.

Ver. 32. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.] Else they would all soon vanish, and come to nothing; for at his presence the very earth trembles, and the mountains, as our fathers saw at Mount Sinai, are full of fire and smoke.

Ver. 33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise unto my God, while I have being.] I will never cease, therefore, to sing the praises of the Lord, who, as he created, so supports and maintains the whole fabric of heaven and earth, and all the creatures contained in them; and I will never forget his particular kindness to me, among the rest, but acknowledge to my very last breath the innumerable benefits I have received from his bounty.

Ver. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord.] With such affection will I praise him, that all my thankful meditations and discourses shall be, I hope, no less pleasing to him, than they shall be to myself; who will take the highest satisfaction in thinking and speaking of the goodness of the Lord; from whom I shall still receive more abundant cause to rejoice in him.

Ver. 35. Let the sinners be confounded out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more; bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.] But as for them, whose only pleasure it is to satisfy their brutish lusts, and abuse the many good things they enjoy, (either denying, or never acknowledging him who is the donor of them), they shall utterly perish, and be no
longer the care of that providence to which they are so ungrateful; O my soul! never imitate their impiety or negligence, but be excited thereby to the greater diligence, in praising thy great Creator and Benefactor. And let all those who have any sense of him, stir up themselves, and join with me in his praises.

PSALM CV.

THE ARGUMENT.—Though this psalm have no title, yet we are assured by what we read in 1 Chron. xvi. 8. &c. that the first part of it at least (to the end of ver. 15.) was made by David; and delivered by him to Asaph and his brethren, for the constant service of God in the tabernacle, when, after several victories over the Philistines, (1 Chron. xiv.) he had settled the ark of God in Zion. And it is most probable that he afterwards enlarged this psalm, (for who else would adventure to do it?) that it might be a more complete commemoration of all the mercies of God towards their nation, from the days of Abraham, to their taking possession of the land of Canaan. Into which, he shews, their glorious Lord conducted them by so many miraculous providences, in several ages, (according to his faithful promise made to Abraham his faithful servant), that it deserved their most hearty acknowledgments; to which he excites them, by ten several expressions, in the five first verses of the psalm.

To which the Greeks prefixed an Ἡσαλυθα, (for they take the last word of the foregoing psalm, and set it on the head of this,) as a note how much they were obliged to praise the Lord, according to that exhortation; when they remembered in this psalm the benefits that he had bestowed upon their forefathers, which were sufficient to excite and whet their minds to the imitation of their virtue.

And it may serve to admonish the new people of God, (as Theodoret speaks), that is, us Christians, how much we ought to rejoice in God's goodness to us, and how our ungratitude it is to be ungrateful to him; which provoked him to deprive the Jews of that fatherly care he had taken of their ancestors.

Ver. 1. **O Give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people.** Stir up yourselves, all ye that are here assembled, to make your most grateful acknowledgments unto the great Lord, who is pleased to come and dwell among you; never approach his presence to make your petitions to him, but join his praises together with them; and proclaim to all the people round about, what great things he hath done for you, and for your forefathers.

Ver. 2. **Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.** Sing his praise with a cheerful voice, and with all the instruments of music; and let the subject of your hymns, and of your ordinary discourse, be his many marvellous acts, of which let not one be forgotten.

Ver. 3. **Glory ye in his holy name; let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.** For nothing can be so great an honour to you, as that you are the servants of such a mighty Lord, who infinitely transcends all other beings; triumph, therefore, and make your boast of this, as a greater happiness than all worldly goods; let it fill the hearts of all his faithful worshippers with the highest joy and gladness.

Ver. 4. **Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face evermore.** Let it encourage them to address themselves unto him upon all occasions; and, prostrating themselves before the ark of his presence, (2 Chron. vi. 41.), commend themselves to his powerful protection; let them unweariedly seek his favour, and implore his gracious assistance.

Ver. 5. **Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgements of his mouth.** Which you may with the greater confidence expect, if you call to mind, and thankfully commemorate the marvellous things he hath done for your deliverance; and his terrible executions, (Exod. iii. 20.), according to his just sentence passed (Exod. vii. 4.) upon your enemies.

Ver. 6. **O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.** The benefit of which you still enjoy, O ye who are the posterity of his servant Abraham, (whose faith and obedience you ought to imitate); the children of Jacob, whom he chose (rejecting Esau) to inherit the promised blessing.

Ver. 7. **He is the Lord our God, his judgements are in all the earth.** He is still the same mighty Lord, and our most gracious God, who continues to execute his judgements every where upon our enemies, (2 Sam. v. 7.—10.—17. &c.) and, therefore, let us never cease to praise him, and cheerfully serve him, and faithfully depend upon him.

Ver. 8. **He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.** For he is never unmindful of his engagements to us, but punctually performs, in all ages, what he hath promised in his covenant.

Ver. 9. **Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac:** Which he first solemnly made, (Gen. xv. 17. 18.), and then swore (xxii. 16.) unto Abraham; and renewed with his son Isaac, to whom he promised to perform that oath which he swore unto Abraham, Gen. xxvi. 3.

Ver. 10. **And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.** And again confirmed it to Jacob, both when he went to Haran, (Gen. xxviii. 13. &c.), and at his return, when he changed his name into Israel, (Gen. xxxv. 10. &c.), and at last passed it into a law, in that covenant which he made with their posterity, (Exod. xxiii. 22. 23.—31. 32.), never to be altered, if they keep their covenant with him.

Ver. 11. **Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritances.** The sum of which was this, I bestow upon thee, and will bring thee into
that good land, the land of Canaan; which, according
to this faithful covenant, you now possess; as by
lot it was distributed to your several tribes, for their
inheritance, Josh. xiv. 1. 2.

Ver. 12. When they were but a few men in number:
yea, very few, and strangers in it.] This covenant he
began to make with your forefathers, (and shewed his
intention to perform it, by his singular care over
them), when their family was very small, (Gen. xii.
1.—5.), and consequently so weak, that they might
easily have been destroyed in the land where they
were strangers, (Gen. xxiii. 4.), and had no friends
nor allies to support them:

Ver. 13. When they went from one nation to another,
from one kingdom to another people.] Nor any settled
habitation; but were forced to wander to and fro,
from one part of Canaan into another, (Gen. xii.
6.—8. 9.), and then to sojourn in other kingdoms; some-
times in Egypt, (Gen. xii. 10.), sometimes in Gerar,
(Gen. xx. 1. xxvi. 1.), and sometimes in the eastern
country from whence they came, Gen. xxxi. 1.

Ver. 14. He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea,
be reproved kings for their sake.] And wheresoever
they sojourned, he took them into his protection, and
suffered no man to do them any injury, (Gen. xxxi.
14.—12.), but gave severe checks, even to the king of
Egypt, (Gen. xii. 16.), and the king of Gerar, (xx.
3. &c.), to prevent the mischief which they were de-
signing to them.

Ver. 15. Saying, Touch not mine anointed; do my
prophets no harm.] For he told them, these were sa-
cred persons, whom he designed to make greater men
than themselves; and therefore charged them not to
hurt them; but to honour them, not merely as prin-
ces, (Gen. xxiii. 6.), but as prophets, (xx. 7.), by
whose prayers they should receive great blessings, if
they were kind to them.

Ver. 16. Moreover, be called for a famine upon the
land; be brake the whole staff of bread.] And when,
in the days of Jacob, he punished the land of Ca-
nan, as well as other countries, with such a dearth,
(Gen. xii. 54. &c.), that the earth brought forth
no kind of grain, for the support of human life;

Ver. 17. He sent a man before them, even Joseph,
who was sold for a servant:] He took a special care,
in a most wonderful way, to provide both for him,
and for his family; for Joseph (whom his brethren
first conspired to destroy, but afterward were diverted
from their purpose, and only sold for a slave) was
brought into Egypt, by the secret counsel of God,
(Gen. xlv. 5.—7. &c.), to be the instrument of their
preservation.

Ver. 18. Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was
laid in iron.] He was oppressed, indeed, for a long
time, by a most grievous calamity; which was a soror
affliction to him, than the chains and fetters that were
at first laid upon him in prison;

Ver. 19. Until the time that his word came; the
word of the Lord tried him.] Till mention at last
was made of him to Pharaoh, by one of his officers;
who related how exactly Joseph predicted what
had befallen him, and another of his fellow-servants,
as if he were a man inspired, Gen. xl. 21. 22. xli.
12. 13.

Ver. 20. The king sent and loosed him; even the
ruler of the people, and let him go free.] Whereupon
the king presently sent for him, (Gen. xli. 14.),
that great prince, whose dominion extended over
many provinces, and commanded him to be set at lib-
erty;

Ver. 21. He made him lord of his house, and ruler
of all his substance.] And received such satisfaction
from him about his dream, which none of his wise
men could interpret, that he not only wholly discharg-
ed him from his imprisonment, but made him the
chief officer in the court; and, under himself, the
supreme governor of his whole kingdom, Gen.
xli. 40. 41.

Ver. 22. To bind his princes at his pleasure, and
teach bis senators wisdom.] Yes, intrusted him with
an absolute power to command all the rulers of his
several provinces what he pleased, and to punish their
disobedience according to his discretion; the most
ancient and wisest counsellors in the realm were or-
dered to repair to him, and to do nothing without his
instructions, Gen. xli. 44.

Ver. 23. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob
sojourned in the land of Ham.] By which great
authority he procured not only the leave, but the in-
vitation of Pharaoh, (Gen. xlv. 16. 17. &c.), to his
father, to come and bring all his family with him
into Egypt; and accordingly he came and dwelt in
the best part of all the country, Gen. xlv. 26.—28.

Ver. 24. And he increased his people greatly; and
made them stronger than their enemies.] Where, ac-
cording to his promise, when he bade Jacob accept that
invitation, (Gen. xlvii. 3. 4.), the Lord multiplied
them exceedingly, (Exod. i. 7.), and made them
mightier than the Egyptians, (Exod. i. 9.), who, of
friends, were now become their enemies.

Ver. 25. He turned their heart to hate his people, to
deal subtilely with his servants:] For the kinder God
was to the Israelites, and the more he increased their
numbers, the greater jealousy it begat in the heart of
the Egyptians, which turned at last into an absolute
hated of them, and provoked their malice to invent
the cruellest ways, first to diminish, (Exod. i. 10. 21.
&c.), and then to destroy them, (ver. 15. 16.)

Ver. 26. He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom
he had chosen.] This moved the divine compassion,
when he saw their oppression grew intolerable, to
give commission to Moses, whom he had in an ex-
traordinary manner preserved from perishing, (Exod.
iii. 13.), and to Aaron, whom he chose to be his as-
tistant, (Ex. d. iv. 15.), to go and demand their li-
 liberty of Pharaoh, Exod. iv. 23. v. 1.

Ver. 27. They showed his signs among them, and
wonders in the land of Ham.] And he disputing his
commission, (and refusing to let Israel go), they
proved it, and persuaded him to obey it, by many
miraculous works; which God commanded them to
do, as tokens that he had sent them.

Ver. 28. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and
they rebelled not against his words.] Among which the
pitchy darkness, which overspread the whole land three days, (except only where the Israelites dwelt), was a very remarkable punishment of Pharaoh's blindness; who would not see the hand of God in all other plagues, which Moses and Aaron, not fearing his displeasure, but pursuing their orders, had inflicted on him.

Ver. 29. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.] As, first of all, the Lord commanded them to stretch their hand upon all the waters of Egypt, which he turned into blood; and made them so putrid, that the fish which was in the river died, Exod. vii. 20. 21.

Ver. 30. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance in the chambers of their kings.] And, at the next stroke, produced such a vast number of frogs out of the stinking waters and mud, that not only the whole earth was covered with them, but no house, no room in their houses, no, not the cabinets of their king and his princes, were free from their annoyance, Exod. viii. 3. 6.

Ver. 31. He spoke, and there came divers sorts of flies and lice in all their coasts.] And then followed an infinite swarm of the most pestilential sort of flies, (see Psal. lxxxviii. 45.) after a troublesome and filthy plague of lice, which had infested all the country, Exod. viii. 17. 24.

Ver. 32. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land.] Which was succeeded (after a murmur upon their cattle, and a fiery ulcer on their own bodies) by a dreadful storm of hail, (when fruitful showers of rain were most desirable), together with such lightning as was never seen; for it ran upon the ground, and burnt up all that was not destroyed by the hail, Exod. ix. 23. 24 &c.

Ver. 33. He smote their vines also, and their fig-trees; and broke the trees of their coasts.] Which not only struck down the grapes and the figs, but shattered the vines and fig-trees themselves, together with many other fruit-trees in the land.

Ver. 34. He spoke, and the locusts came; and caterpillars, and that without number;] And whatsoever escaped this tempestuous storm, (for some things were not then grown up, Exod. ix. 31.) was not long after devoured by an innumerable army of various sorts of locusts, Exod. x. 5. 12 &c.

Ver. 35. And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.] Which, by his command, came and covered the whole face of the country, eating up the very leaves of the trees, as well as all the grass and herbs upon the ground, Exod. x. 15.

Ver. 36. He smote also all the first-born in their land; the chief of all their strength.] And at last he finished these plagues in the slaughter of all the first-born, both of man and beast; the angel of the Lord killing, in one and the same night, (Exod. xii. 29.), the principal prop of every family, and the best of all their flocks and their herds.

Ver. 37. He brought them forth also with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.] Which terrible destruction so affrighted them, that they not only let Israel go, but were forward to thrust them out of Egypt, and that loaded with silver and gold, (Exod. xii. 31. 35.) and, which is very wonderful among so many thousand persons, (ver. 37.), there was not one at that time so feeble, as to be unable to travel.

Ver. 38. Egypt was glad when they departed; for the fear of them fell upon them.] And great was the joy at their departure, not only among the Israelites, but among the Egyptians, who thought themselves not safe till the Israelites had their liberty, but were in dread of another plague, which they thought might kill them, as the former had done their children, Exod. xii. 33.

Ver. 39. He spread a cloud for a covering; and fires to give light in the night.] Nor did the divine providence desert our fathers after it had brought them out of Egypt, but, lest they should suffer any prejudice by the exceeding great heats, or mistake their way in a desolate wilderness, he defended them in the day from the scorching rays of the sun by a cloud, which itself gave them light to comfort, and (if need were) to guide them in the night, Exod. xiii. 21. 22.

Ver. 40. The people asked, and be brought quails; and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.] He provided also a delicate food for that vast multitude, even when they were so ungrateful as to murmur against him, (Exod. xvi. 12. &c.), sending them in the evening such flights of quails, and in the morning such showers of corn out of the clouds, as abundantly satisfied every one of them.

Ver. 41. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.] And when they murmured again for want of drink, (Exod. xvii. 2. 6.), he was so kind as to stop their complaints, by making water to spring out of the rock; from whence it gushed so constantly, and in such abundance, that it made a stream, which followed them in all the parched grounds through which they marched.

Ver. 42. For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.] For the Lord was resolved punctually to perform his promise, passed in former ages, (Gen. xv. 18. Exod. ii. 24.), which made him reward the fidelity of his servant Abraham, even upon his incredulous posterity, at that very time which he had prefixed for it, Gen. xv. 13. Exod. xii. 41.

Ver. 43. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness.] When, with much mirth and joy, he brought his people out of the Egyptian bondage, and made them shout to see the difference he made between them and the Egyptians, who were drowned in the Red Sea, while they were conducted safe through it on dry land, Exod. xv. 1. 13. 19.

Ver. 44. And gave them the lands of the heathen; and they inherited the labour of the people.] And, in conclusion, he cast out seven nations, to make room for them in the land of Canaan; where their posterity took possession of cities and towns, fields and
vineyards, which the labour of others had built and planted for them, Deut. vi. 10. 11. Josh. xxiv. 13.

Ver. 45. That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.] That they might have the more leisure to purg[e] the country of all its ancient superstition and filthiness, and set themselves heartily to worship God, after that manner that he prescribed, in a strict observance of all the rest of his holy laws.

For which, and all other his benefits, exult yourselves to praise the Lord.

P S A L M C V I.

Hallelujah, i.e. Praise the Lord.

The Argument.—There is little doubt to be made, but this is the title of the psalm, as it is of many other, (cxi. &c.), whereby the author excites them to acknowledge God’s bounty to their ungrateful forefathers. For as in the foregoing psalm, (they are the words of Theodoret), the divine benefits are commemorated, so in this, the psalmist both commemorates them, and also upbraids the ingratitude of those that received them. Which magnified the mercies of God the more, in being so very kind to those wicked people, that when he punished them, he did not utterly destroy them.

The opinion of that father is, That the psalm was composed in the person of the more pious sort of people, who bewail the common calamities, and implore the divine indulgence. And most interpreters that I have met withal, imagine it to have been made in the time of the captivity of Babylon; but the proof of it is very weak. For the last verse but one, upon which they ground that conjecture, may have another construction, and mean no more but this, that God would be pleased, when the nation, or any part of it, should be carried captive, to take pity upon them, and restore them again to their country.

Or rather, in my opinion, it refers to those who, in the days of Saul, or before, were taken prisoners by the Philistines, and other nations; whom David prays God to gather to their own land again, that they might worship him in that place, which he had prepared for the ark of his presence. For it seems plain enough that this was one of the songs which he delivered then to Asaph; the first verse and the two last being set down in 1 Chron. xvi. 36. 37. as the beginning and ending of another psalm, (which can be none but this), which he then gave in with the other two there mentioned, (cxi. and ov.), to praise the Lord withal.

Ver. 1. P R A I S E ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.] O make your thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of all the world, who was exceeding gracious to your forefathers, and will continue his kindness, you may hope, unto all succeeding ages.

Ver. 2. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?] Praise him with all your might, for when you have done your best, you must acknowledge that it is impossible to express your obligations to his omnipotent goodness. For who is able to tell how miraculous that power was, which wrought such wonders for us in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan? where shall we find a man that can set forth, as they deserve, all the praise-worthy acts of the Lord?

Ver. 3. Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.] Which are so great and many, that they are most happy men, who, by faithful obedience to all his precepts, (not only when they have newly received his benefits, but throughout the whole course of their lives), preserve themselves in the favour of so gracious a Lord and master, (which our forefathers foolishly lost, by revolting presently from their merciful deliverer.)

Ver. 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation.] Make me, good Lord, one of this happy number, and let me partake of the favour thou still designest for thy people, and find thee ready at hand, in all dangers, to preserve and deliver me, (1 Chron. xviii. 6.-13. 14.)

Ver. 5. That I may see the good of thy choosing, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thy inheritance.] That I may live to see thy chosen people Israel settled in a peaceful enjoyment of all thy blessings, (1 Chron. xxii. 18.), and have my share in their joy and felicity, (1 Chron. xxix. 9.); may, triumph together with them, in the highest praises of thy bounty towards thy own nation, and peculiar inheritance, (1 Chron. xxix. 10. 11. 12. 13. &c.

Ver. 6. We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.] Our sins indeed may hinder these blessings from us, for we are no better than our forefathers, but have offended after their example, by which we ought to have been amended; we are guilty of many iniquities against one another, and much impiety against thee.

Ver. 7. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.] We are the wicked offsprings of those who were so stupid, as not to be affected with the prodigious works thou didst in Egypt, or presently to forget that long series of miraculous preservations and deliverances, by which they were brought from thence; but in the very next strait into which they fell, (at the borders of the sea, that remarkable place the Red Sea), distrusted his power; and wished he had left them in that cruel servitude, of which before they so heavily complained, Exod. xiv.

Ver. 8. Nevertheless he saved them for his name’s sake; that he might make his mighty power to be known.]

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And yet (such was his stupendous goodness) he would not let them perish in their ingratitude; but to preserve the name he had gotten of their mighty Saviour, gave them a new deliverance; that the world might not imagine he wanted power to complete what he had begun to do for them.

Ver. 9. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up; so led them through the depths as through the wilderness. On this consideration, he checked the course of that sea by so strong a wind, that he made a path in the midst of it; and led them through those depths on as hard and dry ground, as they trod upon in their march through the parched deserts, Exod. xiv. 21. 22.

Ver. 10. And be saved from the hand of him that hated them; and redeemed from the hand of the enemy. By which means he saved them from Pharaoh's army, which pressed hard upon their backs, as the sea was before their face, (Exod. xiv. 9. 10.) He rescued them from the power of those implacable enemies, whose hatred carried them to pursue them eagerly even into the sea, (Exod. xiv. 23.)

Ver. 11. And the waters covered their enemies; there was not one of them left. Where they were drowned every man of them; the sea, which had stood fixed as a wall to save the Israelites, returning back with a mighty violence to overwhelm their adversaries.

Ver. 12. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. Which was so evident a token of his power and goodness, that they were persuaded by it, at that present, to believe God's promises, (Exod. xiv. 31.), and to sing a song of praise to him for this miraculous deliverance, Exod. xv. 1. &c.

Ver 13. They soon forgot his works, they waited not for his counsel. But within three days they grew impatient again, (Exod. xiv. 22. 24.), and forgetting the great and many pledges they had received of his divine power, quarrelling with his servants; and would not expect till he shewed what way he intended to relieve them.

Ver. 14. But lusteth exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. But not long after this, murmured again, (Exod. xvi.) And though, instead of punishing them for it, he satisfied them with bread from heaven, and gave them several other demonstrations of his divine presence among them in the wilderness, (Exod. xvi. xx. xxiv. &c.), yet, to please their wanton appetite, they mutinied another time, and cried out vehemently for flesh to eat, (Numb. xi. 4. 5. &c.), and desired new proofs of his power to supply them.

Ver. 15. And he gave them their request, but sent leavens into the soul. Which he was pleased to grant in such abundance, that they surfeited of the quails which he sent them; and, instead of being nourished, fell into a grievous disease, whereby great numbers of them were wasted and consumed, Numb. xi. 31. 32. &c.

Ver. 16. They envied Moses also in the camp; and Aaron the saint of the Lord. And they that escaped were not cured of their rebellious humour; but seditiously disputed the authority of Moses; and accused both him and Aaron, whom the Lord had consecrated for the service of the altar, as ambitious men, that took too much upon them, Numb. xvi. 3.

Ver. 17. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.] Which moved the divine justice to punish their presumption with a most terrible vengeance, for the earth opened, and buried alive both Dathan and Abiram, and the faction that adhered to them, Numb. xvi. 32. 33.

Ver. 18. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burnt up the wicked.] And the other company raised by Korah, were smitten with lightning from heaven; which burnt up those impious men, who were so bold as to invade the office of the priests of the Lord, Numb. xvi. 35.

Ver. 19. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Whose anger they began very early to incense; for even at that very place where the Lord had newly appeared to them, in astonishing thunder, and lightning, and clouds, (Exod. xx. 18.), and had spoken to them with an audable voice, and at the second word he spake had charged them not to make any graven image, (Exod. xx. 4.), and had called Moses up into the Mount to receive the rest of his laws, (which he had begun in a most dreadful manner to deliver to them), they stupidly made a golden calf, and prostrated themselves before the work of their own hands.

Ver. 20. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. Slighting that glorious presence of the majesty of God, (Exod. xxiv. 26. 17.), which, appearing in the cloud, had done many wonders for them; and choosing rather to commend themselves to the protection of an image, in which they saw no glory; the image of a dull ox, a creature without reason, a servant of man, that is supported itself by so weak a thing as hay, Exod. xxxii. 14.

Ver. 21. They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt. The root of which seditious apostasy was, that they did not keep in mind what deliverances God had granted them under the conduct of Moses, whom now they despised; (Exod. xxxii. 1.) But forgot his great works in the land of Egypt, where they never saw any similitude of him.

Ver. 22. Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea.] Miraculous works, which filled the whole country with wonder and astonishment; and concluded at last in the fearful overthrow of Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, through which they passed safely.

Ver. 23. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach; to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them. Which provoked the divine displeasure so highly, that he resolved to destroy them, (Exod. xxxii. 9. 10.) and had done it, if Moses, for whom he had a great respect, had not, by his earnest intercession, made up this breach; and reconciled him so far to them, that he did not proceed then to take such vengeance on them, Exod. xxxii. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.
Ver. 24. They despised the pleasant land; they believed not his word.] But when after this they despaired (Numb. xii. 32.) that goodly country, to the borders of which he had brought them, (Deut. i. 19. 20.), which the spies themselves confessed was rich and desirable, (Numb. xiii. 27. xiv. 31.), and would not believe that God intended, or was able to perform his promise to them, Numb. xiii. 37.

Ver. 25. But murmured in their tents, and bewailed not unto the voice of the LORD.] But murmured against Moses and Aaron in their tents, as if they had deluded them, (Numb. xiv. 1. 2. &c.), refusing to march, when the Lord commanded them to go up and take possession of it, Deut. i. 21. 26. 32.

Ver. 26. Therefore let his hand be against them, to overwork them in the wilderness.] Then he solemnly swore, that not one of that wicked generation, who had so often rebelled against him, should ever come there; but all perish in the wilderness, Numb. xiv. 21. 22. 35. Deut. i. 34.

Ver. 27. To overwork their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.] And some of them be overthrown by the heathen, whom the Lord would have delivered up into their hand, (Numb. xiv. 45.), and others dispersed in several parts of that country, which they despised, Numb. xxi. 1.

Ver. 28. They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifice of the dead.] Nor did they grow much better by these dreadful threatenings and executions; but not only most shamefully committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, but embraced their religion; devoting themselves to the vile service of Baal, whose temple stood upon Mount Peor; and partaking with them in the sacrifices which they offered to dead men, Numb. xxv. 1. 2. 3.

Ver. 29. Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions; and the plague brake in upon them.] Which abominable wickedness incensed the divine displeasure to such a degree, that he commanded the offenders to be killed and hanged up in the face of the sun; and also sent a grievous plague among the people, Numb. xxv. 4. 5. 9.

Ver. 30. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment; and so the plague was stayed.] Which raged in the camp, till Phinehas, in a holy zeal, went as boldly to punish, as others did to commit their crimes; and thrust through the body one of the princes of the people, whom the judges feared to meddle withal; and then the plague ceased, Numb. xxv. 6. 7. 8.

Ver. 31. And that was counted unto him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore.] Which, seasonable piece of justice, the Lord not only approved as a praise-worthy act, but rewarded also with the promise of the priesthood: which he entailed upon his posterity, throughout all generations, Numb. xxv. 12. 13.

Ver. 32. They angered him also at the Waters of Strifes, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes.] And, before this, they had been unbelieving and rebellious, as, having had long experience of God's power and goodness in providing for them, to murmur for want of water, at that place which took its name from their quarrel with Moses, (Numb. xx. 3. 13.), who sadly suffered upon their account, Numb. xx. 11.

Ver. 33. Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.] For, being exasperated by their frequent mutinies, he let fall some passionate words; which expressed such distrust and impatience, as did not become so great a minister of God, (Numb. xx. 12.), who thereupon resolved, he should not have the honour to accomplish his promise, of bringing them to their rest, Numb. xxvii. 24. Deut. i. 37.

Ver. 34. They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them.] In which being settled, they did not destroy those seven nations, (Judg. i. 21. 27. 29. &c.), whose abominations were so foul, that the Lord gave them a strict charge, not to suffer them to live there any longer, Exod. xxxiii. 30. 32. Deut. vii. 2.

Ver. 35. But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.] But, quite contrary, they not only let them live, but, against God's express commandment, (Josh. xxxiii. 7. 12.), entered into familiarity, and made a covenant and league with them, (Judg. ii. 1. 2.), and so at last learned to do as they did, and imitate their evil manners.

Ver. 36. And they served their idols; which were a snare unto them.] For they forsook the Lord, who had brought them thither; and worshipped the gods of those people whom they had conquered, (Judg. ii. 11. 12. iii. 5. 6.), which proved their utter ruin and destruction, Deut. vii. 16. 26. Judg. ii. 3.

Ver. 37. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.] For they were so besotted with their idolatry, as to imitate their most barbarous rites, sacrificing to infernal spirits, not only their beasts, but (as the custom of that country was, Deut. xii. 30. 31.) their sons and their daughters.

Ver. 38. And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with blood.] Whom they did not merely consecrate to the service of devils, but offered their blood, the blood of innocent babes, even of their own sons and daughters, (as I said), upon the altars of the idols of Canaan; profaning thereby the holy land with the most impious and unnatural murders.

Ver. 39. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a-wandering with their own inventions.] Besides other abominable works wherewith they defiled themselves; such as whoredom, and all manner of beastly lusts; which were the filthy vices of those nations, whom God cast out before them, Lev. xviii. 24. 25. 27. 28. &c.

Ver. 40. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.] And so contrary to nature, as well as his law, that the Lord was exceeding angry with them, (Judg. ii. 14. 20.), and the more, because he
had made them his people, whom he now abominated as impure and unclean, though once they had been very dear unto him;

Ver. 41. And he gave them unto the hand of the bedthen, and they that hated them ruled over them.] And thereupon did they make them up to the power of those impious nations, with whom they contracted friendship, when they should have destroyed them, (Judg. iii. 5. iv. 2. xiii. 13.), who, retaining still their ancient hatred, exercised a rigorous tyranny over them, Judg. iv. 3.

Ver. 42. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.] And so did many other of their neighbouring enemies, the Mesopotamians and Moabites, (Judg. iii. 8—12.), the Midianites and Amalekites, (vi. 2. 3. &c.), and such like, (x. 7. 8.), who not only grievously afflicted them, but deservedly made those their subjects, as slaves, who would not serve their gracious God;

Ver. 43. Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.] Who still continued so kind to them, that upon the first sign of their repentance, he constantly raised up the spirit of some great man or other, to restore them from every one of these oppressors; though they as constantly provoked him again, by relapsing to their former idolatry, which in the issue brought them exceeding low, Judg. x. 8. 9.

Ver. 44. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:] And yet, such was his tender compassion towards them, that he did not absolutely refuse to help even these base revolters, (Judg. x. 14. 15. 16.), when in their distress they made lamentable moan, and promised amendment.

Ver. 45. And be remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.] For he was not unkind to the covenant he had made with their forefathers, (Levit. xxvi. 42. 44. 45. Deut. xxx. 1. 2. 9.), but let them reap the benefit of it, in ceasing to punish them, and, when they deserved to be utterly destroyed, bestowing many and exceeding great blessings on them.

Ver. 46. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.] For he inclined the hearts, even of those who had subdued, and implacably hated them, unto some compassion towards them; so that they did not endeavour their total extirpation, Judg. xiii. 1. xiv. 2. xv. 9. 10. &c.

Ver. 47. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.] And therefore we humbly hope still in the same great mercies; and beseech thee, O most mighty Lord, who hast been wont to do our nation good, to deliver us, how un worthy soever, from all our present enemies; and to restore such of us as are fallen into their hands, unto their own country; that they may join with us in giving thanks to thy incomparable goodness, and setting forth thy praises with the greatest joy and triumph, saying;

Ver. 48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.] Let the great Lord of all the world, who hath been so gracious unto Israel, as to choose them for his own peculiar people, be most heartily blessed and praised: Let all generations bless him, as long as the world shall last, and unto all eternity; and let all his people concur in these desires, and wish it may be so; let them all praise the Lord, and desire he may be ever praised.

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK OF PSALMS.

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THE FIFTH BOOK OF PSALMS.

PSALM CVII.

The Argument.—The fifth book of psalms (which consists mostly of praises and thanksgivings) begins here; with an exhortation to those whom God (according to the prayer foregoing, cvi. 47.) had delivered from pagan servitude, to acknowledge that singular benefit with their hearty thanksgivings; and thence to take occasion to magnify his merciful providence over all other men, not only of that, but of all nations, when they addressed themselves unto him in their distresses. For instance, travelers in the desert, who have lost their way, prisoners, sick people, mariners, husbandmen, even whole countries, the psalmist shews, are made strangely prosperous, if they have a regard to God; and on the other side, fall into great misery, if they neglect him. It had been endless to enumerate all other cases; but by these any man may understand, if he please, (as he observes in the conclusion), how good the Lord is, and ready to help those who fly unto him for succour, whatever their condition be.

The author of the psalm is unknown; but if I have guessed aright at the connection of this with the foregoing psalm, it is most probable it was com-
posed by David; who having, in the 105th, put them in mind, (as Theodoret observes), of the promises made to the patriarchs, and of the blessings bestowed on their posterity; and in the 106th, of their horrid ingratitude for such benefits, and the punishments for that cause inflicted upon them, declares in this psalm the inexplicable kindness of God, in their freedom from slavery, and in his careful providence, as I said, over all mankind; which might give them the greater encouragement to hope in him, if they served him faithfully, who had taken them for his peculiar people.

Ver. 1. **O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.**

O make your grateful acknowledgements to the great Lord of the world; of whose goodness you and your forefathers have had such long experience, that you may conclude his loving-kindness will extend itself to all succeeding ages.

Ver. 2. **Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.** Let them especially call upon one another to give thanks unto his goodness, whom the Lord hath graciously redeemed from a sad captivity, into which they were reduced by their prevailing enemies:

Ver. 3. **And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.** And hath brought them back to their own country again, from all the lands, on every side, into which they were dispersed.

Ver. 4. **They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.** And they also, who, travelling through vast wildernesses and sandy deserts, lost their way, and could find no tract to lead them to a city inhabited;

Ver. 5. **Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.** But, in this perplexity, wandered up and down so long, that all their provision was spent, and they were ready to die with hunger and thirst:

Ver. 6. **Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.** Yet then, recommending themselves to the Lord, and earnestly imploring his help in this miserable strait, he mercifully delivered them out of it, and freed them from all their anxieties:

Ver. 7. **And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.** Directing them, when they were in a maze, into the right path again; which brought them to a place inhabited, where they found relief for their necessities.

Ver. 8. **O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!** O that such men would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgements to the Lord for his singular kindness, but every where proclaim his wonderful works.

Ver. 9. **For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.** Who thus seasonably preserved them from starving, by providing, in this languishing condition, drink to quench their thirst,

and plenty of good things to satisfy their hungry appetite.

Ver. 10. **Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron:** They also who have no other dwelling but a dark prison, nay, a horrible dungeon; where, to add to their affliction, they are loaded with iron manacles or fetters.

Ver. 11. **Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High:** As a just punishment for the crimes they had rebelliously committed against the express command of God, and the plain dictates and frequent checks of their own consciences; which were the voice of the Most High, giving them wholesome counsel, though they contemned and despised it:

Ver. 12. **Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.** And thereby provoked him to throw them into that miserable condition, to humble their proud hearts by the hardships of a tedious and painful imprisonment; in which they lay so dejected and helpless, that they saw no human means whereby they should be delivered.

Ver. 13. **Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.** Yet they then making their addresses to the Lord, and earnestly beseeching him to take pity upon their wretched estate, he was pleased mercifully to hear their prayers, and free them from those miserable straits:

Ver. 14. **He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.** Bringing them out of their sad confinement in that dismal dungeon, and setting their hands and feet at liberty from the chains wherewith they were bound.

Ver. 15. **O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!** O that such men would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgements to the Lord for his singular kindness, but every where proclaim his wonderful works:

Ver. 16. **For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.** Who, when their case was desperate, removed the greatest obstacles, and made even brazen gates, and iron bars, give way to their escape.

Ver. 17. **Fool, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.** In like manner we see others, who, forgetting God, and sottishly giving themselves up to all kind of debauchery, in an irregular way of living, falling into grievous diseases:

Ver. 18. **Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death.** Which not only quite take away their appetite, but make them nauseate all manner of food, which they formerly abused; and thereby lay them so low, that they are at the very brink of the grave:

Ver. 19. **Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble; he saveth them out of their distresses.** Yet even these men, when they make their addresses unto the Lord, and in the weak estate into which they have brought themselves, pray earnestly to him, are wont
to find relief from him, when no medicines whatsoever will avail them.

Ver. 20. He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." He orders their recovery, when all the prescriptions of physicians prove ineffectual; nay, when they are left for dead, raises them up to life and health again.

Ver. 21. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O that these men would be so grateful to the Lord, as never to forget his singular kindness to them, but every where proclaim such wonderful works as these!

Ver. 22. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

And not content themselves with the sacrifices of beasts, (which in their sickness they were apt to vow unto him), but offer those far more acceptable sacrifices of a grateful heart; acknowledging his goodness, and telling every body they meet withal, in such a manner as may express how much they are affected with it, what great things the Lord hath done for them:

Ver. 23. That they go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters: Who shews no less kindness to those that have occasion to be much upon the sea, to fish, or to traffic upon the main ocean.

Ver. 24. These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. Where they behold remarkable acts of divine providence, in the wonderful alterations which he makes in that vast collection of waters.

Ver. 25. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. For when they are smooth and still, a sudden tempest arises by his command, which puts them into such a rage, that they are turned into swelling waves and billows.

Ver. 26. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. On which the ships are sometimes mounted up as high as if they would touch the clouds, and then sink down as low as if they would be buried in the bottom of the sea; to the great astonishment of the passengers, who are ready to die with fear.

Ver. 27. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. For they are so tossed and whirled about, that they are not able to stand upon the decks, so the most skilful mariners do not know which way to steer, or what course to take, to save themselves from perishing.

Ver. 28. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and be brought them out of their distresses.

And yet, when in the midst of this great strait they make their addresses to the Lord, with earnest prayers for his protection, he is graciously pleased to hear their cry, and to free them from that anguish of mind which sorely oppresses them.

Ver. 29. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. For he silences the blustering wind, and makes so great a calm, that the swelling waves lie quiet and still.

Ver. 30. Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Which happy change turns their fear into joy; when they see not only the storm appeased, but gentle gales arising, to carry them directly to the port for which they are bound.

Ver. 31. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O that they who are thus unexpectedly preserved, would never forget to make their thankfull acknowledgements to the Lord for this singular kindness, but every where proclaim what wonders he hath done for them!

Ver. 32. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

Let them magnify his power and goodness in the greatest assemblies of the people, especially in his temple: let them praise him in the supreme court of the kingdom, that the judges and governors may be excited to make him their trust and confidence.

Ver. 33. He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground: Who turneth well-watered countries into a mere wilderness, and makes moist and fertile soils become dry and barren ground.

Ver. 34. A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. Where none of those fruits will grow, which before it plentifully yielded; because of the ill disposition of the inhabitants, who produce nothing but all manner of vice and wickedness.

Ver. 35. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs. And on the other side, he turns a barren desert (for none of these things come by chance) into rich and fruitful pastures, and sends such plenty of water into dry and sandy grounds.

Ver. 36. And there be made the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation. That there they, who lived wretchedly before, find a comfortable habitation, and are invited to build towns and cities in those formerly desolate places:

Ver. 37. And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. Where they sow all manner of grain, and plant vineyards; which recompense their pains with a plentiful harvest, and a joyful vintage.

Ver. 38. He blesteth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. His blessing also makes the inhabitants fruitful, as well as their ground; they grow exceeding populous, together with their flocks and their herds, which by the increase of people are not diminished.

Ver. 39. Again they are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. But when they prove ungrateful to him, he quite alters the course of his providence, and on a sudden sends some grievous pestilence, which lessens their numbers, or lays them low by tyrannical oppressors, (into whose hands he delivers them), by death, and other calamities, which make them pine away in grief and sorrow.

Ver. 40. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way. Their princes, and the most eminent per-
sons in their country, are not able to preserve themselves from contempt and scorn, to which they are so openly exposed, that they who had troops of followers and attendants, are utterly deserted, and forced to walk in solitary places to hide their shame; without any means, that they can see, to recover their thrones, out of which they are disgracefully thrown.

Ver. 41. *yet settest be the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families as a flock.* Which he bestows upon some poor desppicable person, whom, from a low condition, he raises to the highest dignity; and gives him a very numerous issue, to maintain and continue the honour he hath conferred on him.

Ver. 42. *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.* Which is a great encouragement to the righteous, who herein behold with joy the wise and just providence of Almighty God; but gives the wicked (who under those bad princes were insolent, and full of proud boasts) such a rebuke, that they hang down their heads, and are confoundedly put to silence.

Ver. 43. *Who is wise, and will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.* And therefore, whosoever will be truly wise, ought to mark and ponder such passages as these in the divine government; that they may make others, who are less considerate, understand how very kind and gracious the Lord is to those who study to please him, and to obtain his favour by dutiful obedience and humble submission to him.

**PSALM CVIII.**

*A Song or Psalm of David.*

The Argument.—The title tells us, this song-psalm (see the reason of this name upon Psal. Ixviii.) was made by David; and was placed here, as I conjecture, because now he was in a hopeful way to perfect some victories which he had begun to win; whereby some of those captives in strange lands, (mentioned ver. 2. and 3. of the foregoing psalm,) were rescued and set at liberty. What those nations were, over whom he was about to triumph, see in the title of Psalm lx. For the latter part of this psalm, from ver. 6. to the end, is the very same (with some light variations) with the eight last verses of that; as the former part of it is very little different from the five last verses of Psalm Ixviii. Which the psalmist, I suppose, here placed instead of those wherewith the 60th begins, (though he retains all the latter end of it), because now, as I said, he had made some progress in those wars, which he was but entering upon, when he made that 60th psalm. And therefore, here he begins with thanks to God for his mercy, as there he laments the ill condition wherein he found the affairs of the kingdom, when he came to the crown.

Ver. 1. *O GOD, my heart is fix'd; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.* [My heart is ready, O most gracious God, it is firmly resolved, to give thee most solemn thanks; my tongue also, wherewith I ought to glorify thee, shall sing of thy goodness, and, with all the expressions of joy, set forth thy praise.

Ver. 2. *Awake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early.* Nor shall any of the instruments of music be silent, but accompany my hymns, which I will sing unto thee so early, that I will prevent the rising of the sun.

Ver. 3. *I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.* Nor will I merely make thee my private acknowledgments, but publish thy praise in the greatest assemblies of thy people, among whom this song shall be sung; yea, other nations shall read therein, how thankful I am for what thou hast begun to do for us.

Ver. 4. *For thy mercy is great above the heavens; and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.* For it is fit my thankfulness should be as boundless as thy mercy; which infinitely transcends all my expressions, and hath nothing equal to it, but thy faithfulness and truth.

Ver. 5. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; and thy glory above the earth.* [Be thou more and more exalted in these, O God, and raise to thyself thereby the highest praises; spread the fame of them every where, that thou mayest be glorified throughout the world.

Ver. 6. *That my beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and answer me.* Especially now, I beseech thee to grant my humble petitions, that by thy mighty power accompanying my arms, I may be an instrument of delivering thy beloved people from their oppressors.

Ver. 7. *Gad hath spoken in his bosom; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.* Why should I doubt of it, and not rather rejoice in assured hope of a perfect victory? since God, who is most holy, and cannot lie, hath said he will deliver them by my hand, (2 Sam. iii. 18.,) and hath already put me in possession (as he also promised, ver. 2.) of all the country about Samaria; which I will distribute under such officers as I think fit to set over them.

Ver. 8. *Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver.* Gilead also, and Manasseh, who were lately under another king, (2 Sam. ii. 9,) have submitted themselves to me; and so hath the tribe of Ephraim, which is a main support of my authority; these, and all the rest of the tribes of Israel, are united to the royal tribe of Judah, which (according to the prophecy of our forefather, Gen. xliv. 10,) supplies me with wise and able men to administer the laws, and order the affairs of my kingdom.

Ver. 9. *Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.* Which shall now extend itself beyond the bounds of this country; for I will tread the Moabites under my feet, and reduce them to the vilest servitude, (2 Sam. viii. 2.) I will trample also upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves, (2 Sam. viii. 14.) the Philistines also, whom I have begun to smite, (2 Sam. v.}
17.—22. &c.), shall add to my triumphs, and be forced to submit unto me, as their conquering lord, (2 Sam. viii. 1.)

Ver. 10. Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom? These are difficult things indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, by what power or force I shall be able to enter that strongly-fenced city, in the frontiers of their country? who is it that will conduct me into Edom, and make me a master of it?

Ver. 11. Wilt thou not, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt thou, O God, go forth with our horse? But I can soon answer myself: for why should I despair of thy presence with us, O God of all power and might! who formerly indeed didst reject us, and forsake the conduct of our armies, (1 Sam. xxxvi. 1.—7), but now, I hope, wilt graciously aid us, and make us victorious.

Ver. 12. Give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man.] Do not frustrate these hopes; but afford us thy help against the Syrians also, (2 Sam. viii. 5.), now that they distress us; for no human force is able to deliver us, nor have we any confidence in it, but in thee alone.

Ver. 13. Through God we shall do valiantly; for he is that shall tread down our enemies.] By whose assistance we will behave ourselves courageously, and do valiant acts; for God will utterly rout our enemies, and tread them down like the mire in the streets.

PSALM CIX.

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—Most interpreters consent to the opinion of Aben-Ezra and D. Kimchi, that David (to whom the title ascribes this psalm) hath respect here, in the first place, to the grievous persecution which he suffered by Saul, and some of his court; who would let him enjoy no rest, but having driven him from his own house, pursued him so close, wheresoever he heard he was, that he could have no certain dwelling; but became like a locust, (as he speaks, ver. 23.), which having no nest, (as Bochartus observes, p. ii. i. iv. de Animal. Sac. cap. 2.), leaps or flies from hedge to hedge, as he did from place to place. To provoke Saul to this rage against him, as they all loaded him with many calumnies, (which made David curse them to Saul's face, 1 Sam. xxv. 19.), so one especially among the rest, who is thought generally to be Doeg the Edomite, was notoriously guilty of this wickedness; whom by a prophetic spirit, he here most solemnly curses, in a direful manner, and pronounces the heaviest judgement upon him and his family; his inhuman villainy being so great, that it made him an exact picture of the traitor Judas, to whom the apostle St Peter, Acts, i. 20. applies the 8th verse of this psalm. The rest of which is spent in prayer to God against such false accusers; and in vows of the praises he would give him, when he was delivered from the mischief which thereby they designed to him. Accordingly, when he was settled in his throne, he sent this psalm, among others, unto the master of music in the tabernacle; to perpetuate the memory of God’s mercy to him. Concerning such imprecations as we here meet withal, see the argument of Psal. xxxv. which is of the same nature with this.

Ver. 1. HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise.] O God, the Supreme Judge of the world, who, as thou hast given me hitherto continual cause to praise thee, so I hope wilt still vindicate my honour; I appeal unto thy majesty, beseeching thee to declare thyself on my side, and make it appear that I am innocent.

Ver. 2. For the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.] For men of no conscience have taken the liberty to invent the most mischievous lies of me, whereby, though they always speak me fair to my face, they have wickedly traduced me to Saul behind my back;

Ver. 3. They compassed me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause.] And spread those false reports so diligently, that I find they have made me odious every where; and thereupon, without any provocation from me, have levied war against me, to take away my life, 1 Sam. xxiil. 8.—25.

Ver. 4. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.] Who have been so far from doing them any harm, that I have deserved well of them, (1 Sam. xix. 4. 5.), and even now, when they require my kindness with endeavours to destroy me, do nothing but recommend myself by prayer to thy protection, refusing to make use of the opportunity I had to revenge myself upon them, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9. to. &c.

Ver. 5. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.] And yet this will not mollify them, but still they are so extremely ungrateful, as to repay my kindness with new attempts to do me mischief, (1 Sam. xxvi. 2.), and the more affection I express, with the greater hatred am I prosecuted.

Ver. 6. Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand.] So implacable is his malice, who is the principal author of the calumnies wherewith I am loaded, (1 Sam. xxvii. 9. 11.), against whom, therefore, I implore thy justice, O most righteous Judge of the world: let the worst man that can be found, be appointed to hear his cause when he is accused, and his most malicious adversary plead against him.

Ver. 7. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin.] When sentence is given, let him be condemned to be as guilty as really he is; and if he petition for a pardon, let it not only be rejected, but prove an aggravation of his crimes.

Ver. 8. Let his days be few, and let another take his office.] Let him (and the false traitor, who in future times will use the Messiah as now they do me) be
cut off before his time; and his office, (1 Sam. xxii. 7. xxii. 9.), wherein he behaves himself with such insufferable insolence and falsehood, be transferred to a better man.

Ver. 9. Let his children be fatherless, and his widow.] Let not his fatherless children succeed him in any thing that he hath, nor his widow have any thing left to maintain her.

Ver. 10. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.] Let them not have so much as an house wherein to put their heads, but be perpetual vagabonds, supporting a miserable life by begging an alms, and seeking where to lodge, because their own dwellings are laid waste and desolate.

Ver. 11. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath: and let the stranger spoil his labour.] Let his creditor (pretending a judgment) seize on all his estate; and a stranger, by that means, reap the fruit of all his care and labours.

Ver. 11. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.] Let no man show the least kindness to his memory, or upon that account bestow an alms upon his fatherless children.

Ver. 13. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let them be blotted out.] Let them rather be odious for his sake, and the sooner destroyed; so that they be the last of the name, and, in the next generation, not one of that family be found.

Ver. 14. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord: and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.] But, according to the just sentence of thy law, (Exod. xx. 5.), let the punishments (which were due long ago, but thy patience moved thee to forbear) fall all upon him; let him suffer for the sins of his progenitors on both sides, in whose wicked steps he would not cease to tread.

Ver. 15. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.] Let it be seen that their wickedness is not forgotten, though committed many years ago; but prosecute it with a continued vengeance, till nobody remember that there were such people in the world.

Ver. 16. Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that be mighty slay the broken in heart.] This will be but a deserved recompence for all his cruelties; for as he let all benefits slip out of his mind, and was ungrateful to those who had obliged him, so he had no sense of that common compassion which is due to the calamitous; but when he saw me in a necessitous condition, destitute of friends, and dejected in spirit, made no other use of it but to persecute me to death.

Ver. 17. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.] What can be more just, that than the mischief, in which he delighted, and both wished and designed to others, should fall upon himself! and that he should meet with the blessing of those righteous persons which he always hated and avoided?

Ver. 18. As he cloathed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come unto his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.] His very business was to slander others every where, taking a pride in the mischievous effects of his cursed lies; and therefore, let him feel the miserable fruit of his wickedness spreading itself, like the water he drinks, into every vein of him, and sticking as close to him as oil unto the bones.

Ver. 19. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.] Let him be involved in perpetual misfortunes and miseries, and never be able to shake them off; let him be hampere with straits and difficulties, without any possibility of getting out.

Ver. 20. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul.] This shall most certainly be the reward, which the righteous Lord will give to my malicious adversaries, for all the pains they have taken, by slanderous reports and calumnies, to take away my life.

Ver. 21. But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.] Which I commend to thy protection, O Lord, the Governor of all things; beseeching thee to take my part, and appear for me, though not for my honour, yet for thy own, whose kindness is so exceeding bountiful unto all, that for that reason I am encouraged to hope thou wilt deliver me, to whom thou hast engaged thyself by many promises of mercy.

Ver. 22. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.] Which I never needed more than now; for I am so poor, and forsaken of all my friends, (1 Sam. xxv. 8. &c.), that I am ready to faint away with grief and sorrow, like one that is wounded at the very heart.

Ver. 23. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I was tossed up and down as the locust.] The evening shadow doth not vanish sooner than I from the place of my present abode, (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 3. 5. xxiii. 13. 14.), which I am forced to quit on a sudden, and to wander, like the locust, which flies, or is driven, with the wind, uncertainly from place to place.

Ver. 24. My knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness.] And for want of food in those desart places, I am sometimes scarce able to remove; for my body, which heretofore was plump and fat, (1 Sam. xvi. 12.), is now grown lank and thin, like one of those miserable lean creatures.

Ver. 25. I became also a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they shook their heads.] Which, instead of moving their pity, hath exposed me to such contempt and scorn, that when I am seen by any of them, they deride and scoff at me as an undone wretch, that vainly hopes to escape their hands.

Ver. 26. Help me, O Lord my God; O save me, according to thy mercy.] But my hope is, that thou, O Lord, who hast hitherto been my most gracious God, wilt seasonably interpose for my relief; and
deliver me, out of that tender mercy which is wont to extend itself to those who have nothing else to depend upon.

Ver. 27. That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, Lord, hast done it. Whereby they themselves may be convinced, and forced to acknowledge, that not by chance, no more than by my small forces, but by thy almighty power alone, and thy care of me, O Lord, I am delivered.

Ver. 28. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Thy blessing and protection I implore; which if thou wilt vouchsafe me, let them go on to curse and slander me as long as they please, it shall not hurt me, nay, let them assault me with armed force, they shall only be confounded at their vain attempt, and give thy servant the greater cause to rejoice at their disappointment.

Ver. 29. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame; and let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle. Which shall so increase the confusion of my malicious adversaries, that they shall not be able to bear the disgrace; but wish they could hide themselves from the sight of their shame, which their own wickedness hath brought upon them.

Ver. 30. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude. In hope of which defeat, I vow beforehand to the Lord the best expressions of my gratitude that I am able to make; not only in private, but in the greatest assemblies, where I will not cease to praise his almighty love.

Ver. 31. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from them that condemn his soul. And bid them trust in God, who hath pleaded my cause, and rescued me from death, and will ever be the advocate of him that hath no helper, but depends on his goodness to deliver him from the hands of those judges, who prosecute the unjust sentence they have passed upon him to lose his life.

**PSALM CX.**

A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—There is the same reason to think this psalm was composed by David, (not by some other concerning David), that there is to conclude all the rest to be so, which have the same title. And then, as it is very plain he speaks of some person much greater than himself, whom he calls his Lord, so it can be no other but the Lord Christ, of whom he here prophesies. Not, as he is wont to do elsewhere, with respect to himself, in the first place, as his type and figure, but in plain words, which can belong to none but Christ alone; for no other king but he can be said, in any sense, to sit at God’s right hand; nor was there any priest of the order of Melchisedeck, that could be a shadow of him.

David indeed seems once to have exercised the office of a priest, when he blessed the people at the bringing of the ark to Sion, (2 Sam. vi. 18.), and so have been both king and priest in one person, as Melchisedeck was; but not a “priest for ever” on whom the office was perpetually established, and that “by an oath,” as it was on the priest here mentioned.

And therefore it is in vain to endeavour to accommodate any part of this psalm to David, who conquered many of the neighbouring countries, smote their kings, made them bring him tributes, and at last smote the head of the country of Rabbah,(assume the rest) the words of the sixth verse of this psalm, that is, the king of the children of Ammon; but still we are to seek how the rest can be applied to him, who never had any pretence to such an authority as is here described, nor can in any sense call himself my Lord; but, as our Lord Christ hath demonstrated, spake concerning him, (Matt. xxii. 43. &c.), and his exaltation, after his resurrection from the dead; as St Peter and St Paul also shew, Acts. ii. 34. 35. 1 Chron. xv. 25. Heb. iv. 1.—13. v. 6.), when he set up another priesthood, and abolished that of Moses; which change is here predicted.

And though the Jews have taken a great deal of pains to wrest this psalm to another sense, yet they are so divided in their opinions about it, (speaking inconsistent things, like drunken men, as St Chrysostom’s words are, or rather, says he, like men in the dark, running against one another), that from thence alone we may be satisfied they are in the wrong, and have their eyes blinded, else they would not have embraced such interpretations as those which may be seen in them that have written upon this psalm; which some of the Jews themselves, (such as R. Moses Hadarson, Saadias Gaon, and divers others whom I might mention), have been forced to acknowledge belongs to Christ, and is a very plain prediction of his divinity, his royal dignity, his priesthood, and his victorious triumphs; which the psalmist sets forth as follows.

Ver. 1. THE Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.] This is the decree of the eternal Lord, that the great person whom we expect, and whom I honour as my Lord and Master, shall be advanced (after his sufferings) to the highest dignity (1 Kings, ii. 19.) in the heavens, and reign with him as the King of all the world, till he have perfectly subdued (Josh. x. 24.) the most powerful opposers of his kingdom, and overcome death itself, by whom all mankind are conquered, 1 Cor. xv. 25. 26.

Ver. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of his strength out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.] The eternal Lord, who hath thus decreed to honour thee, O most mighty Prince, will make Sion, first of all, to feel how powerful thy sceptre is, (Acts, i. 8. ii. 34.—37.), and thence extend thy empire over all the earth, where I wish thou mayest, and foretell thou wilt, prevail over all infidelity, idolatry, superstition,
and impiety, which will set themselves against thy authority.

Ver. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.] For in the day when thy forces, (2 Tim. ii. 3.), completely armed with a divine power, (Acts, iv. 33.), shall march forth to subdue the world unto thy obedience, they that are fit for thy kingdom, (Luke, ix. 61. Acts, xiii. 48.), shall cheerfully submit themselves, and present thee with free-will offerings, in token of their absolute subjection to thee, (Acts ii. 45. iv. 34.; and great shall be the number of chosen men, (1 John, ii. 13.), who, glad to see the night of ignorance gone, shall at thy first appearance, by the celestial blessing, fall unto thee as thick as the morning-dew.

Ver. 4. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.] And happy are they who live under thy government, for the Lord hath unchangeably resolved that thou shalt be a priest, as well as a King, with full power to bless all thy subjects, not only in that, but in all future ages, even to all eternity; for thou shalt not be a priest like those after Aaron’s order, who die to make room for others, but, like that great king and priest Melchisedec, shalt neither have any predecessor nor successor in thine office, but continue a royal priest for evermore, Heb. vii.

Ver. 5. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.] Who, as he will be most compassionate to all those that heartily acknowledge him for their Lord, and submit unto his government, so will break in pieces the greatest powers on earth that provoke his displeasure by obstinate opposition of his authority at thy right hand.

Ver. 6. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.] From whence he shall demonstrate himself to all the heathen world, to be their Lawgiver and their Judge; taking a severe vengeance on those that persecute his subjects, and destroying, at last, even that mighty empire which shall then rule over many countries.

Ver. 7. He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.] But before all this, he shall first humble himself to the meanest condition, not living in the state of a King here in this world, but of a way-faring man, (Luke, ix. 56.), who is content with such provision as he meets withal. For which cause, after the enduring many hardships, even death itself, he shall be highly exalted to his royal and priestly dignity in the heavens, from whence he shall never fall.

Psalm CXI.

P S A L M C X I.

Hallelujah, i.e. Praise the Lord.

The Argument.—It is certain this is the title of the psalm, which consists of as many short metres as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet; and therefore cannot begin with Hallelujah, whose first letter is the fifth, not the first letter in that alphabet: In which order it proceeds, for the better help of the memory; being composed thus artificially, that every one, as well as the singers, (to whom the Hallelujah perhaps is particularly directed), might have in their minds a brief form of thanking God (especially upon festival-days) for the wonderful things he had done for that nation.

It was a meditation which the author had in time of peace and quiet; for in distress, or immediately after a great deliverance, men’s spirits are not at liberty to use such art and curiosity in their compositions, as there is in this psalm, being full at those seasons of such passions as make them neglect it, even when they are inclined to use it, see Psal. xxxv.; for which reason I think Theodoret’s opinion hath no ground, that the psalmist had respect to the great victory obtained by Jehoshaphat over the Ammonites, and other nations who invaded his kingdom, for which they gave thanks to God presently after, 2 Chron. xx. It is more likely that David, who composed those larger forms of commemoration, Psal. cv. and cvi. made this (as I said) for a compendious remembrance of what is there more largely delivered. And that he might not exceed the number of the ten commandments (as some give the reason of it) in the verses of this psalm, the metres of the two last are so short, that they have each of them three letters of the alphabet in them, whereas all the former have but two.

Ver. 1. PRAISE ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.] I will make my thankful acknowledgments to the Lord, not only with my lips, or with some slight affections of my mind, but with all my heart and soul; and that not only in the private society of those good men whom I am more intimately acquainted withal, but in the public congregation of all his people.

Ver. 2. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.] Who ought to join together to praise the Lord for his mighty and wonderful works, which it will not cost them much labour to understand, for they are easily found out by all those who take any pleasure in such inquiries.

Ver. 3. His work is honourable and glorious; and his righteousness endureth for ever.] And there is not one of them but is full of majesty and splendour, and the fruits of his infinite bounty, and faithfulness to his promise, which he still presses towards us, and will do so for ever.

Ver. 4. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion.] And such is his goodness, lest we should forget his benefits, he hath instituted solemn times for the commemoration of the wonders he hath done for us, (Exod. xii. 14. xiii. 3. 9. &c.), which are everlasting testimonies that we serve a most gracious and compassionate Lord:

Ver. 5. He hath given meat unto them that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his covenant.] Who
gave our forefathers (whom by his wonderful works he possessed with the fear of him, Exod. xiv. 31.) the spoil of the Egyptians, (Exod. xii. 36.), and afterwards fed them with manna in the wilderness, (Exod. xvi.), according to his covenant, which he had made long before, (Gen. xv. 14.), and will never forget in future ages.

Ver. 6. He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.] He hath evidently demonstrated to his people the greatness of his power in destroying Sihon the Amorite, (Deut. ii. 24. 25.), and Og the king of Bashan, (Deut. iii. 21. 24.), with the rest of the Amorites, and other nations in the land of Canaan; (Josh. x. 6.—11. 12. &c.), which he took from the ancient inhabitants, that he might give it us for our possession.

Ver. 7. The works of his hands are verity and judgement; all his commandments are sure.] In which he did them no wrong, but was exactly just in fulfilling his promise to us, and in executing his judgements upon those wicked wretches, (Deut. ix. 5. Gen. xv. 15.), for all his orders of either kind are in pursuance of most righteous decrees.

Ver. 8. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.] Which he doth not alter and change at pleasure, but hath settled as eternal rules; because there is no partiality or inquiry in them, but they were enacted with a sincere respect to all men's good and happiness.

Ver. 9. He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.] And it was in conformity to these that he at first sent Moses and Aaron, to bring our fathers out of Egypt, (Exod. vi. 6.), and then exercised his supreme authority over them, in giving them a law, which he tied them by a covenant perpetually to observe, (Exod. xix. 4. 5. xxiv. 8.), appearing in such majesty to them, (Exod. xx. 18. xxiv. 10. 11.), as might possess them with an awful regard to him, and make them for ever dread, by any profaneness, to offend him, who infinitely excels all other beings.

Ver. 10. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.] And indeed, it is the first and principal point of wisdom to fear the Lord, and carefully observe his commandments; the practice of which gives men a better understanding of what is good for them, than any politic maxims can imbibe into them. Therefore let the Lord be for ever praised, who hath given us these good and wholesome laws, and thereby shewn us the way to eternal honour and praise.

PSALM CXII.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm is composed after the very same manner with the former, and seems to be intended for a short commentary upon the last verse of it; shewing how well and wisely they consult their good and happiness, who observe God's commandments; especially those about charity, or doing good to others. Of which that they might be always mindful, the psalm is contrived for the help of their memories, into as many short verses as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Hallelujah, therefore, is no part of them, but the title prefixed to the psalm, (see Arg. upon Psalm cxix.) to excite them to praise the Lord, who had made it their present interest to be religious.

Ver. 1. PRAISE ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.] Happy is that man whose chiefest care it is to please the Lord, by observing his commandments; which will yield, in the issue, the highest pleasure and satisfaction to himself;

Ver. 2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.] And procure a blessing also upon all belonging to him; first, upon his children, and those that shall descend from them in future times; who shall fare the better, and be more powerful and prosperous, for the sincere virtue of their pious forefathers:

Ver. 3. Wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endureth for ever.] And next on his estate; which shall not only be rich and plentiful, but so firmly settled and entailed on his posterity, that they shall reap the perpetual fruit of his justice and charity.

Ver. 4. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.] Or if any affliction come, it will be so far from making him unhappy, that, besides the divine comforts imparted to him for his support, it will make the virtue of upright men the more illustrious: while one exercises meekness and sweetness to those that provoke him, another forgives offences, and pities the instruments of his troubles; and a third exercises the greater justice of mercy, and will not be tempted to do any dishonest or cruel thing for his own deliverance.

Ver. 5. A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion.] But, above all other men, he leads the most comfortable life, who is so kind, that he supplies the needs of others; giving to one, and lending to another, as occasion serves; and yet ordering all his affairs so judiciously, that he doth not impair, but rather maintain, the good estate of his own family.

Ver. 6. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.] Sure it will not be in the power of the most mighty and malicious enemies (though they may disturb him) quite to overthrow him; and when they are forgotten, or mentioned with contempt, the worthy actions of this sort of righteous men shall be celebrated with never-ceasing praises.

Ver. 7. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.] He is not affrighted and discomposed at the false reports that are raised of him; nor at the rumour of dangers which
thwart him; being prepared for such things as these, by a settled trust and hope in God, that he will take care of him, who hath been as kind as he could to others in their distresses.

Ver. 8. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.] This confidence is the prop and support of his soul; which will not let him be dismayed, but makes him expect the time, when he shall be able securely to look upon all his enemies.

Ver. 9. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.] He doth not merely heap up riches for himself, but dispenses them to others, especially to the poor and needy, with a liberal hand: nor is he weary of well-doing, but ever producing some new fruit of his charity, which shall gain him the greatest honour, and raise him to an illustrious degree of power and authority.

Ver. 10. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; they shall gnash with their teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.] At the sight of which the wicked (who shall not be able to observe it) shall be extremely vexed, or rather furiously enraged; he shall pine away with grief, envy, and impatience, to see himself and his companions disappointed in all that they wished, either of good to themselves, or evil to the righteous.

PSALM CXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm, with the five next which follow, the Hebrews call by the name of Hallel, or hymn, which they recited at their table (as in the new moons, and other feasts, so) in the paschal night, after they had eaten the lamb; concluding it with Hallelujah, which is the title of this psalm, (as of the two foregoing), to excite all God’s people, especially those that consistently attended the tabernacle, to the praises of God’s good providence, which extends itself as far as this earth where we live: several instances of which the psalmist here mentions.

Ver. 1. PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.] O ye ministers of the LORD, praise his eternal majesty; be not remiss in this heavenly employment, but, with your best affections, praise the power, wisdom, and goodness of his eternal providence.

Ver. 2. Blessed be the name of the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore.] Praise him now in this present age; and wish that those incomparable perfections of his may be celebrated with the praises of those that live in future times, as long as the world shall last:

Ver. 3. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the LORD’s name is to be praised.] And not only here in this little spot of earth, but wheresoever the sun shines, and lets men see how splendid and glorious his majesty is.

Ver. 4. The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.] For all the nations of the earth are his, and but a little parcel of his supreme dominion; which extends far beyond the sun, and moon, and stars, whose light is but a dim resemblance of the brightness of his glory.

Ver. 5. Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high?] Do not think that any of them (though worshipped by other nations as gods) is comparable to that great Lord, and our most gracious God, whom we adore; for the very place where his glorious majesty resides is far higher than they.

Ver. 6. Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth.] And it is a great condescension in him, that he will have any respect to the most illustrious of those celestial bodies; though he be so gracious also as to extend his kind and careful providence, even to us who dwell upon this earth.

Ver. 7. He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.] Where, among other manifest tokens of his stupendous goodness, he is pleased to take special notice of those whom the world despises; and to raise them out of a mean, nay sordid condition, to such a pitch of honour and dignity,

Ver. 8. That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.] That at last they are advanced to sit upon a throne, and made the governors of his own people; (1 Sam. ii. 8. 2 Sam. vii. 8. 9. compared with 1 Sam. xxiv. 14.)

Ver. 9. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.] And, which is still more strange, he opens the barren womb, (which according to the course of nature would have brought forth nothing), and makes a numerous family spring from thence, to the great joy of her that bears them, (1 Sam. i. 20. ii. 21.)
Praise the Lord in these, and such like wonderful works of his.

PSALM CXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.—As the foregoing psalm puts them in mind of several works of the divine providence about particular persons; so this makes a brief narration of some miraculous work, where-in the Lord declared his power, when he brought the whole Jewish nation out of the Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 1. WHEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;] When our forefathers, with their whole family, were brought out of Egypt, and not one of them left behind among that barbarous people who had long oppressed them,

Ver. 2. Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.] There was a most glorious appearance of God among them, by that bright cloud, the token of his presence; which then had no other peculiar place
for its sanctuary, but stood over the whole camp of Israel, (Exod. xiii. 21. Numb. xiv. 14.), whom he then took for his peculiar kingdom, (Exod. xxi. 6.)

Ver. 3. The sea saw it, and fled; Jordan was driven back.] At which appearance the Red Sea forsook its channel, and left a dry path for them to march through, (Exod. xiv. 22, 23.); and so did Jordan also afterwards, to make way for their easy entrance into Canaan, Josh. iii. 15, 16.

Ver. 4. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.] All the mountains, great and small, which adjoined unto Sinai, trembled and leaped, like so many affrighted rams, or little lambs, before the same most dreadful majesty, (Exod. xix. 18.)

Ver. 5. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?] To what else shall we ascribe that sudden ebb of the sea, and that no less strange retreat of Jordan, when it overflowed all its banks?

Ver. 6. Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams? and ye little hills, like lambs?] What made the mountains and hills leap up, like affrighted rams or lambs, as if they would run away from the place where they were so firmly fixed?

Ver. 7. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.] But only the glorious presence of the divine majesty, who was then bringing his people to the rest he had promised to give them. And let the whole earth be afraid, and tremble before that great Lord who hath honoured us so far, as peculiarly to be our God:

Ver. 8. Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.] And was so kind as to supply the necessities of our forefathers, even when they murmured against him, by a new miracle, bringing out of hard rocks, as hard as flint, such plenty of water, as if they had been dissolved into lakes or rivers, (Exod. xvii. 8. Numb. xx. 11.)

THE ARGUMENT.—There is great reason to think that this psalm was made in some time of sore distress, when their Pagan enemies began to boast and brag, as if their gods were too hard for the God of Israel. But by whom it was made, or on what particular occasion, there are so many conjectures, that it will be no presumption to interpose mine, which is this.—That when Jehoshaphat saw that vast army (which we read of 2 Chron. xx. 2.) composed of several nations coming against him, and after his prayer to God for deliverance, was encouraged by a prophet to hope for it, (ver. 14. 15.), and had by the Levites given him thanks for this hope, he, or that prophet, composed this hymn, to quicken and confirm their faith in God; unto which you read he exhorted them, ver. 20. And it is likely that this was the hymn which, by common consent, the singers were appointed to use, when they went out to encounter those enemies; saying not only those words, which we read there, ver. 21. “Praise the Lord, for his mercy endur-
help and their shield.] O ye Israelites, who by the
divine favour are better instructed, repose that con-
dfidence in the eternal Lord, which they do in those
vanities: and he will not only protect and defend you
against all the assaults of your enemies, but help you
to overcome them, (2 Chron. xx. 9.)

Ver. 10. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is
their help and their shield.] O ye priests and Levites,
do you above all others rely upon that eternal Lord,
whose praise you sing, and to whom you offer con-
tinual sacrifice; for he will never fail, not only to
protect, but to assist all such as piously confide in
him.

Ver. 11. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord:
he is their help and their shield.] And let all that fear
the Lord, and devoutly worship him, (of whatsoever
nation they be), place the like confidence in his al-
mighty goodness; for he will never forsake those that
depend on him alone, (though they be not of the seed
of Abraham), but defend them also in all dangers,
and aid them against all their enemies.

Ver. 12. The Lord hath been mindful of us, he will
bless us; he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless
the house of Aaron.] We have had abundant expe-
rience of his care over us in all ages; and therefore,
though now for the present our enemies afflict us,
yet let us believe that the Lord will do us good, and
bless us with a glorious deliverance: all the house of
Israel shall see how kind he is, especially they that
minister unto him in his holy temple.

Ver. 13. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both
small and great.] And he will not forget those pious
proselytes that are come to worship him there, as the
only God, but, without any respect of persons, give
them his blessing also; which shall not be denied,
either to old or young, to rich or poor.

Ver. 14. The Lord shall increase you more and more,
you and your children.] Nor will he grant you only a
single blessing, by sending a present deliverance, but
heap his benefits, and multiply his mercies upon you,
and upon all those that shall succeed you.

Ver. 15. Ye are blessed of the Lord, which made
heaven and earth.] Ye are a happy people, who live
under the care, and love, and benediction, of that
mighty Lord, whose power nothing can confine; for
he is not made, (like the Gentile gods), but himself
created both the heaven and the earth.

Ver. 16. The heaven, even the heavens, are the
Lord's; but the earth hath been given to the children of
men.] In which he cannot be comprehended neither,
for in the empire extends farther than you can see; to
the heavens, which are above these visible heavens;
from whence his providence reaches down, even to
us the children of men, whom he hath placed upon
this earth, to admire and praise his infinite majesty.

Ver. 17. The dead praise not the Lord, neither any
that go down into silence.] And therefore will not suf-
fer us to be rooted out, as our enemies design, (2
Chron. xx. 11.), for then the earth would have none
in it to sing his praises, which the dead, who dwell
in the silent grave, cannot celebrate.

Ver. 18. But we will bless the Lord, from this time
forth and for evermore. Praise the Lord.] But will
continue us still alive, that we may praise the Lord,
and speak good of his name, as we do at this time,
(2 Chron. xx. 21. 22.), and leave those to succeed
us, who shall continue his praises in all future gene-
rations to the world's end. Hallelujah, praise the
Lord.

PSALM CXVI.

THE ARGUMENT.—I do not understand the reason
why Theodoret applies this psalm to the times of
Antiochus Epiphanes, when it agrees so exactly
to the condition of David in his flight from his
son Absalom, (which seems to be mentioned ver.
ix.), when Ahithophel and others proved very
false unto him, and he had little or nothing to de-
pend upon but the goodness of the Almighty, who
was pleased to plead his cause, and deliver him.
For which he resolved to be very thankful, and to
call all his friends to rejoice with him, as I have
expressed it, ver. 13. where the first words suffi-
ciently declare the sense; but I have added more to ex-
plain the phrase, which is borrowed from the cus-
tom of those days; about which the reader may
consult Mr Mede, p. 433. last edition. In this
resolution he was so serious, that he repeats it in the
conclusion, and saith he will pay his vows in the
midst of Jerusalem; from whence, the history tells
us, he was forced to fly in great haste, to save his
life, (2 Sam. xv. 14.)

This seems to be the occasion of the psalm, which
may very well befit any other persons that receive
any great deliverance from God; and accordingly
I will order the paraphrase, and fit it for the ex-
pressing of their devout affections.

Ver. 1. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my
voice, and my supplication.] O how I love
the Lord! He knows that I love him exceedingly;
and there is the greatest reason for it, because he hath
so graciously heard my prayer, when in my distress
I cried unto him.

Ver. 2. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,
therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.] I cannot
choose but mention again this love of his, in grant-
ing so readily my desires; which encourages and
engages me, on all such occasions, to address myself,
with thankful acknowledgements, unto him, and to
the last breath of my life, to expect deliverance from
him.

Ver. 3. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the
pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and
sorrow.] Great was my misery, exceeding great;
death itself and the grave were ready to seize on me,
and I saw no way to escape; nay, I myself, in the
anguish of my soul, inconsiderately cast myself into
danger.

Ver. 4. Then called I upon the name of the Lord:
O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.] Yet I did
not despise in these straits, but made the mighty,
wise, and good providence of God my refuge; to
whom I cried, saying, O Lord, who wast before all things, and commandest them as thou pleasest; rescue me, I most humbly beseech thee, from those dangers which threaten my destruction.

Ver. 5. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous: yea, our God is merciful.] And it was not in vain that I cried unto him, for the Lord hath shewn me how ready he is to do good, and how faithful in his promises; and withal how gentle in his punishments, and inclinable to pardon our faults, which demonstrates that no people serve such a gracious Master as our merciful God.

Ver. 6. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.] I had perished, I am sure, if I had relied only on my own wisdom, or the skill and policy of others: but the Lord was my hope, who preserves the most simple and incautious souls, when they commit themselves to him, and wholly depend on his providence. I ought to say so, who was reduced to a most forlorn estate, and then, by his assistance, in a wonderful manner delivered.

Ver. 7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.] What hast thou then to do, O my soul, who hast been tempestuously tossed, but to settle thyself again in peace, and tranquillity? loving and praising the Lord, who hath very many ways expressed his bounty most liberally to thee.

Ver. 8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.] For when the dangers of death surrounded me, thou, O my God, didst deliver me; whenever any sadness seized on me, thou hast been my comforter; and when I have been in danger of hurts, maines, or bruises, (of falling into the hands of my enemies), thou hast still been my protector.

Ver. 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.] I ought therefore, and I am resolved, to employ all that health and cheerfulness, that soundness of body and mind, that peace and safety, which thou hast thus graciously bestowed on me, in doing thee (to whom as my sovereign Lord I owe) all faithful service, as long as I stay in this world.

Ver. 10. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted.] I had nothing, I will thankfully remember, to depend on, but only thy kind providence; in this I placed my trust, in this I gloried to others, when I was in my greatest straits; for the truth is, I was extremely miserable.

Ver. 11. I said in my haste, All men are liars.] Pressed on all sides with dangers; from which, when I find as fast as I was able, (2 Sam. xv. 14. xvii. 16. —22.), I concluded it was vain to rely on the friendship and help of men; for they in whom I trusted proved so false and treacherous, (2 Sam. xv. 31.), that I had reason to think the rest would deceive and fail my expectation, when I was in the greatest need of them.

Ver. 12. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?] O the greatness of thy love, who even then didst interpose and deliver me, by the assistance of some faithful friends, who still stuck to me! (2 Sam. xvii. 13. &c.) What shall I render unto the Lord, who heard my prayer! (2 Sam. xv. 31.); how shall I shew myself grateful to him for this, and for all other his benefits, which he hath heaped upon me!

Ver. 13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.] All that I can do cannot make him more happy; but, as my duty binds me, I will praise the Lord, and speak good of his name, and give him thanks, in the best and most solemn manner I am able: I will call all my friends together to rejoice with me, and taking the cup, which we call the cup of deliverance, (because, when blessed and set apart, we are wont to commemorate the blessings we have received), I will magnify the power, goodness, and faithfulness of God my Saviour before all the company; and will drink myself, and then give it to them, that they may praise his name together with me.

Ver. 14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.] And whatsoever I have promised thee, O Lord, in the time of my distress, I will faithfully engage myself to perform before them all: they shall see I am not forgetful of thee, who wast so mindful of me in my trouble;

Ver. 15. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.] As indeed thou art of all good men, whose lives thou preservest as a precious jewel; and wilt not give them up to the pleasure of their enemies, nor suffer them to be lost, but by thy special providence.

Ver. 16. O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.] Accept, good Lord, of these my resolutions; for I am sensible that I am thy servant; every way thy servant, and entirely obliged to be faithful to thee; both by my birth, and by my education, and by this marvellous deliverance, whereby thou hast rescued me from the power of death, which had in a manner taken hold of me.

Ver. 17. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.] I can never sure prove ungrateful to thee, unto whom I am tied by so many bonds, but will always be making thee my most thankful, solemn acknowledgments for the benefits I have received; and, together with those praises and thanksgivings, wait upon thy goodness for the like mercies in time to come.

Ver. 18. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.] I resolve again, religiously to make good these, and all my other vows wherein I stand engaged to the Lord; and that not only in private, but here at this solemnity, in the face of all his people;

Ver. 19. In the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.] When they are gathered together at his house, in the midst of the holy city of our God, where they meet to worship him, and to do him honour. There let them all join with me, to bless and praise the great Creator and Preserver of all things.
PSALM CXVII.

PSALM CXVII.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm (like the 110th) seems to be altogether prophetic of the joy that all the world should conceive, at the coming of the Messiah; to give salvation, first to the Jews, and then to all other nations, according to his faithful promise. Saint Paul applies the first words of it to this business, Rom. xvi. 11, and some of the Hebrews justify his application; confessing that this psalm belongs to that matter. The brevity of it makes it the more remarkable, and easier to be remembered both by Jews and Gentiles.

Ver. 1. O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people.] Let not the praises, which are due to the great Lord of all, be confined to our nation; but let all people upon the face of the earth praise him; let all mankind sing thankful hymns unto him.

Ver. 2. For his merciful kindness is great towards us; and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.] For they are all concerned in his transcendent kindness, which hath done mighty things for us; and the Lord, who changes not, will never fail to perform his faithful promises to the world's end. Therefore let us all join our praises to our common benefactor.

PSALM CXVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.—There is nothing more probable than that David composed this psalm, after God had settled him upon the throne of Israel as well as Judah; and also subdued the Philistines, (who hoped to have crushed him before he grew too powerful, 2 Sam. v. 17.), together with other enemies round about him, who, though they are not mentioned, yet in all likelihood joined with them, as we may gather from ver. 10. 11. of this psalm, compared with 2 Sam. vii. 1. For that it was written after he had brought the ark to Jerusalem, (mentioned there, chap. vi.), and placed it in the house he had prepared for it, seems very plain from ver. 19. of this psalm; where he begins to praise God in such words, as had not their complete fulfilling till the Lord's Christ (whom the Jews rejected, and said, He shall not reign over us) was made King of the world. For to him R. Solomon himself acknowledges those words, "The stone which the builders refused," &c. are to be applied. And as the latter part of the psalm is a prophecy of Christ, in David his type, so the former part may be accommodated to all Christians; who being persecuted, (as Thoedoret speaks), and tormented, and disgracefully treated, by many princes and their people, by kings and governors, got a glorious victory over them all, after they had endured a thousand deaths.

It seems also to have been pronounced, at first, in some solemn assembly of all the people, met together to praise the Lord for his benefits. And it is the common opinion of most interpreters, that they all had a part in this psalm. The greatest part of which was spoken by David; who begins with a declaration how much he was indebted to God, desiring all to assist him in his praises: And then coming in a solemn procession, I suppose, to the gates of the tabernacle, calls upon the porters, ver. 19. to open them to him, that he might praise God in his sanctuary; which he doth in the very entrance, ver. 20. and then in the courts of his house, ver. 21. After which all the people shout, and magnify the divine goodness, in making him, who was banished from his country, their king, ver. 21. &c. And then the priests come forth, and bless both the king and people in the name of the Lord, ver. 26. and exhort them to be thankful, ver. 27. And then David seems to take the words out of their mouths, and to declare that he will never be unmindful of God's benefits; desiring all the people also to remember them, ver. 28. 29. According to which account of the psalm I have ordered the paraphrase.

Ver. 1. O GIVE thanks to the LORD, for he is good; because his mercy endureth for ever.] O make your thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of all the world; who, as he is the author of all good, and hath been exceeding bountiful unto us, so will continue his kindness to all succeeding generations.

Ver. 2. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.] Let the children of Israel, who have had such long experience of his love, and now see his promises fulfilled; let them confess and thankfully acknowledge, that his kindness continues to all generations.

Ver. 3. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.] Let the priests and the Levites, whose business it is to attend upon his service, confess now, and thankfully acknowledge, that his kindness extends unto all ages.

Ver. 4. Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy endureth for ever.] And let all the devout worshippers of the Lord, of whatsoever nation they be, join together with us, (for there is one Lord of all, who dispenses various benefits to every one of us), and confess now most thankfully, that there is no end of his kindness.

Ver. 5. I called upon the LORD in distress; the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.] You may see an example of it in me, who was in grievous straits and dangers, (1 Sam. xxiii. 16. xxvii. 1.) but then imploring the divine protection, the Lord not only delivered me, but placed me in a secure estate, free from all such molestation, 2 Sam. v. 3. vii. 1.

Ver. 6. The LORD is on my side, I will not fear; what can man do unto me?] For the Lord, it is evident, takes my part; and therefore, though I have many enemies, I am not afraid of them; for when he is for me, what disturbance can then, be they never so powerful, give me?

Ver. 7. The LORD taketh my part with them that
help me; therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.] It is sufficient that the Lord, who hath done great things for me by weak instruments, is still aiding to me; therefore I dare look the most malicious enemies in the face, and doubt not to see them turn their backs upon me. (2 Sam. viii.)

Ver. 8. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man.] This is my hope; and long experience hath taught me, that it is much safer to rely upon him, than upon the numerous armies.

Ver. 9. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes.] Far more safe, to depend upon his help and protection, (who, as he can do what he pleaseth, and is constant to his word, so never dies,) than to confide in the aid of the greatest princes; whose mind may change, or their forces fail, or they themselves on a sudden leave the world.

Ver. 10. All nations compassed me about; but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.] All the neighboring nations round about, (1 Sam. v. 17. &c. vii. 1,) combined with the Philistines to envious me; but by the almighty power of the Lord, I was confident that I should hew them in pieces.

Ver. 11. They compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about; but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.] Again they made a new invasion, and beset me with stronger forces, (2 Sam. v. 22,) &c.; but still, by the almighty power of the Lord, I doubted not that I should cut them off, and utterly defeat them.

Ver. 12. They compassed me about like bees, they were quenched as the fire of thorns; for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.] Though they were exceeding numerous, swarming about me like angry bees, and flaming with such rage and fury as if they would presently consume me; yet it was but like the blaze of fire among thorns, for by the almighty power of the Lord, I was confident I should destroy them.

Ver. 13. Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord helped me.] They pressured me exceeding hard, and, as one man, conspired with all their might to throw me down from the throne, to which I was advanced; but though they shook it, and it was ready to fall, yet, by the help of the Lord, it was supported.

Ver. 14. The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation.] To him alone I ascribe my present happiness, saying, with our forefathers in their triumphant song, (Exod. xiv. 2,) the Lord hath armed me with invincible strength; he, and he alone, is to be praised, who hath given me a most glorious deliverance.

Ver. 15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.] Which comforts the hearts of all righteous men, whose houses sound with such joyful shouts of praise for my deliverance, as these: The mighty power of the Lord hath done most stupendous things.

Ver. 16. The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.] He hath made his mighty power to appear to be superior to all other; for not by man, but by that power, we have again and again obtained illustrious victories over our enemies, (2 Sam. xix. 9.)

Ver. 17. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.] From whence I conclude, that I shall not fall into the hands of those that would take away my life; but still prolong it, to declare what wonderful works the Lord hath done for me.

Ver. 18. The Lord hath crosseted me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death.] Who hath let my enemies have power to afflict me very sorely, but not to proceed so far as to destroy me.

Ver. 19. Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go in, and I will praise the Lord.] No, instead of that, he hath brought me to his own house again, from which I was banished, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19,) where I will return thanks unto him; and therefore, O ye that minister in the tabernacle, open the gates at which the righteous enter into the courts of the Lord, that I may go in, and make him my acknowledgements, for bringing me from a most forlorn condition to a throne.

Ver. 20. This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.] This is the gate (which I behold and approach with joy) that leads to the courts of the Lord, at which the righteous shall enter together with me, and hear me say,

Ver. 21. I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.] I will never cease to praise and acknowledge thy goodness, O Lord, who hast graciously heard my prayer, when I implored thy help, and delivered me out of all my distresses.

Ver. 22. The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner.] And let them bear a part with me in this my song of praise, saying, He whom the great men and rulers of the people rejected, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19,) as the builders of a house do a stone unfit to be employed in it, is now become our king, to whom we must all join ourselves, if we hope for safety: In whom we see a figure of that glorious King, who shall be in like manner refused, (Luke, xix. 14. xx. 17,) and then by God exalted to be the Lord of all the world, and the foundation of all men's happiness, (Acts, iv. 11. 12.)

Ver. 23. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.] This is the sole work of the Lord, (not the effect of human counsels, who opposed and obstructed it,) which surprises us with the greatest admiration, to see a despised person become on a sudden so renowned.

Ver. 24. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.] This is the happy day which the Lord himself hath made illustrious by his marvellous work, and which it becomes us to celebrate with joyful hearts, and with all outward expressions of gladness for so great a benefit.

Ver. 25. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.] Most humbly beseeching thee, O Lord, to preserve our king, and to perpetuate his kingdom, (especially the kingdom of Christ,) which shall be welcomed into the
world with these words, Matth. xxi. 9. &c.) it begins most gloriously; be pleased now, O Lord, to give it answerable success and prosperity.

Ver. 26. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.] Which acclamations of the people, let the priests of the Lord meet with their approbation, saying, Blessed be the king which is set over us by the divine appointment, and blessed be all the people who live under his happy government; we, whose office it is to minister to the Lord, give you his blessing from the holy place, into which you are come to worship him;

Ver. 27. God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.] Who is the omnipotent Lord, most faithful to his promise, who hath put an end to our troubles, and made peace amongst us. O be not ungrateful to him, but solemnize this day with festival joys; bind your sacrifices with cords, and bring them to the corners of the altar, to be offered as testimonies of your love and thankfulness unto him.

Ver. 28. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, I will exalt thee.] And so for my part I am resolved, who must own thee to be my most gracious God and almighty deliverer, to whom therefore I will make continually my most thankful acknowledgements; to thy almighty goodness alone I owe this greatness to which I am promoted, and therefore I will never cease to speak the highest things I am able in thy praise.

Ver. 29. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.] And let all good men rejoice together with me, and make their thankful acknowledgements to the great Lord of the world, who, as he is the author of all good, hath been exceeding bountiful unto us, so will continue his kindness unto all succeeding generations.

Psalm CXIX.

The Argument.—This psalm is contrived so artificially, that one would think, at first sight, it was made after the foregoing, when God had subdued the rest of David’s enemies, (2 Sam. viii. 10.) and given him leisure for such curious compositions. For it is divided into as many parts as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet, each part containing eight verses, and every one of those verses beginning with that letter wherewith that part begins. The verses, for instance, of the first part, all begin with Alpha, or A, and all of the second with Beta, or B, &c. And thence this psalm is called the Masora, the great Alphabet, which is an indication that David was now in a very sedate condition, under no extraordinary motions, when he penned this psalm, but quietly considered things, as they were represented to his remembrance.

But when we observe how frequently he mentions his affection, as lying actually upon him, now when he wrote these meditations, it forces us to conclude that it was penned during Saul’s persecution; in which there were, I suppose, some quiet intervals, (see ver. 54.), either between the time that Saul (having his life given him by David) resolved to persecute him no more, 1 Sam. xxiv. and his renewed attempts to destroy him, upon the information the Ziphites again gave him, 1 Sam. xxvi. or after David’s fresh demonstration of his loyalty to him, before he went to Gath; or while he was in that city, where he had liberty to meditate on the excellence of God’s laws, and the happiness of those that kept them, and the comfort they were to him in his affliction; which he found to be so sweet and so great, that he begs of God little else, but that he might be more and more in love with them; which were already so much his delight, that he mentions them under one name or other in every verse of this psalm, none excepted but one, ver. 122. or two at the most, ver. 90. where he celebrates God’s faithfulness, which relates to the stedfastness of his promise, (called in this psalm his word), it may well be thought to be no exception to that observation.

I shall not be so curious as to examine the nice difference which is made by some, between laws, statutes, testimonies, judgments, precepts, &c. because they seem here to be used promiscuously; or if there be any peculiar meaning in some verses, I shall endeavour to express it plainly in the paraphrase.

Theodoret hath a conjecture concerning David’s design in this psalm, (both in his preface to it, and upon ver. 157. which I shall mention, that the reader may take his choice. David, it is well known, had great varieties in his condition; for he both fled from enemies, and chased them, lived sometimes very melancholy, and again most pleasantly; ran into God’s ways, and stumbled, and rose again to run that good course. Now, all these things, says he, (and it is not improbable), David afterward collected into this one “psalm, connecting all the prayers which he had made to God at several times, and on several occasions, and putting them together in this admirable meditation, divided into twenty-two parts, which propound one and the same most profitable lesson to all men, and teaches them how it is possible to live virtuously in the worst condition. Nor doth he neglect dogmatical instruction, as he speaks, but adds it to the other; so that this psalm is sufficient to perfect those that study exquisite virtue, and to stir up the diligence of those that are lazy, to comfort those that are sad, to correct the negligent; and, in one word, to afford all manner of medicines for the cure of the various diseases of mankind. And if it would not have made this book too big, I should have taken the pains to shew the design of every part in an argument before it.

Aleph, Part I.

Ver. 1. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.] Happy, more hap-
Ver. 11. Thy word have I bid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.] Next, I have laid up thy word in my heart, as the most precious treasure, hoping that it will be a security to me, and preserve me from offending thee, whose promises are no less comfortable than thy threatenings are dreadful.

Ver. 12. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.] And I know also, that thou, O Lord, art kind, and dost not envy thy favours to any of us, but wilt for ever be praised for thy bounty towards us; and therefore I expect that thou wilt hear my prayer, and enable me effectually to learn thy statutes.

Ver. 13. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.] On which I have so much set my heart, that I have not spared to declare to others the great regard I have to every thing which thou hast pronounced just, or condemned as unrighteous.

Ver. 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I can safely say likewise, that I have taken more satisfaction, now that I am poor, in doing that which thou hast testified to be acceptable to thee, than I should in all the wealth of the world, were it heaped on me.

Ver. 15. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.] I will ruminate also often on thy precepts, (which will be another means I trust to preserve me undefiled,) and never do any thing, but consider beforehand how it agrees with the rules which thou hast prescribed me.

Ver. 16. I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.] The study of thy statutes (see ver. 8.) shall be my delight; and I will not let slip any word of thine, but preserve it in faithful remembrance.

GIMEL. PART III.

Ver. 17. Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.] Let these reasons move thee to deal graciously with me, who am devoted to thy service: render to me according to my integrity, and let not my enemies take away my life, which I intend to employ in doing whatsoever thou hast commanded.

Ver. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.] For which end, I beseech thee to illuminate the eyes of my mind, that I may clearly discern the admirable wisdom which discovers itself in thy law.

Ver. 19. I am a stranger in the earth; bide not thy commandments from me.] I am no better than a stranger in the land, wandering from place to place, (1 Sam. xxvii. 33, 2 Sam. v. 4,) in an age that is prone to evil, be able to do as he resolves? keeping himself so pure in all his ways, that they maintain an exact conformity unto thy word.

Ver. 20. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.] For which my soul longs so vehemently, that I am not more broken
with the hardships of my banishment, than with my continual labour, and earnest application of my mind, to have a full understanding of thy judgements.

Ver. 21. Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments. According to which, thou hast already given a severe rebuke to those haughty men, who, without any respect to right or wrong, persecute and abuse thy servant, (2 Sam. xxiv. 21. &c. xxv. 10. 37.) and the curse which thou hast pronounced. (Deut. xxvii. 26.) shall light on all such men as take the boldness to transgress those bounds which thou hast set them.

Ver. 22. Remove from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept thy testimonies.] And thereby remove from me that disgrace and shame, unto which they expose me as a traitor to my king and country; for I am not guilty of any such wickedness, but carefully observe thy testimonies, ver. 14. (1 Chron. xii. 17.)

Ver. 23. Princes also did sit and speak against me; but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.] Though the rulers and principal senators of the kingdom sat in consultation how to ruin me, declaring me guilty of the greatest crimes, the only care of thy servant hath been to study how to behave himself unblemishly according to thy statutes.

Ver. 24. Thy testimonies also are my delight, and my counsellors.] Of which I have not been weary, but make the study of thy testimonies my recreation, and never took advice of any other counsellors.

DALETH. PART IV.

Ver. 25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken me according to thy word.] Consider, therefore, the forewarn condition wherein I lie; struggling for life, and utterly unable to help myself; and be pleased to revive and raise me out of it, according to thy promise, (1 Sam. xvi. 12.)

Ver. 26. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me! teach me thy statutes.] Thou knowest both my manner of life, and all the dangers to which I am exposed; for I have ever laid them before thee, and found thee ready on all occasions to assist and relieve me; and therefore I hope thou wilt not leave me, but more perfectly instruct me in my duty, as the surest way to safety.

Ver. 27. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts, that I may be called by thy name, and not put to shame.] Give me such a right understanding, that I may ever be preserved in the way of thy precepts; then shall I escape the snares of my enemies, and my ordinary discourse shall be, what wonderful deliverances thou hast given me.

Ver. 28. My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen thou me according unto thy word.] Pity my sad condition; and now that my heart sinketh under the weight of my affliction, support and strengthen me according to thy promise; that I may never take any undue course for ease and relief.

Ver. 29. Remove me from the way of lying; and grant me thy law graciously.] For be all fraud and falsehood from me, whereby my enemies contrive to undo me; I desire not to learn any of their wicked arts, but only beseech thee to give me grace to observe thy laws constantly.

Ver. 30. I have chosen the way of truth; thy judgements have I laid before me.] That is the way I have resolved upon, to deal truly and sincerely; squaring all my actions according to thy judgements, which I have laid before me as the most equal rule of my life.

Ver. 31. I have stuck unto thy testimonies; O Lord, put me not to shame.] And hitherto I have kept my resolution, and never started from thy testimonies; preserve me, good Lord, that I may not hereafter disgrace myself, by doing any thing contrary to them; nor be disappointed of my hope; by falling into the hands of those that seek my ruin.

Ver. 32. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.] And when thou shalt have filled my heart with joy, by freeing me from those grievous straits, I will do thee better service, and be more forward cheerfully to execute all thy commandments.

HE: PART V.

Ver. 33. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.] Instruct me, therefore, good Lord, more and more in the right way of serving thee; and I will shew myself most thankful for it, by keeping it to all the days of my life.

Ver. 34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.] Illuminate my mind to understand the excellence of thy law; and then I shall not only observe it, but set my heart to do it with a watchful, impartial, and most affectionate diligence.

Ver. 35. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.] Be thou my leader and guide, that I may not stray from the path of thy commandments, wherein I find the greatest satisfaction.

Ver. 36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.] Incline my heart always to seek its contentment in thy testimonies; and suffer it not to be drawn away by the desire of worldly goods, which, having no measure, is never satisfied.

Ver. 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.] Help me to overlook those empty honours and fading beauties which we are apt to behold with too much admiration, and with lively affections and vigorous endeavours, to persist in the pursuit of thy favours, in the way thou hast set before me.

Ver. 38. Establish thy word unto thy servant, whom I am resolved to thy fear.] And at last make good thy promise to thy servant, (2 Sam. v. 2.) who feasts to do any thing to offend thee, though thereby he might win a crown.

Ver. 39. Turn away my reproach which I fear; for thy judgements are good.] Turn from me that disgrace, of which I cannot but be sometimes afraid;
(1 Sam. xxvii. 1.), and must certainly suffer, if I fall into my enemies' hands, for thou wilt proceed, I know, according to thy own judgements, which are all equitable, merciful, and gracious.

Ver. 40. Be bold, I have longed after thy precepts; quicken me in thy righteousness.] I appeal to thee, whether I have not a great zeal for thy precepts, unto which I desire above all things to be conformed: let me not perish, therefore, in these troubles, but in much mercy revive me, according to thy faithful promise.

VAU. Part VI.

Ver. 41. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD; even thy salvation, according to thy word.] To those infinite mercies of thine, which moved thee to make me such gracious promises, I betake myself, and beseech thee to let me feel the happy effects of both in my deliverance.

Ver. 42. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me; for I trust in thy word.] So shall I be able to put to silence those that reproach me for my confidence in thee; which they call a vain presumption, but is an humble reliance on thy own gracious promises to me.

Ver. 43. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgements.] Which till thou art pleased to fulfill, do not so far abandon me, as to let me be disheartened in asserting their truth and faithfulness, (which I am wont to oppose to all the threats of my enemies;) for my whole dependence is on this, that thou wilt not fail me, but pronounce a righteous sentence for me.

Ver. 44. So shall I keep thy law continually, for ever and ever.] And for my part, promise, when thou shalt be so gracious to me, not to suffer myself to grow more negligent in thy service; but to be more careful than ever in the observance of thy laws, to the very end of my days.

Ver. 45. And I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts.] For then I shall have no such encumbrances on me, as I now have in these straits and difficulties; from which when thou freest me, I will do my duty with the greater cheerfulness and joy; for it is not liberty, no, nor a kingdom that I seek, so much as better advantages to fulfill thy precepts.

Ver. 46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.] Which I will not be ashamed to justify before the greatest persons in the world, to be the most excellent rule of life, and the best testimony of thy love to us; and will do it with such reasons, that they shall never be able to disprove me.

Ver. 47. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.] Nor will I confute myself, by leading a voluptuous life, when I have liberty to do as I list; but as I have hitherto preferred thy commandments before all other things, so then will I take the highest pleasure in them;

Ver. 48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.] Not only in their study, but shew the truth of my love to them, by a diligent and zealous practice of them, which shall be the end of my meditation in them.

ZAIN. Part VII.

Ver. 49. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to be lifted.] Be pleased, therefore, in due time, to perform the promise which thou hast long ago made unto thy servant, (1 Sam. vii. 2.), and when I thought of no such thing, given me an assured hope of it; (1 Sam. xvi. 11, 12, 13.)

Ver. 50. This is my comfort in my afflictions, for thy word hath quickened me.] Which as it hath been the occasion of many and great troubles to me, so hath comforted me under them all; and, even when I despised of safety, revived my spirit, and restored my courage to life again.

Ver. 51. The proud have bad me greatly in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law.] Though my insulting enemies mocked exceedingly at my hope, and, in the pride of their hearts, attempted by the most unjust means to destroy me, it never moved me to imitate them; by taking any unlawful method for my preservation.

Ver. 52. I remembered thy judgements of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.] But I called to mind, O Lord, how, in all foregoing ages, thou hast suffered good men to fall into great calamities, thereby to render them, at last, the more illustrious; and with this consideration also I comforted myself.

Ver. 53. Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.] I have been seized, indeed, sometimes with an horrible fear, when I thought what sort of men were my persecutors, who stuck at nothing which would serve their ends, having no regard to right or wrong.

Ver. 54. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.] Yet in all my wanderings up and down, (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 2. 5. xxiii. 13.), I never tarried long in any place; but I passed the time delightfully, in composing some such song as this in praise of thy statutes.

Ver. 55. I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.] When others were asleep, I was calling to mind how good, how powerful, and how faithful thou art; and resolving with myself still to observe thy laws;

Ver. 56. This I bad, because I kept thy precepts.] Which make those so happy, that obey them, that I ascribe this sweet composition of mind, and cheerfulness of spirit, under all my grievous afflictions, to my strict observance of them.

CHETH. Part VIII.

Ver. 57. Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.] I have no possessions in this world, (1 Sam. xvi. 19.), which I see others greedily sharing among them; but I do not think myself poor, as long as I have an interest in thy
love, and in thy promises, O Lord, whose word I have resolved to keep as the greatest treasure.

Ver. 58. I intreated thy favour with my whole heart; be merciful unto me, according to thy word.] For there is nothing comparable to thy favour, which I have besought with the heartiest affection, and do again beseech thee to deal mercifully with me, according to thy repeated promises unto me.

Ver. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.] For upon serious deliberation what course of life it was best to take, I rejected all other, which with specious shews of worldly advantages would have seduced me, and determined to be guided wholly by thy testimonies.

Ver. 60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.] And being thus resolved, I admitted no further debate about it; but instantly, without any delay, set myself to the strict observance of thy commandments.

Ver. 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me; but I have not forgotten thy law.] Nor hath any thing been able to remove me from this resolution; but, though I have been beset with troops of wicked men, who stripped me of all I had, (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.), it did not make me forget my duty, nor put me upon any unlawful means of being revenged of them, (1 Sam. xxiv. 6. 7.)

Ver. 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.] But have blessed thee, both night and day, and arose at midnight to give thee thanks, for those just and good laws, which thou hast taught me to observe.

Ver. 63. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.] Associating myself willingly with none but such as fear to offend thee, and do religiously observe thy precepts; who are all truly dear unto me.

Ver. 64. The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy; teach me thy statutes.] And no other thing do I desire of thee, O Lord, whose kindness is so great that it dispenses its blessings plentifully throughout all the earth, but that thou wilt instruct me still to serve thee as I ought.

TETH. PART IX.

Ver. 65. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word.] Many other benefits, I will thankfully acknowledge, O Lord, thou hast bestowed upon thy servant, with whom thou hast faithfully kept thy word.

Ver. 66. Teach me good judgement and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments.] And I am not ignorant of thy commandments, which, by thy grace, I have believed to be the only way to happiness. But still I need thy farther assistance, to give me a delightful taste and thorough sense of what I know; which, I beseech thee, add to the rest of the benefits I have received from thee.

Ver. 67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.] And if it be necessary for this end, to deprive me still of all other delights, I submit unto it; for I must confess I committed many errors before I was thus afflicted, which since I have corrected, and grown more strictly observant of thy word.

Ver. 68. Thou art good, and dost good; teach me thy statutes.] Thou art in thy own nature kind and good; and nothing else can proceed from thee, who designest our good even when thou afflictest us: take what methods thou pleasest with me, only teach me effectually to do as thou wouldest have me.

Ver. 69. The proud have forged a lie against me; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.] They that disdain to be tied to the common and plain rules of honesty, have taken a great deal of pains to invent a lie against me, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.); but as I am hitherto conscious of no such guilt, so I will always confute them by an impartial and most hearty observance of thy precepts;

Ver. 70. Their heart is as fat as great, but I delight in thy law.] Which gives me infinitely greater satisfaction in a poor starved condition, than all the dull delights of sense which they enjoy, in the fullest plenty of worldly prosperity.

Ver. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.] This they-superstitiously imagine is the only happiness; but I can truly say, it was more happy for me that I was afflicted, for thereby I learnt to apply myself more seriously to thy statutes.

Ver. 72. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.] Whereby thy will is declared unto us by a voice from heaven, (Exod. xx. 1.), which I prefer before all the gold and silver in the kingdom.

JOD. PART X.

Ver. 73. Thy bands have made me, and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.] Desert me not, then, who am thine own workmanship, that neither hath nor hopeth for any thing but from thy almighty power, and desires above all things to comprehend fully what thy will is, that he may obey it.

Ver. 74. Thy word will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.] It will be a very great comfort and encouragement to all good men, when they see me delivered out of all these troubles; for thereby they will be confirmed in their belief of thy faithfulness to thy promises, on which it will appear, I have not vainly depended, though I stay long for the performance.

Ver. 75. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.] And I am satisfied, O Lord, that while thou makest me wait for the performance, thou dost nothing contrary to thy justice, or to thy fidelity; but that all these cross dispensations of thy providence, in the heavy afflictions which have befallen me, are perfectly righteous, and will only make thy truth and faithfulness at last the more illustrous.
Ver. 76. Let, thy merciful kindness, be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. O hasten that happy time, when I shall see thy loving-kindness turning this disconsolate into a more comfortable condition; according to the promises which thou hast made unto thy servant. (1 Sam. xvi. 12).

Ver. 77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live; for thy law is my delight. Let me feel the speedy effects of thy compassionate mercy; rescuing me from those that seek my life, and raising me out of this forlorn estate. (1 Sam. xxiv. 14). For however I am represented, my highest satisfaction is in obedience to thy law.

Ver. 78. Let the proud be ashamed, for they deal perversely with me without a cause; but I will meditate in thy precepts. Confound all those proud contemners of it, who, making no conscience of what they say, have oppressed and overthrown me with lies and calumnies; as if I studied to disturb the kingdom, when my only study is to observe thy precepts.

Ver. 79. Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies. Let all pious men, who have a due regard to thy testimonies, be convinced of this, and be no longer abused by these slanderers, but turn to my side, and become my friends.

Ver. 80. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed. And in order to it, preserve me so blameless before thee, in such integrity of heart as well as life, that I may not be ashamed of the hope I have, that thou and all good men will take my part.

C A P H. Part XI.

Ver. 81. My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope in thy word. For which blessing I have now attended so many years, that I am ready sometimes to faint away with vehement desire to see the long-expected promise fulfilled, of deliverance from all my enemies.

Ver. 82. Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? That joyful sight I have looked for, till I am in danger to be weary with expectation, saying, When will the time come of my deliverance from this disconsolate condition?

Ver. 83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget thy statutes. I hope it will not be long delayed; for I am worn away, and my skin (like an empty leathern bag that hath been a great while in the smoke) is shrivelled up with toil and grief; and yet I have never taken any unlawful course to rid myself of all this misery.

Ver. 84. How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? I leave that to thee, O Lord; beseeching thee to consider how my days spend apace in trouble and sorrow; which force me to sigh, and say, How long must thy poor servant still lie in this calamitous condition? O when wilt thou do me right against my persecutors?

Ver. 85. The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law. Who proudly contrive by all manner of frauds and treacheries to take away my life, directly contrary to thy law, to which they are as injurious as unto me.

Ver. 86. All thy commandments are faithful; they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me. For all thy commandments teach us to be just and true, being as faithful as those men are false and perfidious; therefore make good thy promises to me, and deliver me from those who persecute me with lies and sorceries.

Ver. 87. Thy word was almost consumed in my mouth; but I sought not thy precepts. Which they have employed so successfully, that I escaped very hardly with my life, when I was in the land of Judah, (1 Sam. xxviii. 26); yet for all this, I stuck to thy precepts, and would not take away the life of him that sought mine, when I could have easily done it. (1 Sam. xxiv. 9-10).

Ver. 88. Keep me after thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth. Deal as kindly with me, O Lord, and not only spare my life, but take me out of this forlorn estate, wherein I lie like a man that is dead. (1 Sam. xxiv. 14); and I will endeavour the more carefully to observe the testimonies which thou hast solemnly given us in charge.

L A M E D. Part XII.

Ver. 89. For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thou art eternal, O Lord, and changest not; and thy promises are like thyself, fixed and settled in the heavens, which are a lively emblem of their constancy and invariable truth.

Ver. 90. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. One generation goes, and another comes, but thy fidelity is still the same to all, and alters no more than the earth, which thou hast firmly and immovably established, while all those creatures, that live upon it, pass away and perish.

Ver. 91. They continue this day according to those ordinances; for all thy servants. All things remain to this day in the order at first appointed, and never vary from the laws which thou hast set them; for they are entirely subject to thy will and pleasure.

Ver. 92. Unless thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction. Which was a most comfortable meditation in my afflicted condition, when my heart would have failed me, and I should have been undone, if thy laws (which stand as fast as heaven and earth) had not given me constant consolation.

Ver. 93. I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me. I will never, therefore, be guilty of neglecting thy precepts, which have revived me, (by thy faithful promises thou hast annexed to the observance of them), when I looked upon myself as a dead man, that could not escape the hands of those that sought to destroy me.

Ver. 94. I am shine; save me, for I have sought thy precepts. And be thou pleased still to deliver me.
from falling into their hands; for though they have
driven me from thy inheritance, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.),
I still continue thine, and serve no other god; but
having diligently inquired, in my greatest dangers,
what would be most pleasing to thee, as most advan-
tageous to myself.

Ver. 95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy
me; but I will consider thy testimonies.] Those wick-
ed men who are combined to destroy me, have long
watched for an opportunity, which they confidently
expect to meet withal; but it doth not discourage my
study of thy testimonies, as the best defence against
their bloody attempts.

Ver. 96. I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy
commandment is exceeding broad.] For had I greater
forces than my enemies, alas! I never yet saw any
thing so complete, but as it had its bounds and limits,
so it is exceeding frail; and when it is arrived at per-
fection, comes to a speedy end; whereas, the wisdom
which thou hast revealed to us hath infinite satisfac-
tion in it, durable and lasting satisfaction, which never
fails those that depend upon it.

MEM. PART XIII.

Ver. 97. Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation
all the day.] It is impossible to express the love I
have to thy law; which entertains my meditation,
and enables me to entertain others, with admirable variety,
whole days together.

Ver. 98. How through thy commandments hast made
me sweeter than mine enemies; for they are ever with me.] Mine enemies are very crafty, and use many artifices
to destroy me; but by observing thy commandments,
I have defeated all their subtle devices, and confounded
them, even by refusing (because thy commandments,
which are ever before my eyes, restrain me) to be a
venged on them. 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. 18. &c. xxvi. 21.

Ver. 99. I have more understanding than all my
masters; for thy testimonies are my meditation.] I have
outstripped all the doctors of the law, of whom I former-
ly learnt; and understand more perfectly than they,
the best means of securing myself; because my mind
is still employed in thy testimonies, as the rule of all
my designs and undertakings.

Ver. 100. I understand more than the ancients, because
I keep thy precepts.] Though I am but young, yet
I have more understanding in things, than the judges
and grave privy counsellors; because my maxim is,
strictly to observe thy precepts.

Ver. 101. I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
that I might keep thy word.] Whatsoever advantage it
promised me, I have never proceeded in any evil course
to obtain my end, but refused the seeming gain, that
I might not offend against thy word.

Ver. 102. I have not departed from thy judgments, for
they best taught me.] My respect to thee hath
hindered me from doing any injury unto others; be-
because I know thou art the author of those laws which
forbid it; and, in the observance of them, I have learnt,
icconsists my happiness.

Ver. 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste!

yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!] And a happe-
ness it is, I feel already, incomparably above all other
the pleasure I take in every word of thine is inex-
pressibly far to be preferred before all the delights of
sense, though never so sweet and luscious.

Ver. 104. Through thy precepts I get understanding;
therefore I hate every false way.] And by thy precepts
I am so fully instructed how to behave myself, that I
need not to betake myself to any dishonourable ways, which
I utterly abhor.

NUN. PART XIV.

Ver. 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a
light unto my path.] Thy word is my only guide;
whose directions I follow in all the dark and difficult
passages of my life.

Ver. 106. I have sworn, and will perform it, that I
will keep thy righteous judgments.] I have solemnly
resolved, and bound myself by the most sacred ties,
which I will never break, but do now confirm, that I
will carefully observe thy decrees, which I find to be
both just and good.

Ver. 107. I am afflicted very much; quicken me, O
Lord, according unto thy word.] I have suffered
very much upon that account, and am still sorely af-
flicted; but I comfort myself, O Lord, with thy pro-
mise, according to which I beseech thee to deliver me
from those that seek to destroy me, and raise me out
of this forlorn condition, wherein I can scarce be said
to live.

Ver. 108. Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offer-
ings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgements.] I
have no other sacrifices that I am able in this exile
to offer to thee, but these of prayer, and thankful ac-
knowledgments, and vows of sincere and chearful
obedience; with which I do most freely and heartily,
present thee, O Lord, beseeching thee to teach me
still more effectually thy judgements, that I may
never fail to be confirmed to thy will.

Ver. 109. My soul is continually in my hand; yet do
I not forget thy law.] To which I have hitherto so
closely adhered, that though I go in continual danger
of my life, (Judg. xii. 3,) it doth not move me in the
least (whatsoever shifts I am forced to make) to
save myself by forsaking thy law.

Ver. 110. The wicked have laid a snare for me; yet
I revered not from thy precepts.] They that make no
conscience of their actions, have contrived a subtle
plot to ruin me; but I have never stepped out of the
way of thy precepts, to avoid the snares they have
laid for me.

Ver. 111. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage
for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.] I had
rather alway continue as poor as I am, than do any
thing against thy testimonies, which I hold to be my
chiefest good, and surest possession; out of which none
can expel me, and which always yield me that
inward satisfaction and joy which none can take from
me.

Ver. 112. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy
statutes alway, even unto the end.] This infinitely out,
weighs all other considerations; and hath inclined my heart to resolve to do always as thou biddest me, (whatever I may lose by it), to the very end of my days.

SAMECH. PART XV.

Ver. 113. I hate vain thoughts; but thy law do I love.] I hate all double dealing, and crafty devices, that are not warranted by thy law, which I have resolved to stick with hearty affection.

Ver. 114. Thou art my hiding-place, and my shield; I hope in thy word.] In that way I will trust to thee for safety and protection; having a firm hope that thou wilt be as good unto me as thy word.

Ver. 115. Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of thy God.] Do not persuade me any longer, O ye evil doers, to join with you; but get you gone from me; for I will follow none of your counsels; but strictly observe the commandments of my God, who hath hitherto most graciously delivered me.

Ver. 116. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope.] And on whom I still depend, that thou wilt support me, O Lord, according to thy promise, against all the assaults of my enemies that seek my life; and not let me be ashamed of the hope and expectation I have, that thou wilt defend and deliver me.

Ver. 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.] Be thou my support in this weak condition, I humbly again beseech thee; and then they shall not be able to throw me down; but in safety and security, I shall make thy statutes my perpetual study.

Ver. 118. Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes; for their deceit is falsehood.] They shall fall to the ground, and not I; for thou art wont, I observe, to abase and lay as low as the mire in the streets, all those that presume to go out of the plain way of thy statutes; for all their crafty tricks and crooked arts, on which they rely, at last prove false unto them, and deceive them.

Ver. 119. Thou pourest away all the wickedness of the earth like dross; therefore I love thy testimonies.] Thou castest all such wicked men out of the land like dross, that is good for nothing, which makes me addict myself with the greater love unto thy testimonies.

Ver. 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.] Trembling all over with fear, lest I should, by any disobedience to thee, incur thy severe displeasure, and dreading above all things thy judgments, which are threatened in the law, and which I see executed upon the contemners of it.

AIN. PART XVI.

Ver. 121. I have done judgement and justice; leave me not to mine oppressors.] This pious fear laid such a restraint upon me, that I never did any wrong to them, nor so much as dealt hardly with them, that now injure me; therefore suffer me not to fall into the hands of those who oppress me with their calumnies.

Ver. 122. Be surety to thy servant for good; let not the proud oppress me.] Their pride is great, and having power equal to their malice, they hope to prevail over me; but do thou graciously undertake my protection, and be my security against the mischief they design me, that instead of being my ruin, their calumnies may turn to my greater good and advantage.

Ver. 123. Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.] I believe they will; but I have looked so long for that happy time, when thou wilt deliver me, (and yet am still in apparent danger to fall into the hand of my enemies), that I am almost tired with expectation of thy promise, though I know it is faithful and true, and shall certainly be performed.

Ver. 124. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.] Pity my infirmity, and in much mercy send speedy relief unto thy servant, and in the mean time instruct me more perfectly in thy statutes, that I may make the better use of that deliverance.

Ver. 125. I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.] I am devoted to thy service, and designed by thee to a high employment; enlighten my understanding, therefore, that I may fully know my duty.

Ver. 126. It is time for thee, LORD, to work; for they have made void thy law.] For now is the time to do all I can for the Lord, (who may be pleased then to take this opportunity to perform his promise), when wicked men not only transgress, but are so profane that they reject, and would wholly lay aside thy law.

Ver. 127. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.] This inflames my zeal, and heightens my love to thy commandments, which I value far more than all the riches in the world; which shall not tempt me to violate one of them, or suffer them, if I can help it, to be entertained by others.

Ver. 128. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.] For the more I consider them, the more I approve every one of them, (as the exactest and best rule whereby I square all my actions), and abhor all those base and dishonest ways whereby others study to advance themselves to riches and honours.

PE. PART XVII.

Ver. 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore doth my soul keep them.] I cannot sufficiently admire and extol the excellent wisdom also, of thy laws, whereby thou hast testified thy will unto us; which makes me the more careful faithfully to observe them.

Ver. 130. The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.] When a man doth but begin to be acquainted with thy word, he finds his mind marvellously enlightened with such clear and useful knowledge, as directs the most simple people how to live happy.
Ver. 131. I opened my mouth, and pantèd: for I longed for thy commandments.] Which hast excited me to the most eager pursuit of this most excellent wisdom; for I longed to have a perfect understanding of thy commandments, which at first sight afford such abundant satisfaction.

Ver. 132. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou used to do unto those that love thy name.] favour my desires, I most humbly beseech thee; and vouchsafe me the same grace, which thou art wont to bestow on those that sincerely love thee, and study, as I do, thy honour and glory.

Ver. 133. Order thy steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.] And, first of all, enable me to walk steadily, according to the rule of thy word, that I may not be a slave to any sin whatsoever.

Ver. 134. Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.] And then deliver me from the oppression of him (1 Sam. xxvi. 25.) who unjustly seeks to destroy me, that I may have the greater liberty to study and observe thy precepts.

Ver. 135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: and teach me thy statutes.] Put an end to the troubles of thy servant, who is devoted to thy obedience, and for this reason, above all others, desires to see better days, that he may have better opportunities to learn thy statutes.

Ver. 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.] Which it is a very great grief to me to behold so universally neglected, and hast cost me many a tear, when I consider, not merely the persecution I suffer, but how there-by my enemies violate thy law.

Ver. 137. Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgements.] I leave it to thee, O Lord, to redress these evils, who art both just and good, and governest all things with an unerring equity.

Ver. 138. Thy testimonies, that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful.] For as all the laws thou hast given us are perfectly righteous, so thou dost exactly and most faithfully fulfill all the promises or threatenings which thou hast made to the observers, or against the breakers of them.

Ver. 139. My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.] The consideration of which moves my indignation to such a degree, that I am tormented to see my enemies so forgetful of their own interest, as not to regard thy words.

Ver. 140. Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.] Which I know to be infallibly true, and perfectly free from all falsehood and deceit; which is the reason of that ardent affection thy servant hath unto them.

Ver. 141. I am small and despised: yet do I not forget thy precepts.] Which will not suffer me, though I am mean and contemptible in the eyes of my enemies, (who are honourable and mighty,) to be guilty of neglecting any of thy precepts.

Ver. 142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.] For still I think with myself, that thy justice, goodness, and fidelity are unchangeable, and whatsoever thou hast said in thy law is the very truth, upon which we may certainly depend, and never be deceived.

Ver. 143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.] And therefore, though I am unexpectedly (1 Sam. xx. 3.) involved in very sore straits and difficulties, yet I do not forsake, but find great consolation in the study of thy commandments.

Ver. 144. The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.] Especially in this consideration, (which comes often into my mind, ver. 142.), that all the declarations thou hast made of thy will to us, are so just and true, that they will never fail our expectation. O give me wisdom to order my life according to them; and then it shall not be in the power of my enemies to make me miserable.

KOPH. PART XIX.

Ver. 145. I cried with my whole heart; bear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.] I have besought thy favour in this sorrowful and distressed condition, with most vehement cries and hearty affection: be pleased to rescue me out of it, O Lord, and I promise with the greater care to observe thy statutes.

Ver. 146. I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.] I have made it my constant business to cry unto thee for help, from whom alone I seek it; deliver me, I again beseech thee, and I will not fail to make good my promise of observing thy testimonies.

Ver. 147. I presented the dawning of the morning, and cried; I hoped in thy word.] I have sent up early cries unto thee, before the morning-light appeared; constantly expecting the performance of thy promise to me.

Ver. 148. Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word.] Nor have I been less forward in the study of my duty, than in the implo ring of thy mercy, but have awakened before all the watches were set, to meditate in thy word.

Ver. 149. Hear my voice, according unto thy loving-kindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judg ment.] Let my prayer prevail with thee, O Lord, for that favour and kindness which I have oft experienced, and preserve my life, as thou hast done hitherto, by such means as thou judgest best for me.

Ver. 150. They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.] I am closely beset, thou seest, and in danger to be seized (1 Sam. xxiii. 26.) by those, who, as they persecute me, and seek my ruin, so care not by what wicked arts they compass their design; for they have no regard at all to thy law.

Ver. 151. Thou art near, O LORD; and all thy commandments are truth.] My only comfort is, that they cannot approach so near to hurt me, as thou, O

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Lord, art to defend and preserve me; and that all thy promises annexed to thy commandments (still I think of that, ver. 142.) shall faithfully be fulfilled.

Ver. 152. Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever. This hath ever been my support, long before I fell into these troubles, that whatsoever thou hast testified to be thy will and pleasure, is firm and steadfast, and shall never fail those that depend upon it, ver. 144.

RESH. PART XX.

Ver. 153. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me; for I do not forget thy law. Show then that thou dost not neglect me, but art as mindful of me, as I am of thy law in this afflicted condition; out of which I beseech thee to deliver me, for none of the evils that have befallen me have made me forget my duty to thee.

Ver. 154. Plead thou my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word. I appeal to thee, whether I have not a righteous cause, beseeching thee to do me justice upon mine enemies, (1 Sam. xxiv. 15,) and rescue me from their persecutions; for I am in great danger of perishing, but depend upon thy promise for my safety.

Ver. 155. Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes. Far be it from thee to afford any help to the wicked, for they have no regard to thy statutes; but seek only how they may satisfy their own base and cruel desires.

Ver. 156. Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD; quicken me according to thy judgments. To which I oppose: the bowels of thy compassion, O Lord, whose tender mercies are many and great, and will preserve my life, I hope, according to thy wonted care over me, and kindness to me, ver. 149.

Ver. 157. Many are my persecutors, and mine enemies; yet I do not decline from thy testimonies. I am not discouraged, either by the number or the strength (which are both very great) of those that persecute me with a deadly enmity; which doth not move me in the least to depart from thy testimonies, (Lev. xix. 18,) by seeking their destruction as they do mine, (2 Sam. xxiv. xxvi.)

Ver. 158. Behold the transgressors, and was griev’d; because they kept not thy word: It only provokes my sorrow, to see that there is no faith, nor truth, nor gratitude in them, (1 Sam. xxiv. 17 &c. xxvi. 2,) and troubles me beyond measure, that they have no regard to what thou commandedst or forbiddest.

Ver. 159. Consider how I love thy precepts; quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving-kindness. Such is the love I have to thy precepts, which I beseech thee, let the world see; then dost observe; and both preserve thy life, O Lord; and, according to the exceeding greatness of thy goodness, deliver me out of this sad condition.

Ver. 160. Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. As I doubt not thou wilt; for none of thy promises have ever failed; but the very first of them, which thou madest to our forfather, Abraham, (Gen. xi. 25,) hath been faithfully fulfilled; and so shall every thing else, which thou hast resolved and declared to be thy will, be punctually performed, to the end of the world.

SHIN. PART XXI.

Ver. 161. Princes have persecuted me without a cause; but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. The rulers and prime counsellors of the kingdom persecute me, for pretended crimes; of which as I am not guilty, so I do not fear so much, what they can do against me, as lest I should do any thing in my own vindication, against thy word, (1 Sam. xxiv. 6. xxvi. 9.)

Ver. 162. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. I would not purchase my liberty, my peace, or the honour they enjoy, by any lawful actions; for I take far more delight in doing thy will, and in what thou hast promised to do for me, than in the completest victory over all my enemies.

Ver. 163. I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love. I hate all fraud and deceit, even to the degree of abhorrence and abomination; but most heartily love those honest courses, to which thy law directs me.

Ver. 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteousness judgments. It is the subject of my perpetual thanks and praise, that I have the happiness to be acquainted with the justice and goodness of those laws whereby thou governest us.

Ver. 165. Great peace have they which love thy law; and nothing shall offend them. The observance of which gives such inward satisfaction, and brings so many and great blessings to those who truly love them, that they take all things which befall them in good part, and nothing will tempt them to turn aside, and leave those virtuous paths wherein they lead them.

Ver. 166. LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. I have met with the most grievous discouragements; but, Lord, in the midst of the greatest straits I have expected deliverance only from thee, and never done any thing for my preservation contrary to thy commandments.

Ver. 167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. All my care hath been, still most heartily to observe thy testimonies; which I prefer infinitely before all earthly enjoyments.

Ver. 168. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies; for all my ways are before thee. There is not one of thy laws, of any sort, but I have carefully observed, even then when I might have privately broken them, and been a gainer by it, (1 Sam. xxxix. 14 &c.) for I knew that nothing can be done secretly, but thou art perfectly acquainted with it.

TAU. PART XIV.

Ver. 169. Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD; give me understanding according to thy word. As thou art also with my most earnest petitions, 19
whichever, I beseech thee, O Lord, wound safe a gracious answer; and in the first place teach me, according as thou hast promised, to walk, not only innocently, but prudently, in the midst of all the snares that are laid for me.

Ver. 170. Let my supplication come before thee; deliver me according to thy word. Do not deny admission to this humble suit, but in due time grant this farther request; that I may, according to the same promise, be perfectly delivered from this long persecution.

Ver. 171. My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. Then will I praise thee without ceasing; first, for instructing me how to please thee in all things:

Ver. 172. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. And next, for fulfilling thy promise to me; which I wholly proclaim with my thankful acknowledgments, that whatsoever thou hast said is truly and faithfully performed.

Ver. 173. Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts. Let thy divine power, therefore, succeed us in this weak and distressed condition wherein I am; for I rely on that alone, having resolved to be guided wholly by thy precepts.

Ver. 174. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord; and thy law is my delight. And I have long expected, with most ardent desires, thy help, O Lord, for my deliverance; delighting myself, in the mean time, in thy laws, while thou art pleased to delay it.

Ver. 175. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgements help me. O let me not perish in these straits wherein I am involved, but spare my life, according to thy wonted kindness, and I will spend it in thy praises; send me relief, by executing the judgements thou hast decreed against my enemies.

Ver. 176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments. Who have so chased me from place to place, during this tedious banishment, that, like a wandering sheep which hath lost its way, I know not whither to betake myself for safety; but be thou pleased, like a careful shepherd, to look after me, and to put thy servant into the right way of escaping all the dangers to which I am exposed, and of recovering my liberty, rest, and peace again; for how hard soever my condition hath been, (I cannot seriously profess it), I have not been careless in the observance of thy commandments.

PSALM CXX.

A Song of Degrees.

The argument. There can be no certain account given, why this, and fourteen other psalms which follow, are called songs of degrees or cansons. This conjecture seems to me most probable, who think the title denotes, either the elevation of the voice in the singing these songs, or the excellency

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Ver. 7. *I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.* As I never gave them the least offence, so there is nothing that I more vehemently desire, than peace and reconciliation; but when I make a motion of it, they are the more exasperated, and, as if I distrusted my cause, or craftily sought advantage by a treaty, betake themselves more fiercely and resolutely to their arms.

**PSALM CXXI.**

*A Song of Degrees.*

The Argument.—If David was the author of this Psalm, (and to whom can we with so much likelihood ascribe it?), it is an expression of the high trust and confidence which he reposed in God, when he was in great straits, and saw no hope of human help; being either environed by Saul’s forces, or pursued by his son Absalom. It is hard to say to which it belongs; but if by **hills** in the first verse we understand Sion and Moriah, where David’s palace and the ark of God were placed, then it must be referred to the latter; for Sion was not theirs, during Saul’s persecution.

There are those indeed, who, following Kimchi, take the first verse to be a military form of speech, and suppose David to have looked round about him, as a captain in danger doth, to see if he could spy any assistance coming down to the neighbouring hills wherewith he was encompassed. But the other sense seems to me more simple, which therefore I have followed; though, if we should adhere to that conjecture, still it will best agree to the distress into which Absalom had reduced him; for then he might well look to see if any of his subjects, continuing their fidelity to him, would appear to defend him. Why called a song of degrees, see cxx.

**Ver. 1.** *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help.* Though I am driven not only from my own palace, but from God’s dwelling-place, (2 Sam. xv. 14. 25.), yet my eyes shall be ever directed thitherward; from whence I expect a powerful aid against those numerous enemies that are combined to destroy me.

**Ver. 2.** *My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.* I have no dependence on any other help, but wait for deliverance wholly from the presence of the Lord; to whom all creatures are subject, and who hath angels at his command, to send to the succour of his servants, for he made the heavens as well as the earth.

**Ver. 3.** *He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; be that keepeth thee will not slumber.* And methinks I hear his ministers calling to me out of his holy place, and saying, Fear not, since thou hast placed thy confidence in the Lord alone, he will not let thee be subverted; thou hast a stronger guard than the most valiant army would be to thee, for they may be tired and fall asleep, but he that hath thee in his custody will exercise a most unwearied care over thee.

**Ver. 4.** *Be bold, be that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.* Be confident of it, he that is the protector of all good men, will never in the least neglect thee, much less abandon the care of thee, but, by a most watchful providence, keep thee in safety.

**Ver. 5.** *The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.* The omnipotent Lord of the world is thy guardian; the very same Lord that covered your forefathers with a glorious cloud, (Exod. xiii. 21.), is always present with thee, to defend and assist thee against all the enemies that assault thee.

**Ver. 6.** *The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.* Be not troubled that thou art forced to take up thy quarters in the open field; for the sun shall do thee no hurt by its vehement heat in the day, nor the moon by its cold moisture in the night, (2 Sam. xvii. 1. 6. 21.).

**Ver. 7.** *The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; be shall preserve thy soul.* The Lord shall preserve thee from all manner of harm; he will preserve thy life, and not suffer thee to fall into the hands of those that contrive to take it away, (2 Sam. xvii. 1. 9. 14.).

**Ver. 8.** *The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.* The Lord shall secure thee whithersoever thou marchest, and prosper thee all along in all thy undertakings, either abroad or within doors; not only now, but in all future times, to the end of thy days.

**PSALM CXXII.**

*A Song of Degrees of David.*

The Argument.—The title satisfies us that David was the author of this psalm; who, having settled the ark (which before had no certain place) at Jerusalem, and being, at this time, upon some occasion in the country, heard the good people there speak one to another, as some of them did to him, of going to worship God at some of the three solemn feasts. Which devotion of theirs, as it rejoiced his heart, so it moved him, I conjecture, to compose this psalm for their use at such times.

If the Talmudists may be believed, they were wont to sing the first verse of this psalm as they went out of the country towards Jerusalem, carrying their first-fruits to the house of the Lord, as the law (Deut. xxvi. 2.) directed them. And when they entered within the gates of the city, they sang the second verse. There they were met by some of the citizens, who, if this be true, sang the rest of the psalm, it is likely, together with them, as they went toward the temple. Of this custom Mr. Selden treats, lib. III. de Synedr. cap. 13. Of a Song of Degrees, see cxx.
PSALM CXXII.

Ver. 1. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord; I was exceedingly pleased with the cheerful devotion of those who came unto me, before the approaching feast, and said, Let us go and pay our thankful acknowledgments to the Lord in the place where he dwells, and makes himself present among us.

Ver. 2. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Which motion ought to be the more readily embraced, because now he hath fixed his habitation; and we need not travel farther than Jerusalem, to inquire after the ark of his presence.

Ver. 3. Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together. To Jerusalem, I say, that fair and beautiful city, whose buildings do not now lie scattered and divided, but are all compacted, and united together (as we ought to be) in a godly order, (1 Sam. v. 9. 1 Chron. xi. 8.)

Ver. 4. Whether the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. Thither all the twelve tribes of Israel, who own the great Lord for their God, go up from all the parts of the country, by his special commandment, (Exod. xxiii. 17,) to acknowledge before the ark of his testimony, (Exod. xxv. 21. 22,) all the benefits they have received from his almighty goodness; and this above the rest, that he thereby testifies his singular care and providence over them.

Ver. 5. For there are set thrones of judgement, the thrones of the house of David. Thither also they repair for justice, for the supreme judicatory of the kingdom sits here, (2 Chron. xix. 8,) and there is the seat of the royal family, (where David and his sons have their residence, and govern the people, 2 Sam. viii. 15. 18.)

Ver. 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Let this be part of your devout prayers, when you come there, that God would preserve Jerusalem in peace! Happy shall they be, who, out of love to the religion and justice which is administered in thee, (O beloved city,) contribute their endeavours, as well as their prayers, for thy safety and prosperity.

Ver. 7. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. Let no enemy (this shall be my constant prayer) approach so much as to thy outworks, to disturb thee; and let plenty of all good things abound within thy palaces.

Ver. 8. For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee. The kindness I have for my kindred, and my neighbours and friends, whether in the city or the country, will not let me cease my most earnest prayers to God, that he will confer his blessings on thee.

Ver. 9. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good. But above all, the love I have to the Lord our God, whose house is here, (whether all his devout servants resort to worship him and celebrate his name,) shall excite not only my prayers, but my study to promote thy welfare.

PSALM CXXIII.

A Song of Degrees.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm, it is certain, was composed in a time of great distress, when they were extremely afflicted by some haughty and insolent enemies, ver. 3. 4. Who those enemies were, there are several conjectures, and I will add mine; that this short form of prayer was made by some pious person, when the king of Assyria (whose pride the prophet Isaiah describes, viii. 7. and many other places) sent Rab-shakeh, and other of his captains, to besiege Jerusalem; where they poured out most contemptuous, nay, blasphemous words, against God and his people, 2 Kings, xviii. xix. It is probable, if this conjecture be admitted, that it was made by Isaiah, whom Hezekiah desired to lift up his prayer for the remnant that was left, 2 Kings, xiv. 4. Isa. xxxvii. 4. Accordingly we read, (2 Chron. xxxiii. 16,) both he and Hezekiah cried unto the Lord, and, we may suppose, lift up his eyes to heaven, and said these words.

Ver. 1. Unto thee I lift up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Though all human help fail us in this sore distress, yet I do not despair of relief from thee, O Lord, whose majesty and power incomparably excels all earthly monarchs.

Ver. 2. Bebold, as the eyes of servants look unto the band of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the band of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Behold how not only I, but the rest of thy faithful people, wait upon thee; submitting ourselves to this severe punishment, as poor slaves do to the stroke of their offended master or mistress, and resolving to bear it patiently, till thou, our Lord, who dost inflict it, wilt be pleased to shew thyself our most gracious God, and in much pity towards us remove it.

Ver. 3. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. O be gracious unto us, good Lord, be gracious unto us, and in much mercy take away this heavy scourge from us; for we are become so beyond all measure contemptible, (2 Kings, xviii. 23. 24. xiv. 34,) that we can scarce any longer endure it.

Ver. 4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of them that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud. We have a long time groaned under the intolerable load of derision and contempt of those whose constant prosperity puffs them up with pride; nay, makes them insolently oppress all those who are unable to resist them.

PSALM CXXIV.

A Song of Degrees of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—If the title had not told us, that
this is a Psalm of David's, I should have thought it had been composed by the author of the former, to acknowledge the wonderful power and goodness of God in delivering them from Sennacherib's army, which came in like a flood, (Isa. lxix. 19.), and had overflowed all the country as far as Jerusalem, (Isa. viii. 7, 8.), which might well make them be called proud waters, (as the psalmist here speaks, ver. 5.), because they fancied nothing could stand before them. Such, it seems, were either the Philistines, upon whom, when they spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim, the Lord broke forth as a breach of waters, (2 Sam. v. 19.), or the Ammonites and their associates, (2 Sam. x. 6—15. xvi.) Of a Song of Degrees, see cxx.

Ver. 1. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say.] If we had not had such a mighty helper as the Lord, who took our part, may Israel now most thankfully acknowledge;

Ver. 2. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us!] If it had not been the Lord (whom none can resist) who took our part, when such numerous enemies united their forces, as one man, to make war upon us;

Ver. 3. Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.] They would then have made but one morsel of our small army; and, in the furious rage wherein they were, have immediately devoured us, as monstrous beasts do their prey, which they greedily swallow down alive.

Ver. 4. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul.] Then they would have over-run all the country, like a violent torrent, and we should have been buried in the flood.

Ver. 5. Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.] Having once made a wide breach by the overthrow of our army, they would have poured in more numerous forces upon us; till, like an inundation of water, which swells more and more, they had wholly overwhelmed us.

Ver. 6. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.] Thanks be to the Lord, to whose infinite mercies we ought to ascribe it, that he hath not permitted them to domineer over us, and ex- cute their cruel intentions against us.

Ver. 7. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped.] They thought they had laid their design so slyly, that we could not escape; no more than a little bird, which a fowler hath taken in his snare; but, blessed be the Lord, who hath assisted our weakness, their plot is defeated, they are broken in pieces, and we thereby most wonderfully delivered.

Ver. 8. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.] This was not a work of our wit, no more than of our power; nor were we beholden to the help of any of our neighbours; but we owe it wholly to his almighty goodness, who com-
PSALM CXXVI.

A Song of Degrees.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm is so universally thought to be a joyous song composed by Ezra, or some such good man, when they returned out of Babylon, that I shall seek for no other interpretation; but observe, with Theodoret, that when Cyrus gave them all leave to return to their own land, some were so ill-minded that they chose to continue where they were; but such as had any sense of the piety of their forefathers, and desired to see the worship of God according to the law restored, gladly embraced the opportunity of returning to their own country; where they thought themselves so happy in the liberty which they enjoyed, that they pray (ver. 4.) all the rest of the nation who remained still behind, would come and partake of it.

This is the most received sense, else I should have thought the deliverance from Sennacherib might be here celebrated, who had carried many of them captive, (Isa. v. 13. and other places;) and when they were delivered from his oppression, they were indeed like men that dreamed, as the psalmist here speaks. For awaking in the morning, and seeing his vast army to be dead corpses, (2 Kings, xix. 35.;) they could scarce believe what they beheld with their eyes, it was so wonderful. And perhaps it was first made then, and afterward applied, with some alteration, to their return from Babylon. See cxxiii.

Ver. 1. WHEN the LORD turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream.

To the Lord above must we ascribe this wonderful change, (which is like the sudden recovery of health, out of a tedious and desperate sickness;) for when the proclamation unexpectedly came forth to give us liberty to return to our own country, out of a long captivity, (Ezra. i. 2. 3.) we could scarce believe it, but were apt to look upon ourselves as only in a dream of so great a happiness.

Ver. 2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for us.

Which presently turned our heavens into such a height of joy, that it filled all places with our mirth; especially with cheerful hymns, in which the heaven themselves accompanied us, saying, This truly is the Lord's work, who hath magnified his power in the strange deliverance of this nation.

Ver. 3. The Lord hath done great things for us; we are glad.

And truly so he hath, (we should be very ungrateful, if we should not thankfully acknowledge the singular benefits which strange admirers;) the Lord hath not only restored our liberty, but declared the greatness of his power in this deliverance, which justly fills us with joy and triumph.

Ver. 4. Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

Then this small handful of people, who are come to plant themselves here again, and have laid the foundation of the temple, with a great mixture of sadness and tears, (Ezra. iii. 12.) shall shout for joy, to see so great an increase, and this pious work, by their help, brought into perfection.

Ver. 5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

I just as we behold the poor husbandman, going to and fro with a little seed, which in a scarce year he throws with an heavy heart into the ground, returning again and again from the field, with songs of joy in his mouth, when the harvest comes to reward his past labours with a plentiful crop of corn.

PSALM CXXVII.

A Song of Degrees for Solomon. See cxx.

THE ARGUMENT.—The Hebrew particle which here we translate for, is thought by our interpreters, in most other places, to signify of; and so they translate it a little before, in the title of Psal. cxxiv. and a little after, in that of 131st. Therefore I shall look upon this psalm as composed by Solomon, who, you read, (1 Kings. iv. 32.) made above three thousand songs; though none of them (except that large poem called the Song of Songs, and as some think, Psal. cxxiii. and, as I suppose, the next to this) have been transmitted to posterity, but only this; which is a commentary upon a pious maxim of his, often repeated in the book of his Proverbs, that it is in vain to attempt anything, if the Lord do not prosper it. Teaching us, therefore, in all our ways to acknowledge him, (Prov. iii. 6. xxvi. 3.) and not to presume, that it is in our power to direct our own way, (that is, our designs, enterprises, and actions,) to what issue we please. For "though a man's heart deviseth his way, yet it is the Lord that directeth his steps," (Prov. xvi. 9. xx. 24. xxi. 30. 31.) A truth to be deeply pondered by all, especially by princes, in whose affairs this over-ruling providence is most visible. Of a Song of Degrees, see cxx.

Ver. 1. EXCEPT the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

The success of all our undertakings depends so entirely upon the Lord's blessing, that it is in vain, by building houses and cities, to enter into societies, unless he prosper the design; and when they are framed, all the care of the soldier and the magistrate,
is to no purpose, unless his good providence be their guard.

Ver. 2. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.] And as fruitless, unless he favour it, is the toil and solicitude of you, the artificers and tradesmen in the city, who rise betimes, and go to bed late, and fare hardly; when they whom he loves (because they own his providence, and depend upon his blessing, more than their own diligence) live securely, and want nothing that is fit for them; though they have no such strong guard of soldiers to defend them, nor break their sleep with labour and care, to supply their necessities.

Ver. 3. Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.] Observe it also, it is not in the power of the strongest and most healthful persons (though nature designs above all things the propagation of mankind) to have children when they please, to inherit the riches they have got; but the Lord bestows them as freely as parents do their estates, and makes those women fruitful, whose pious reliance upon him he thinks good to reward.

Ver. 4. As arrows are in the hands of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.] And yet there is nothing of which we are more desirous, than a numerous issue; especially in the flower and vigour of our youth, for they will be no less defence to us in our age, than arrows or darts are in the hand of a valiant champion, to beat off his assailants.

Ver. 5. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.] Happy is that man who hath obtained so much favour of the Lord, as to have his house as full of them as the champion’s quiver is of arrows; they will undauntedly appear for him, to answer any challenge sent him by his enemies*, or any accusation put in against him before the judges.

* See Theodoret.

Psalm CXXXVIII.

A Song of Degrees.

The Argument.—It is not unlikely that this psalm was composed by the same author that made the former; to excite men to be truly religious, as the only way to obtain the blessings there mentioned of the Lord. Which as he there shews we must have from his free gift, and not think to acquire merely by our own industry; so here he shews the Lord is wont to bestow on those, who, fearing to offend him, sincerely keep his commandments.

Some think this was a form prescribed to be used at the blessing of their marriages, when they wished the new-married couple all manner of happiness; especially a long life in peaceable times, ver. 5. 6. Of a Song of Degrees, see cxx.

Ver. 1. BLESSED is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways.] Whosoever thou art that desirdest to be happy, be sure to add unto the devout worship of the Lord, the practice of justice and charity, and all other virtues, and thou shalt never miss of it.

Ver. 2. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.] For then he will prosper thy honest labours, and give thee an heart also to enjoy the fruit of them; yea, this will seem no small part of thy happiness, that thou art able to live of thyself, and not be holden unto others.

Ver. 3. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive-plants, round about thy table.] He will bless thee also in thy wife, and make her as fruitful as the vine, which spreads itself, laden with full clusters, over all the sides of thy house; and in thy hopeful children too, who shall grow and flourish like the young olive-plants, that are set in thy armour, round about thy table.

Ver. 4. Be bold, that thus shall the man be blessed, that feareth the Lord.] Observe it, that this shall be the comfortable portion of the man that religiously serveth the Lord; who alone can bless our labours, and continue the product of them in our families.

Ver. 5. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.] Address thyself unto him in his holy place; and the Lord shall bestow on thee whatsoever blessings thou askest of him; yea, mayest thou be so happy as to see Jerusalem, the seat of justice and religion, in a flourishing condition all thy life long.

Ver. 6. Ten, thou shalt see thy children’s children, and peace upon Israel.] And long mayest thou live, to such a good old age, as to ‘see thy children’s children; and the whole nation, all the time, in a prosperous tranquillity.

Psalm CXXXIX.

A Song of Degrees. See cxx.

The Argument.—This psalm was made when some new calamity threatened them, either by Sennacherib, or, as Theodoret thinks, by those nations which combined to destroy the Jews, as soon as they returned from the captivity of Babylon. When they were taught by Ezra, or some such holy man, to recount what God had done for them ever since they were a people, and to denominate the divine vengeance against those that now sought their ruin. The former conjecture seems the truer; because as yet, he saith, ver. 5. their enemies had not prevailed against them; unless we expound that phrase, as I have done in the paraphrase, (according to the received interpretation of the psalm), that they had not quite destroyed them, and made them cease to be a nation.

Ver. 1. MANY a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say.] Our adversaries, may Israel now upon this occasion say,
have very often and very sorely distressed us, ever since we began to be a people.

Ver. 2. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me.] It is hard to number how oft, or to tell into how great straits they have reduced us, ever since we began to be a nation; and yet, by the special favour of God, they have not been able to compass their desire of our utter extirpation.

Ver. 3. The flowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows.] They have laid us sometimes exceeding low; and not only scourged us so severely, that the marks of it might be seen as plain as the furrows are which the plough makes in the ground, but long continued also our vexation and torment.

Ver. 4. The Lord is righteous; he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.] But the Lord at last, in much mercy, hath made good his faithful promises, and broken in pieces the power of wicked oppressors, that they might not always hold us under their yoke, and thus miserably tyrannize over us.

Ver. 5. Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.] And may all those that still hate us and our religion, never have better success; but be shamefully defeated, and forced to desist in all their attempts upon us.

Ver. 6. Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up.] Let none of their designs ever come to maturity, but be blasted like the grass upon the house-top, which having no root, withers of itself, and needs no body’s hand to pluck it up.

Ver. 7. Whereewith the mower filleth not his bands; nor be that bindeth sheaves his bosom.] And as it lies unregarded by those that reap, or that carry in the fruits of the earth; so let these men and all their enterprises become contemptible, and be looked upon as good for nothing.

Ver. 8. Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you in the name of the Lord.] Let all their hopes so speedily vanish, that there be none to favour them, nor so much as to wish prosperity to them; no more than there are gatherers of such withered grass appear, to whom the passengers (after the usual form, Ruth, ii. 4.) should say, The Lord give you a good harvest; we pray God you may reap the fruits of your labours.

P S A L M CXXX.

A Song of Degrees. See cxx.

The Argument.—Some think David made this prayer, after he had plunged himself into a very deep guilt, by his sin with Bathsheba. I rather think, when he was persecuted by Saul, and reduced to so low a condition, that his heart began to sink within him. For the " floods of ungodly men (as he speaks, Psal. xviii. 4.) made him afraid," that he should one day perish in them, (1 Sam. xxix. 1.); and he complains elsewhere, " that he sunk in the mire, where there was no standing," &c. Psal. lxxix. 14. 15.

In this condition he implores the divine mercy with great earnestness, and beseeches him to pardon his sins, and the sins of all the people; which made them deserve that ill government, under Saul and his flatterers.

It is the last but one of the seven penitential psalms.

Ver. 1. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.] In the greatest straits, when I can see no bottom, no end of my troubles, but I still sink lower and lower into them, I never despair of thy mercy, O Lord, but cry unto thee most earnestly to deliver me.

Ver. 2. Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.] Vouchsafe, good Lord, the Governor of all things, to grant my petition; do not reject it, I humbly beseech thee, but give me a favourable answer, when I deprecate thy displeasure.

Ver. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?] I do not plead any merits of mine, but rather accuse myself before thee; knowing that if I were the most innocent person in the world, yet if thou, Lord, shouldst strictly examine my life, and proceed against me according to my deserts, (Lord, what would become of me?), I should certainly be condemned.

Ver. 4. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.] But thou most graciously invitest us unto thy service, by thy readiness to pardon all those that are truly penitent; without the hope of which, we could not so much as think of becoming religious.

Ver. 5. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait; and in his word do I hope.] This encourages me to wait, and expect when the Lord will deliver me; my soul is earnestly bent to expect this happy time, which I believe will come, because I have his promise for it, on which I depend.

Ver. 6. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that wait for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.] I direct my thoughts to the Lord alone for safety and relief, which I implore incessantly with my early prayers; for they that watch in the temple for the break of day, I say, the priests that watch in the temple for the break of day, are not more forward than I, to offer up their morning sacrifice to the Lord.

Ver. 7. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.] In whom let all his people place their trust and confidence; for the Lord is very ready to do good, and hath more ways than we can imagine, to rescue those that hope in him out of the sorest distresses.

Ver. 8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.] And he will at last free them from all these troubles, which he hath inflicted on them as a punishment for their iniquities.
Psalm CXXXI

A Song of Degrees. See cxx.

The Argument.—Though David could not purge himself from all manner of guilt, (as he confesses in the foregoing psalm, ver. 3), yet in that matter which he was charged withal by his enemies, (of affecting the kingdom), he could safely protest he was as innocent as a little child. Which he doth in this psalm particularly, and in several parts of other psalms.

Ver. 1. LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.] O Lord, I am accused of traitorous designs against my sovereign, and of aspiring to the throne wherein thou hast placed him: but thou, who searchest the hearts, knowest that I harbour no such ambitious thoughts; nor hath my behaviour betrayed any such intentions; for I never looked upon any man superciliously, nor meddled with affairs of state, or any thing else that is above my place and calling;

Ver. 2. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.] But have bevelled my mind (else let me perish) to an equality with my condition; and resolved to acquiesce in the present state of things; committing myself unto thy care, and depending on thy providence, as a child that is newly weaned doth upon its mother; just so do I silence my natural desires, and am content to be disposed of as thou pleasest.

Ver. 3. Let Israel hope in the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.] And let all good men, in like manner, modestly place their confidence and hope in the Lord, as long as they live; and choose rather to be depressed, than by any undue means raise themselves to greatness and honour.

Psalm CXXXII

A Song of Degrees. See cxx.

The Argument.—This psalm seems to have been composed by some holy man, after God had given commandment to David, by God the seer, to build an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, (where the destroying angel stood), and the Lord had answered him by fire upon that altar, (1 Chron. xxii. 18—26); whereby David knew, what he had till now been ignorant of, that this was the place where God would be worshipped, and have his temple built, xxii. 1. Accordingly we read expressly, that Solomon therefore built the temple in this place; because God here appeared to David his father, and David designed and prepared this place for it, (2 Chron. iii. 1); that there God's habitation might be fixed, and not removed from place to place, uncertainly, as it had been in former times. For the tabernacle, which the Hebrews call Mischkan, had been in an unsettled condition, except one period of time, ever since they came into the land of Canaan. It was first pitched in Gilgal, and stood there 24 years. Then it was removed to Shiloh, where it remained to the death of Eli, 369 years. After his death, Shiloh being laid waste, it was translated to Nob, where it remained, they say, 13 years, (but was now no better than a cabinet without its jewel; the ark being in another place, and never restored to it after that desolation of Shiloh; see Psal. lxxviii.) After the death of Samuel, they say, Nob was also destroyed. And then it was carried to Gibeah, where Solomon found it, and from thence fetched it, when he had finished the temple, which the Hebrews, therefore, call Beth-Olamim, the eternal house; because it was fixed to a place, and out of it the ark never departed, as it had done out of the tabernacle; but there (as the psalmist here speaks, ver. 14.) the Lord took up his rest for ever, never to depart, that is, to any other place, till the Messiah came, who was the temple of God, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

There are those that think Solomon penned this psalm, because (in 2 Chron. vi. the two last verses) he concludes his prayer at the consecration of the temple with some part of it, viz. ver. 8. 9. 10. And truly, since he speaks as if the priests were just taking up the ark to carry it into this resting-place, and there begs that God would not, for David's sake, turn away the face of his anointed, (i. e. refuse to hear his prayer), it is not an improbable conjecture; which I shall follow in my paraphrase, and connect also this psalm with the former; to which it seems to have respect, if we render the last word of the first verse, as the ancient interpreters do; not affliction, but humility, meekness, or modesty. Yet I have not forgot to take notice of the other signification; and in like manner have expounded that phrase, the mighty God of Jacob, two several ways, ver. 2. and 5.

Ver. 1. LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions: I Let it appear, O Lord, that thou art not unmindful of the pious humility of my father David, (cxxxii. 1.), who chose to endure many afflictions, rather than by unlawful means to prefer himself to a kingdom;

Ver. 2. How he swore unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob: Which when he enjoyed, his principal care was to provide a settled place for the worship of God; for he bound himself with a solemn oath unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty One, who had preserved him, as he did Jacob, in all his troubles;

Ver. 3. Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed:] Saying, I am resolved, as I hope to prosper, that I will not come into the new palace which I have built for myself, (1 Chron. xiv. 1.), much less, go to dwell, and take up my lodging there;
Psalm CXXXII.

Ver. 4. I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eye-lids.] Nay, I will not lay myself down to rest, nor take a wink of sleep.

Ver. 5. Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.] Until I have found out a convenient place for the ark of the Lord, (1 Chron. xv. i. xvi. 1. 43.), an habitation for that mighty One, who there makes himself present to his people, the posterity of Jacob.

Ver. 6. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood.] And now, behold, the Lord himself, to our great joy, hath told us the very place where he will set his habitation, (1 Chron. xxix. 26.), in the territory of Bethlem-Ephratah, (Gen. xxxv. 16. 19.), in the fields of that forest where the angel stood, and directed David to build an altar unto the Lord, (1 Chron. xxii. 18. 27.), in the city of Bethlehem-Ephratah.

Ver. 7. We will go into his tabernacles; we will worship at his footstool.] Let us go, therefore, into his tabernacles; and,prostrating ourselves before his majesty, let us take up the ark on which his glory stands, (1 Chron. xxxvii. 2.), with humble reverence, and bring it into the temple which is now built for it, (2 Chron. v. 2. 3. 4. &c.).

Ver. 8. Arose, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.] And be pleased, O Lord, together with the ark, the token of thy powerful presence among us, to translate thy divine glory thither, (2 Chron. v. 13. 14. vii. 1. 2. 3.), there to settle itself, and stir from thence no more for ever.

Ver. 9. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.] Guard also thy priests, who minister unto thee here, and encompass them with thy goodness, (1 Chron. vi. 41.), that they may procure thy blessings for others; and make all thy pious worshippers, who are dear unto thee, triumph in thy kindness to them.

Ver. 10. For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.] I beseech thee, have a respect to the sincere piety of my father David, and thy gracious promise to him, (1 Chron. xxii. 2. 10. 14. xxvii. 2. 6. &c.); and upon that account, deny me not, but grant the petition of thy servant, who by thy special appointment succeeds him in the government of thy people.

Ver. 11. The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.] According to that oath, whereby the Lord secured the kingdom to his family, that faithful oath, which he will never break, saying, One of thy sons will I advance to sit upon thy throne, when thou shalt leave it, (1 Chron. xvii. 11. xxvii. 5. 2 Chron. vi. 10.).

Ver. 12. If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.] Yea, I will perpetuate this royal dignity to thy children in all succeeding generations, (and not take it from them, as I did from Saul, 2 Sam. vii. 14. 16.), if they prove faithful and constant in their religion, and observe all the commandments, whereby I will teach and instruct them how my pleasure is, that they should worship and serve me, (1 Kings. ii. 4. ix. 4. 5. 6.).

Ver. 13. For the Lord hath chosen Sion; he hath desired it for his habitation.] For the Lord hath such a love to Sion, the seat of the royal family, (2 Sam. v. 7. 9.), that he hath chosen to place his own dwelling very near unto it, (2 Chron. iii. i. vii. 12.).

Ver. 14. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.] Saying, This is the place where my glory shall fix itself for ever, (2 Chron. vii. 16.), I will remove no more, but here will I take up my abode; for I have pitched on this place, and declared that it is acceptable to me above all other, (1 Chron. xxii. 26. xxii. 2.).

Ver. 15. I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread.] From whence I will dispense my blessings so abundantly, that Sion (which is become the city of God, as well as of David) shall never be in any want; but I will make such liberal provision for it, by fruitful years, that the poorest person there shall be satisfied with food, (2 Chron. vii. 13.).

Ver. 16. I will also clothe her priests with salvation; and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.] I will also defend her priests, and they shall be giving continual thanks and praise for the blessings they shall procure for my pious worshippers; who shall exceedingly triumph in my kindness towards them.

Ver. 17. There will I make the born of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.] There will I make the regal power and majesty of David to put forth itself afresh in his royal successors; no sooner shall one be extinguished, but another shall shine, (1 Kings. xi. 36. 2 Chron. xi. 7.), in such splendour as shall give a lustre to the name of that anointed servant of mine, till the great Prince, the Messiah, appear.

Ver. 18. His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish.] And whosoever they be that go about to destroy this succession, they shall be so miserably defeated, that they shall not be able to shew their faces, while with shame and confusion they behold the regal dignity in his family, (notwithstanding all their attempts against it), in an unfading glory.

Psalms CXXXIII.

A Song of Degrees. See CXX.

The Argument.—When there was no other strife among all the tribes of Israel, than who should be most forward in returning to their allegiance, and the children of Judah also were inclined as one man to bring back David to his kingdom, from which his son Absalom had driven him, (2 Sam. xix. 9. 14.), he fell into a rapturous admiration of that happy unity and concord, which made them meet together in one place to worship God, (for so, I think, Zanchius rightly understands the last word of the first verse, which we translate together in
unity, to relate to the public assemblies); which unity he commanded to them afterwards in this psalm, as their best preservative and security in future ages. This seems to me more probable to be the occasion of it, than the concurrence of all the tribes to make him king after Saul's death, (which is the common account that is given of it), for then Sion was not in his possession; and it is not likely he would then have made such mention of it as he doth here, while it remained in the hand of the Jebusites. But whatsoever was the first occasion, it was aptly applied to their condition after the return of their captivity from Babylon, when, as Theodoret notes, the tribes which had been divided by the imprudence of Rehoboam, were then again united, living under one and the same government, and worshipping God in the same place, and the same manner, as the law prescribed. It was as fully used by the first Christians, to express their joy for the blessed union of Jews and Gentiles; and may now serve the uses of all Christian societies, whose happiness lies in holy peace and concord.

Ver. 1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.] O consider, how beneficial and delightful it is, beyond all expression, for those that come from the same stock, and are of the same religion, to have no differences one with another, but to live and worship God together, in such a friendly agreement, as if they had but one soul among them all.

Ver. 2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.] I cannot resemble it to anything better than to that excellent ointment compounded of several spices, (Exod. xxx. 21. &c.), which consecrated the high priest to the divine service, (Lev. viii. 12.), and was poured in such plenty, that, running over all his face, even to the collar of his garment, (where he did bear the names of all the tribes of Israel), it perfumed all the place with its fragrant odour; for just so doth this holy concord make you both dear to God, and procure you an excellent fame among men, who cannot but be pleased to see such variety of humours and inclinations, all conspiring with one accord to promote the common good of the whole society.

Ver. 3. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Sion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.] The dew of heaven is not more necessary for the parched mountains, which, though never so distant one from another, (as far as from Hermon to Sion), are refreshed with it, than this is for men of all ranks and conditions, who every where perceive the comfortable fruits of it; for to this the divine favour is immutably annexed, which will pour upon such societies innumerable blessings, giving them an happy and long life, (as earnest of endless felicity), in a constant enjoyment of all manner of good things.
Ver. 1. **Praise ye the Lord.** Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, ye servants of the Lord.] Let all here present praise the most wise omnipotent goodness of the Lord; let him especially be praised by you his priests, who minister unto his majesty.

Ver. 2. **For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.** Let this excite you above all other people to this heavenly duty; both because the Lord had a peculiar kindness for Jacob your forefather, and doth still exercise a special providence over you his children, as far more dear and precious to him, than the rest of mankind who are under his care.

Ver. 3. **And Israel his heritage unto Israel his people.** Which he graciously bestowed upon us, the children of Israel, as an inheritance we should hold of him, by a divine right, of which none, while we continue his obedient people, shall be able to dispossess us.

Ver. 4. **For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.** And because I am sensible that the Lord, under whose government we are, is so great and powerful above all other beings, though called by the name of gods, that you can never praise his majesty enough.

Ver. 5. **Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did be in heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places.** His own will alone gives bounds to his power; for, as none act without his leave, so none can hinder him from doing what pleases himself, in the heavens as well as, on the earth, and the seas, and other deep waters.

Ver. 6. **He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.** He raises vapours, for instance, from any quarter of the earth, and makes them go up into the air; where some of them break forth in flashes of lightning, and that (which is strange) is followed with great showers of rain; and from unknown places and causes, strong and violent winds blow with such continuance, as if they had come out of some treasury, where he had gathered and long locked them up, till he had occasion to bring them forth.

Ver. 7. **Who soweth the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.** He made the Egyptians feel how much superior he was to all their gods, (Exod. xii. 12.), who could not defend them from his stroke; but he sent his angel, and in one night slew all the first-born in the country, both of man and beast, (Exod. xiii. 29.)

Ver. 8. **Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.** Before which terrible blow, he had given many other wonderful demonstrations of his power, in several miraculous plagues, which he openly inflicted on thee, O Egypt, not only on the meaner sort, but upon the king and all his court, (Exod. vii. viii. ix. 

Ver. 9. **Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings.** And after he had by these means brought you out of their bondage, he overthrew several great nations, and slew potent kings; who, presuming of their strength, opposed the accomplishment of his promises to you.

Ver. 10. **Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan.** First of all, Sihon, king of the Amorites, who were esteemed invincible, (Num. xxi. 24. Amos, ii. 9.) and then Og, that giant king of Bashan, (Num. xxi. 33. Deut. iii. 11.) and at last all the kingdoms and kings of the land of Canaan, (Josh. xii. 7—24.)

Ver. 11. **And gave their land for an inheritance unto Israel his people.** Which he graciously bestowed upon us, the children of Israel, as an inheritance we should hold of him, by a divine right, of which none, while we continue his obedient people, shall be able to dispossess us.

Ver. 12. **And thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations.** O Lord, how astonishing is this thy omnipotent goodness! the fame of which shall never be forgotten; but an illustrious memory, O Lord, shall be continued of it from generation to generation.

Ver. 13. **The Lord will judge his people, and be will repeat himself concerning his servants.** For though our enemies may sometimes oppress us, when we offend him, yet the Lord at last will take the part of his people, and deliver them, and, being reconciled unto his servants, will turn his severity into kindness towards them.

Ver. 14. **The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.** It is not in the power of the idols, which the heathen worship, to divert his kindness from us, for they are of no more value than the silver and the gold of which they are made; and are so far from being able to do any thing, that they themselves are made by those that adore them.

Ver. 15. **They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.** They are mere images of things, without their life; having mouths, but cannot give a word of advice or comfort to their supplicants; and eyes also, but cannot see, much less prevent any danger that doth approach them.

Ver. 16. **They have ears, but they hear not, neither is there any breath in their mouths.** Ears they have, but cannot hear a word that is said to them; and noses also, but they do not so much as breathe, much less can they smell the odours that are offered them.

Ver. 17. **They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.** They that make them, therefore, or put any confidence in them, are as senseless as themselves; having eyes, for instance, but do not see that brutes are
more excellent than such gods, and that no help is to be expected from them.

Ver. 19. Bless the Lord, O house of Israel; bless the Lord, O house of Aaron.] O how much, then, are we all bound to bless the Lord, the Creator of all, who hath freed us from this stupid blindness. Let the whole nation of the children of Israel, especially the priests of the Lord, praise him, and give thanks to him, who hath better instructed them.

Ver. 20. Bless the Lord, O house of Levi; ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.] Let all the Levites declare how gracious he is; yes, let all his pious worshippers, of whatsoever nation they be, join in this heavenly employment, of speaking good of the Lord.

Ver. 21. Blessed be the Lord out of Sion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.] Let them all say, with one accord, the Lord be ever praised in this holy place, who, though he be the owner of all the world, yet makes his special residence at Jerusalem.

The honour the heathens give to their lifeless images, ought to excite you all, with the greater devotion, to praise the Lord of the world.

PSALM CXXXVI.

THE ARGUMENT.—This psalm, like the former, is a commemoration of the goodness of God, expressed in his wonderful works; particularly those he had done for that nation; and, it is likely, was composed to be sung upon the great festivals; as every day, I suppose, they sung the foregoing, which is of the same strain with this, and contains much of the same matter; only here, at every half verse, one half of the choir answers to the other in these words, "For his mercy endureth for ever." A form of acknowledgement prescribed by David, to be used continually in the divine service, 1 Chron. xvi. 41. and accordingly followed by Solomon, 2 Chron. vii. 3—6. when he dedicated the temple; and by Jehoshaphat, when, by the encouragement of a prophet, he went out to encounter a vast army with small forces, 2 Chron. xx. 21.; and here is repeated six and twenty times, to make them the more sensible that they owed all they had to the mere bounty of God, and to excite them to depend entirely upon it, and rest assured it would never fail them, if they did piously and most heartily acknowledge it. Such repetitions we use now in our earnest prayers, when we say, Lord have mercy upon us, &c. which are no more vain than these. I have variously expressed, the sense of this repeated acknowledgement, according as the other part of the several verses seemed to direct me.

Ver. 1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.] Offer your thankful hymns unto the Lord of all, who is as good as he is great, and will continue his kindness (which hath been exceeding abundant towards us) unto all succeeding generations.

Ver. 2. O give thanks unto the God of gods; for his mercy endureth for ever.] He is the Sovereign of all the heavenly hosts; and therefore praise him, and give thanks unto him, for he can employ them all for your help and protection, (as he hath in former times); and you need not doubt of his kindness, which continues unto all ages.

Ver. 3. O give thanks unto the Lord of lords; for his mercy endureth for ever.] All the kings and princes of the earth are his subjects; upon which account also, give him praise and thanks; for his kindness endures throughout all ages, to defend you, as he hath done hitherto, from their tyrannical violence.

Ver. 4. To him who alone doth great wonders; for his mercy endureth for ever.] He it is, and he alone, whose works are so great, that they surprise all those who seriously consider them with wonder and astonishment; and therefore give him praise and thanks; for his kindness will never fail, still to employ his infinite power for the good of those who are truly grateful to him.

Ver. 5. To him that by wisdom made the heavens; for his mercy endureth for ever.] Look upon the heavens, and behold with admiration and praise the splendour and the order wherein his wisdom hath contrived and settled them; for his kindness is as large, and as firm and durable as they.

Ver. 6. To him that stretched out the earth above the waters; for his mercy endureth for ever.] And then look down to the earth; thankfully praise him, who brought it out of the waters, and preserves in its just extent, from being again overflowed by them; for his kindness is no less immovable, and by length of time can never be impaired.

Ver. 7. To him that made great lights; for his mercy endureth for ever.] Witness those great lights which never go out, but always call upon us to praise and give thanks to him, who made them to illuminate the world, and to be emblems of his kindness, which sends its benign influences continually upon us unto all generations.

Ver. 8. The sun to rule by day; for his mercy endureth for ever.] By day the sun exerts his power to quicken all inferior beings, and excites us to praise him, and be thankful to him, whose kindness thereby perpetually administers to us all necessary things, and will do so to the end of the world.

Ver. 9. The moon and stars to rule by night; for his mercy endureth for ever.] And by night the moon or the stars supply its place, and let us see how much we are bound to praise and thank him, whose kindness is so constant, that, in the worst condition, it will never quite forsake us.

Ver. 10. To him that smote Egypt in their first-born; for his mercy endureth for ever.] We must needs say so, and think ourselves engaged above all others to give him thanks, if we call to mind that memorable night, (Exod. xii. 29.), when he punished the Egyptians with the loss of all their first-born; for his kindness still continues for ever, to relieve those that are injured, and to punish their insolent oppressors.

Ver. 11. And brought out Israel from among them; for his mercy endureth for ever.] Let us not forget how
after that stroke he brought our forefathers out of the cruel bondage, wherein they had long held them, (Exod. xii. 41, 42,), but thankfully acknowledge that wonderful deliverance; for it is an argument why we should never distrust his kindness, in the sorest straits that can befall us.

Ver. 12. *With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] His power, let us remember, is irresistible, which, first by lesser, then by greater signs and wonders, delivered us out of their hands, (Exod. vi. 5, 7, 9, 11, &c.), to praise and magnify him, whose kindness is stupendously great, and will never cease to succour those who depend upon him.

Ver. 13. *To him which divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Let us therefore give thanks to him, who, when our forefathers utterly despaired of safety, (Exod. xiv. 10, 11.), commanded the Red Sea to retire, and leave a broad way for them to pass, (ver. 21.;) which plainly proves that his kindness is inexhaustible, and always ready to help us in the most dreadful dangers.

Ver. 14. *And make Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] For he led them safely through the very midst of the sea, (which rose up like a wall on either hand of them, Exod. xiv. 22.), and will by his kindness eternally secure all those that piously confide in him.

Ver. 15. *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] But throw those that oppose him headlong into destruction, as he did Pharaoh and his host, in the very same place where Israel was preserved, (Exod. xiv. 27, &c.), for his kindness loves to complete his favours, and perfect what he hath begun for his people.

Ver. 16. *To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And accordingly, when he had thus delivered them, he led his people by the direction of a glorious cloud, through an untroubled desert, and there (with our thankful praises let it be remembered) made a miraculous provision for them, (Exod. xvi.;) for his endless kindness, wheresoever they went, still with new benefits pursued them.

Ver. 17. *To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] When potent kings opposed their passage to the promised land, he utterly discomfited them, (to his praise be it thankfully acknowledged;) for his kindness was not stopped by difficulties, but ever overcame them.

Ver. 18. *And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Though they were kings famous for their prowess, yet, such was his for-ever to be praised kindness towards us, he gave us as easy and as absolutely a victory over them, as he had done before over Pharaoh and his host.

Ver. 19. *Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Over Sihon, king of that fierce nation of the Amorites, who were thought invincible, (Amos, ii. 9,;) for his kindness was mightier than they, and gave us this as an earnest of future conquests over our enemies.

Ver. 20. *And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Over that huge tyrant, Og the king of Bashan, (Deut. iii. 11,;) for his kindness added that, as a new pledge of what he intended to do for us, when we came into Canaan.

Ver. 21. *And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And gave both their countries to be held of him, as a perpetual inheritance; for his kindness doth not decay, (nor loves to revoke his favours,) but continues to the latest posterity.

Ver. 22. *Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] An inheritance they were, which he settled upon us the children of Israel, as long as we continue his faithful servants; for his kindness hath no end, but delights to perpetuate his mercies to those who are worthy of them.

Ver. 23. *Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Nay, when for our sins we were severely afflicted, and in danger to be thrown out of this good land into which at last he brought us, (Judges, ii. iii. iv. &c.), he was pleased graciously to relieve us; for his kindness pardoned our ingratitude, and was as forward as ever to bestow fresh benefits upon us.

Ver. 24. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] And rescued us many a time, when we cried unto him, from the power of those that tyrannized over us; for his kindness was not spent by the frequent deliverances it had given us, but still granted new matter for our thanksgivings to him.

Ver. 25. *Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] Whose bounty is not confined to us alone, but supplies the wants of all mankind, yea, of all living creatures; for his kindness hath no bounds, nor will ever cease to make a plentiful provision for them.

Ver. 26. *O give thanks unto the God of heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.*] O raise your hearts to give him thanks with the highest praises, whose power extends itself beyond this earth, even unto the highest heavens; for his kindness is so unwearyed, that we may hope from thence to be ever receiving more and more of his blessings.

**P S A L M CXXXVII.**

The Argument.—This is a mournful song, composed by some of the captive Levites in Babylon, when he reflected upon their sad parting with their dear country, and the scorn wherewith their insulting enemies treated them in that strange land. Which he foresaw God would severely punish, by the hand of some other cruel people, who should shew them as little mercy as they had shewed the Israelites.

The vulgar Latin ascribes this psalm to Jeremiah; upon which inscription, Theodoret (who found it also in some Greek copies in his time) passes this censure, That the bold author wanted wit, as the inscription itself openly proclaims; for Jeremiah

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was not carried captive into Babylon, but, when he had staid some time in Judea, was compelled by the disobedient Jews to go down with them into Egypt. Yet there are those who, to excuse this, would have us think that Jeremiah sent this psalm to the captives in Babylon; and that this is called a psalm of David, (for so it is in the vulgar Latin also), because made after the example of his psalms; as Virgil said he sung Avicennam carmen among the Romans, when he made his Georgics in imitation of Hesiod.

In the paraphrase of the first verse I have followed a conjecture of St Chrysostom's, that the captives were not suffered (at their first coming thither) to dwell within any of their towns or cities, but were dispersed all along several rivers of the country, where they built tabernacles or cottages for themselves, and perhaps were forced to draw those moist places to make them wholesome.

Ver. 1. BY the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Sion.

When we were transported from our own country into the land of Babylon, and had the sides of Eufrates, and several of its rivers, (Ezek. i. 1. and Baruch, i. 4.), assigned for our habitation, there we sat down in a sorrowful posture, and could not refrain from tears, when we called to mind the happy days which we enjoyed in the holy hill of Sion.

Ver. 2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.] We brought our harps along with us, wherewith we were wont to praise the Lord, (1 Chron. xv. 16.) but as our fruitful vines and fig-trees, under which we formerly sat, were turned into barren willows and osiers, so all our mirth and joy was turned into such heaviness and sorrow of heart, that we let all our instruments of music hang neglected upon the boughs of those doleful trees.

Ver. 3. For there they that carried us away captive, required of us a song; and they that wasted us, required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Sion.

For when our new masters, who had carried us away captive, they that had laid Jerusalem on heaps, and had power to do what they pleased with us, required us (between jest and earnest) to entertain them with our music, and to let them hear one of those songs which were wont to be sung in the temple.

Ver. 4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Neither fear nor favour could extort this service from our Levites; but they resolutely answered, As those songs were not made for pastime and sport, but in honour of the great Lord of the world, so how can you imagine that miserable slaves are disposed to sing? and to sing those songs in the land where we are exiles, which recount the mercies of God unto us, in our once most flourishing country?

Ver. 5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.] No, (said I then within myself), if I forget thy desolations, O Jerusalem, (though never so far removed from thee), so as to gratify their desires, by profaning thy music and thy songs, then let my right hand be benumbed, or quite lose its skill of touching the harp any more.

Ver. 6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.] Let me be struck dumb, and never be able to move my tongue, if I be not so mindful of thee, as never to sing again, till I see Jerusalem and her holy solemnities restored.

Ver. 7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, whom said, Raise it, raise it, even to the foundation thereof.] Which joyful day I hope will come, when thou, O Lord, wilt call our enemies to an account; and first of all, reckon with the Edomites, (Jer. xlix. 10. Ezek. xxv. 12.), who, instead of pitying Jerusalem, as became kind neighbours and relations, were glad to see the day of its desolations, and encouraged our destroyers with their acclamations, saying, Lay it flat, lay it even with the ground upon which it stands.

Ver. 8. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall be he that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.] And then shall your turns come, O ye Babylonians! who have laid waste so many nations, but shall one day be made desolate yourselves, (Isa. xiii. 19. &c.) And may that prince and people prosper and be happy, (Jer. i. 9.—42.) who shall pay you in your kind, and use you as barabarously as you used us, (Jer. li. 24.—35.—49.)

Ver. 9. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.] He shall be praised, and thought to have done a worthy work, who shall snatch your suckling children from their mother's breasts; and having no more mercy on them than upon the whelps of wolves, or such like creatures, but shall dash out their brains against the walls of your houses, or stones in the street, (Isa. xiii. 16.), that there may be no remains of such a cruel generation, (Jer. lii. 62.)

P S A L M CXXXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—This is one of David's psalms, (as the title assures us), wherein he thankfully acknowledges God's goodness to him, in advancing him from a low and afflicted condition to the royal dignity; which remarkable change would invite, he thought, other kings and princes to have a very great regard to his divine majesty; who, he hoped therefore, would support and defend him in his new-gotten kingdom, by the same almighty power which raised him unto it.

Ver. 1. I WILL praise thee with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

I will make thee my thankful acknowledgements, O Lord, with the devoutest affections of my heart; thy holy angels shall be witnesses of my gratitude, which I will express in psalms and hymns, in the presence of the great assembly of the judges, (Exod. xxi. 9.
Psalm CXXXVIII.  

Psalm CXXXVIII. 1–6), that they may remember to whom they owe their power and authority.

Ver. 2. I will worship towards thy holy temple, and praise thy name, for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth; for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.] I will prostrate myself in the humblest adorations of thee, toward the place where the monument of thy divine presence is, and acknowledge how much I am indebted to thy almighty goodness; first for promising me, out of thy mere grace and favour, the royal dignity, and then for performing thy promise most faithfully; for thou hast manifested thy most excellent power and goodness to me, in nothing so much, as in punctually fulfilling thy promise, (1 Sam. xvi. 13.), notwithstanding all the opposition which was made to it; nay, in raising me higher than I expected.

Ver. 3. In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.] I had long ago fallen short of this honour to which I am advanced, hadst thou, during all the time of Saul's persecution, as redly relieved me, as I cried to thee; and mightily supported my spirit, by a courageous faith and hope in thee.

Ver. 4. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they bear the words of thy mouth.] Which will move, sure, all our neighbouring kings, who have any knowledge of my affairs, (2 Sam. v. 11. 12. viii. 10.), to join with me in praising thee, O Lord; when they shall hear, by how many strange providences thou hast brought to pass that which thou promisedst me by thy prophet.

Ver. 5. They shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.] The wonderful ways whereby the Lord brings things about, shall be the subject of their songs; and they shall think it their greatest happiness to be guided and governed by him; for they shall confess, that none can do such glorious things as the Lord hath wrought.

Ver. 6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud be knownath after off.] Whose sublime greatness doth not make him neglect (as they see in me) the meanest persons; especially when their minds are as humble as their conditions; but will not let them stoop to the loftiest princes, (as they may see in Saul), whom he despises, when they are forgetful of him, and ungrateful to him for his benefits.

Ver. 7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.] Which have been so great to me, that should I fall again into the same straits wherein I was before, and be encompassed with them, I should hope that thou wouldest preserve me, and bring me safe out of them all. Thy power, I am confident, will repress the violent assaults of my enemies; and by thy almighty goodness I shall be delivered from their wrath and fury, (2 Sam. v. 17. &c. viii. 1. &c.

Ver. 8. The Lord will perfect that which concern-eth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; for sake not the works of thine own hands.] The Lord, who hath begun, will go on to finish his gracious intentions towards me; not for my merits, (I know they are none at all), but for thy own mercy's sake, O Lord; which, as it was the sole motive to what thou hast done for me, so will, I hope, (for it is still the same, and ever will be), incline thee to preserve and settle me in that dignity, to which not my ambition, but thy own good will and pleasure, hath promoted me.

Psalm CXXXIX.

To the chief musician. A psalm of David.

The Argument.—The two last verses of this psalm seem to me a sufficient indication that David (to whom the title ascribes it) composed it, [when he lay under the imputation of having evil designs upon Saul, (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.); which as he protests against in several parts of other psalms, and calls God often to witness his integrity, so here he appeals unto him in a set and solemn meditation, composed on purpose to represent before him the clearness of his intentions, which never suffered such designs to enter into his thoughts. And who could believe that a man who seriously acknowledged it was impossible to conceal any thing from God's all-seeing eye, who forms us in the womb, should be so impudent as to make this appeal unto him, if he were conscious to himself of any such guilt? and, which is more, how could he be confident (as he declares he was, ver. 19.) that God would make his innocence evidently appear, by destroying his opposers, if he did not know they were calumniators; whose vile aspersions when God had effectually confuted, he delivered this psalm to the master of the music, as a lasting testimony of his sincerity all along before he came to the kingdom; and a constant admonishment to himself and others, never to promote any designs for the future by sinister arts, though managed so secretly that they lay hid from the eyes of all the world; since God cannot but be privy to them, who loves righteousness, and hates all iniquity.

Ver. 1. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.] I am accused, O Lord, of grievous crimes; but my comfort is, thou seest I am not guilty of them; for the exactest survey cannot make any thing so well known to us, as I am to thee, who art thoroughly acquainted with me.

Ver. 2. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought after it off.] Thou knowest what designs I have, when I sit musing at home, and what I go about when I stir abroad; nay, my inclinations are so perfectly understood by thee, that before I have conceived any design, it is visible unto thee.

Ver. 3. Thou compest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.] Nothing
can be so narrowly sifted, as all the motions of my body and mind, both by day and by night, are scanned by thy all-penetrating eye; which comprehends and is intimately privy to all the ends which I pursue.

Ver. 4. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, 

VD. O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. When I am about to speak, thou, O Lord, (such is thy most admirable wisdom,) needest not to be informed what it is, but knowest, before I open my mouth, everything I intend to utter.

Ver. 5. Thou hast set me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Whatever have I done long ago, is as well known to thee, as that which is lately past, or which I am about to do; for I am so environed by thee, and so absolutely in thy power, that I cannot possibly escape thy notice, nor so much as stir without thy leave.

Ver. 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. O amazing height of understanding! it is in vain to think I can hide any thing from it; which so far surpasses all I can say or conceive, that it excels even my admiration.

Ver. 7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Into what world shall I go, where thou art not present, as thou art in this? It is impossible for me, should I make never so much haste, to get out of thy sight.

Ver. 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I could get up into the highest part of heaven, I should not be out of thy reach; or go down, and lie in the lowest depth of the earth, I should find thee still as near unto me.

Ver. 9. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; if I could move as swiftly as the light of the rising sun, and in an instant fly from hence, and take up my dwelling in the remotest parts of the world:

Ver. 10. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. I should not be a jot the farther from thee, without whom I could not get thither; so I should be still subject to thy government, and as much under the care and protection of thy almighty providence, there, as any where else.

Ver. 11. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. If I should have such a thought as this in my mind, that though thou art present everywhere, yet in the dark I may lie undiscovered by thee, it would be very foolish; for when the sun is gone down, all that is in me is as apparent unto thee, as if it were noon-day.

Ver. 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. The darkness cannot conceal any thing from thee, who, being the fountain of light, seest as well in the blackest night as in the brightest day; the night and the day, the most open and the most covert practices, are equally clear unto thy view.

Ver. 13. For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. For my very thoughts, (and what is there more abstruse than they?), my most retired thoughts and contrivances, and my most secret desires, are apparent to thee; whose I am, and by whom I was wapat up in these skins, which inclosed me in my mother's womb, than which there is nothing more hidden and dark.

Ver. 14. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. Yet there (such is thy stupendous wisdom, which I will never cease to praise, and thankfully acknowledge) I was, I know not how, in such a wonderful manner, formed, that the thoughts of it strike me with astonishment: thy operations in that work are most admirable, and of that I am exceeding sensible; but I can say no more, for they are incomprehensible.

Ver. 15. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Though I was made in so secret a place, yet not the least joint in my body was concealed from thy eyes; but I received from thee there (where no more light can come, than there doth in the lowest depths of the earth) such a comely distinction of parts, and variety of powers, that no embroidery can be so curiously wrought.

Ver. 16. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet they were none of them. For when the matter out of which I was made was without any form, it was visible to thee how every muscle, vein, and artery, with all the rest of my body, should be wrought out of the pattern of them, which was in thy mind; and accordingly in time, when there was not so much as one of them, they were all fashioned for the several uses to which they are designed, and not the smallest of them omitted, or left imperfect.

Ver. 17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! How invaluable also, and incomprehensible, (O God, I am not able to express the high and grateful sense I have of it,) is thy tender care and providence, which thou hast exercised over me ever since I was born! all the secret passages of it amount to such a sum, that I am not able to give an account of them.

Ver. 18. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee. When I attempt to reckon how many they are, I find that I may as well undertake to number the sand; for, though I continue the whole day in this employment, and after a night's rest, begin again the next morning to think how numerous thy mercies are, I am still as far as ever from seeing any end of them.

Ver. 19. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men. Which makes me confident, O God, thou wilt not now desert me, but rather destroy that wicked man, (ex. 1.), who, forgetting thy all-seeing eye, regards not by what means he plots my ruin; and therefore it will be best for you all, O ye men of blood, who
have slain the priests of the Lord, (1 Sam. xxvii. 18.), and now thirst after my life, to make your retreat, and desist from persecuting me any further.

Ver. 20. For they speak against thee wickedly, and their enemies take thy name in vain.] For it is not so much me that they persecute, as virtue and piety, to which, though they are not open, yet they are the most dangerous enemies, because they make it serve their wicked ends; having godly pretences for their doing mischief, and not sticking (so little belief have they of thy omniscience) to call thee to witness the truth of their lies and calumnies.

Ver. 21. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?] And have I not reason, then, O Lord, to hate those who have such an invertebrate hatred unto thee? and to take the greatest distance to them that oppose themselves so industriously to thy holy laws?

Ver. 22. I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies.] I detest them with all my heart; and as their impiety is the only cause of it, so I cannot loathe them more than I do, but declare myself upon that account to be their utter enemy.

Ver. 23. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts:] If I have any other ground of my enmity, or am guilty of so much as designing any evil to them, merely because they have done so much evil to me, I desire to find it out, and submit myself to the severest trials, which may discover to me any such thought that lurketh in my heart.

Ver. 24. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.] For I would not continue in such a pernicious course; but if in any thing I do I intend them any hurt, or so much as to be grievous to them, my humble request is, either that I may not live, or live more exactly by the unchangeable rules of righteousness, sincerity, and truth.

were placed here altogether, by him that collected this book.

Ver. 2. Deliver me, 0 Lord, from the evil man; preserve me from the violent man.] Defeat, O Lord, the wicked designs of that naughty man, (1 Sam. xxiii. 9. &c.), who makes no conscience of what he saith or doeth; to compass his ends; and let me not fall into the hands of that injurious prince, (xxiii. 7.), whom I have never wronged, but done him faithful service.

Ver. 2. Which imagine mischief in their hearts; continually are they gathered together for war.] They are zealously bent to do me all the mischief they are able; which they studiously plot, and do nothing all the day but contrive how to oppress me with armed force, which in several places they have laid to intercept me.

Ver. 3. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.] And they have so traduced me by their calumnies and false accusations, that they have already given my reputation a deadly wound; for the tongue of the serpent, or the tongue of the adder or viper, doth not more effectually convey their poison into men's bodies, than they have infused these venomous slanders into the people's minds.

Ver. 4. Keep me, 0 Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man, who have purposed to overthrow my goings.] And therefore I most humbly' again beseech thee, O Lord, to keep me from falling into the power of that naughty man, (ver. 1.), who instigates his prince to the most injurious proceedings against me; be thou my preserver, O Lord, for otherwise I shall never escape the trains they have devised and laid, to supplant and utterly undo me.

Ver. 5. The proud have bid a snare for me, and cords: they have spread a net by the way-side; they have set gins for me. Selah.] There is no hunter or fowler more indolentious and cunning in laying snares and toils, in spreading nets, or setting gins and traps for the beasts or the birds in the places which they are wont to frequent, than they are to trace me in all my motions, (1 Sam. xxii. 23.), and to invent all manner of wiles and subtle arts to surprise me, which they proudly presume will have their desired success.

Ver. 6. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God; hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord.] To which I have neither cunning nor power of my own to oppose, no friend whose aid I can implore, but only commend myself unto the Lord, saying, I have always owned thee for my protector, and thou hast hitherto owned me, and been my merciful deliverer; do not now, O Lord of all power and might, deny my earnest request, who depend on thee alone for succour.

Ver. 7. O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.] O most mighty Lord, whom no creature whatsoever can withstand, O thou who disposest of all events, I
again profess, that I look for safety from thy almighty power alone; by which I was protected (having no other helmet or armour but only that, 1 Sam. xxi. 39. 40. 50.) in the day when I fought with Goliath.

Ver. 8. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; further nor his wicked device, lest they exalt themselves. Selah.] Suffer not him, O most mighty Lord, who now seeks my destruction, to effect his desire; let him not succeed in any of his mischievous designs and projects against me; lest he and his partakers grow so insolent, as to dare to attempt all manner of violence against other innocents.

Ver. 9. As for the bea of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.] Let the poisonous and pernicious calumnies of those that now beset me round, return upon themselves; and let them be overwhelmed by those very devices, which with laborious lies they have contrived for my ruin.

Ver. 10. Let burning coals fall upon them; let them be cast into the fire, into deep pits, that they rise not up again.] Let their slanders (which I can compare to nothing better than burning coals, that are not easily quenched) be the instruments of their own destruction; let them perish in the flames which they themselves have kindled, and be irrevocably thrown headlong into those dangers and mischiefs, which, like dreadful deep pits, they prepared for my destruction.

Ver. 11. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth; evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.] This, I am confident, shall be their portion; for, though a false informer may for a time be believed, and thrive by his lies and slanders, yet truth will at last prevail, and not suffer him to establish his greatness by such base and wicked practices; and as little shall violence and injustice avail him that relies upon it; but bring upon him one evil after another, which shall pursue him to his ruin, as the hounds do the wild beast, which, after all his windings and turnings, becomes a prey unto them.

Ver. 12. I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.] For I am sure the Lord, who is stronger than all, will assert the cause of the oppressed; and do right to those who are destitute of human help, by punishing all that are injurious to them.

Ver. 13: Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name; the upright shall dwell in thy presence.] Let the righteous rely on this as an undoubted truth, that they shall give thanks to thy almighty goodness, for appearing in their vindication; and, when these false and violent men shall be extinct, they that are sincerely honest shall remain in thy favour, and receive the marks of it, in thy constant care and providence over them.

P S A L M CXLI.

A Psalm of David.

The Argument.—If the title had not told us that David was the author of this psalm, the matter of it would have led our minds to think of him, and his many sufferings, during the persecution of Saul. Which he prays to God, (as Theodoret observes upon the third and fourth verses,) he may be able to bear so patiently, that it may not exasperate his spirit to speak irreverently of Saul, much less to do him any mischief; but leave it unto God, to take his enemies in the snare they had laid for him.

Nobody need wonder, that there are so many prayers found upon the same subject; for that persecution endur'd long, and they were made upon different occasions, or to different purposes; and if they had been all to the same purpose, it would not have been strange to him that considers the pious disposition of David; who loved to spend his time in such devout meditations. And this seems to have been composed about the time of the offering of the evening-sacrifice, ver. 2. when his afflictions also pressed him sorely, that they tempted him to speak something which was unbecoming God's anointed, (Saul,) and the profession he made of duty to him.

Ver. 1. LORD, I cry unto thee, make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.] The danger wherein I am, O Lord, is exceeding great, (1 Sam. xxiii. 25. or xxiv. 1. 2.) which makes me double my cries, and beseech thee the more importantly, speedily to succor me (when my distresses call for it) with seasonable relief.

Ver. 2. Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands, as the evening sacrifice.] Though I am now in a wilderness, and thereby disabled from offering thee any other sacrifice but my prayers, yet they shall be as acceptable to thee as if they were accompanied with the sweetest odours, and my fervent devotion in them, with entire dependence on thee alone for help, be as prevalent as if I could now present thee, at the tabernacle, with an evening-oblation.

Ver. 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.] And in the first place, I humbly desire thee, O Lord, to lay such restraints upon my tongue, and to enable me so vigilantly to observe all the motions of it, that none of the troubles I endure, though never so grievous, may make me burst out into any improper speech, which may give a just offence to them that persecute me.

Ver. 4. Incline not mine heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.] Yes, govern all the motions of my will so steadily, that I may not listen to evil counsels, (1 Sam. xxiv. 4. 6. 7.) much less engage with men, who have no regard to right and justice in any evil practices; but always refuse to partake in their designs, though invited with the spurious promises of the greatest felicity.

Ver. 5. Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, whi.b shall not break my head; for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.] I had much rather that a
righteous man should give me a severe rebuke, than be enticed by evil-doers to accompany them in their sins; for it will do me a real kindness, and be so far from giving me any vexation, that it will be as acceptable to me as the most excellent ointments are unto the head; and only make me continue my prayers with the greater earnestness, that I may not run into those mischievous courses, from which I am deterred by their pious reproofs and admonitions.

Ver. 6. When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words, for they are sweet.] The effect of which their greatest rulers have seen, when, being left by their master on the sides of the rock, (1 Sam. xxiv. 2. 3.), while he went into a hole of it to uncover his feet, they heard that I spake not a reviling word, (much less did I stretch out my hand against him), but in the mildest and most dutiful language addressed myself unto him, (1 Sam. xxiv. 8. 9. &c.

Ver. 7. Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.] And yet this gentleness hath been so far from mollifying their hearts, that they still persecute me, and the small body of men that follow me, (1 Sam. xxvi. 2. xxvii. 1.); whom they have reduced to such extremities, that like the earth when it is plowed up, we break in pieces, and are ready to dispersse and flee for our lives, with little hope of safety.

Ver. 8. But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord; in thee is my trust, leave not my soul destitute.] But in this sore distress I fix my thoughts on thee, O mighty Lord, the Governor of all things; in whom I repose an assured confidence that thou wilt not abandon me to the malice of those that seek to take away my life from me.

Ver. 9. Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the grins of the workers of iniquity.] Preserve me, I beseech thee, from all the subtle plots which they have laid to destroy me; and though they stick at nothing, (though never so unjust), and have various arts to blind the world and hide their pernicious designs, suffer me not to be insinuated by them.

Ver. 10. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.] But let all the contrivances of such wicked men prove pernicious to themselves, and bring upon them the evils which they intended me; whilst I, and they that are with me, by thy care of us, escape untouched by any of them.

P S A L M CXLI.

Maschil of David. A prayer when he was in the cave.

The Argument.—When David hid himself for fear of Saul, in the cave of Adullam, (1 Sam. xxii. 1.), or, as others think more probable, in the cave of Engaddi, (1 Sam. xxiv. 1. 2. 3.), this was the meditation he had in that disconsolate place, before Saul came thither to uncover his feet in it. Which was set afterwards to the tune of Maschil, (see Psal. xxxii.), or called by that name, because it admirably instructs posterity in the most forlorn, nay de-

perate condition, to recommend themselves to God, and to depend on him with a resolved faith. Who, by an unexpected means, granted the desire of David, which he makes in the conclusion of this psalm, (ver. 7.), and brought him out of those straits wherein he was imprisoned. I say, resolved faith, because in the Hebrew, the words of the first and second verses run thus:—I will cry unto the Lord; I will make my supplication; I will pour out my complaint before him, &c.

Ver. 1. I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.] Though I am destitute of human help, I will not despair of safety, but with the more fervent cries implore the divine succour, and, with vehement sighs and groans, depurate the Lord's displeasure.

Ver. 2. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed him my trouble.] I will, say before him at large, all the sad thoughts which perplex my heart; and, representing the inextricable straits and difficulties wherein I am, expose myself unto him, as an object of his pity.

Ver. 3. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my path; in the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me. Now that I am utterly at a loss, and ready to faint away in a confusion of thoughts, thou knowest very well a way for my escape; though by the intelligence they hold with my enemies, (1 Sam. xxiv. 1.), they have blocked up all the passages which I am acquainted withal, and laid ambushes for me in every road.

Ver. 4. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.] Look about thee, O my soul, and see if thou canst spy any hope of relief from thy best and most powerful friends; there are none of them that dare own thee; nor do I know whither to fly for safety, if any of them would be so kind as to invent a means, and open a way for my deliverance from the present danger.

Ver. 5. I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.] All that I can do, is to recommend myself to thee, O Lord, by fervent prayers, saying, I trust myself with thy almighty goodness, as in a sure sanctuary; I have nothing else in the world to depend upon, but thee alone, by whom I will hope to be protected and provided for as long as I live.

Ver. 6. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I. O let my importunate cry prevail for some relief, which will come most seasonably in this exceeding great necessity; rescue me now, that I may not fall into the hands of my persecutors, who are every way (except in these cries unto, and confidence in thee) much too strong for me.

Ver. 7. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.] Bring me, with life and liberty, out of this dismal cave, wherein I am pent up; that I may make my thankful acknowledg-
A Psalm of David.

THE ARGUMENT.—To the title of a psalm of David, Theodoret says, he found, in some Greek copies, those words added, (to explain the time of its composition), "when Absalom his son persecuted him." Which he confesses was not then in the Hebrew, (no more than it is now), nor in other interpreters of the psalms; but agrees well enough, he thinks, with the truth of the story. So that he was the author of the vulgar Latin thought also; though there are some passages in this psalm, which sound as if it had been made during the persecution of Saul, at some time when he was in the like distress with that described in the foregoing. For, ver. 3, 4, he uses some of the same expressions which we find there, and represents himself as in danger to be buried in some such cave as that mentioned in the last verse of Psalm cxiii. where he begs, as he doth here, for a speedy deliverance. Yet, for all this, there are other passages which will incline us to adhere to the fore-named addition, and apply the psalm to his flight from Absalom. For then it was he had most reason to fear, lest God should deal with him according to his sins; which he deplores, (ver. 2), with such a deep sense of his unworthiness, that it hath made this to be numbered among the penitential psalms, and is the last of them. The memory, also, of God's former deliverances of him, a great while before, (ver. 5), may well refer to what he had done for him, not only against Saul, but before he knew him; which as he doth not forget, so he hoped the Lord would now remember, and grant him the like again, when he was in the like distresses.

Ver. 1. HEAR my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications; in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness." I renew my requests and my earnest supplications unto thee, O Lord, for some relief, in these new straits and difficulties into which I am fallen; hoping, though I am very unworthy, yet in thy abundant mercy, thou wilt faithfully fulfill thy promises thou hast made to me.

Ver. 2. And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.] My sins, indeed, (2 Sam. xii. 9. 10. 11.), have justly brought these troubles upon me; but I humbly beseech thee to own me still for thy servant, and not call me unto a severe account for what I have done amiss, but to deal favourably with me; for if thou shouldst proceed according to the rigour of the law, the best man living (much less so great a sinner as I) will not be acquitted at thy tribunal.

Ver. 3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.] And I am not so bad, but my enemy that persecutes me is far worse, who without any provocation seeks my life, and hath utterly despoiled me of all the comforts of it, (2 Sam. xv. 13.), and forced me to seek my safety in holes and obscure places, in the wilderness, (xvii. 16.), where I seem to be buried alive, without any hope of a resurrection.

Ver. 4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.] Which as it calls to mind the distress wherein I was, when, in my flight from Saul, I hid myself in caves, (see cxlii. 3.), so it hath the same effect upon me, for I am ready to swoon away in this great perplexity, which hath struck me with such astonishment, that I have no strength remaining in me;

Ver. 5. I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works: I muse on the work of thy hands.] Till I call to mind withal, not only what thou didst for me in that former persecution, but long before, in my younger days, when I was delivered by thee from the greatest dangers, (2 Sam. xvii. 34. 35.), on these wonderful works I meditate, and consider with myself, that not by my own strength, but by thy tremendous power, I was then preserved.

Ver. 6. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.] And then I feel my fainting spirits return again; and though I despair of human help, I make my prayer unto thee with a cheerful confidence for thy relief, which I long for, and expect with as eager desire, as the parched ground gasps for a refreshing shower.

Ver. 7. Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit failth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.] Do not delay it, O Lord, I most earnestly beseech thee, for I am not able to hold out much longer in this great extremity; deny not my humble request, lest I be utterly lost, (as I am in danger), without all hope of recovery, (2 Sam. xvii. 15.).

Ver. 8. Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning, for in thee do I trust; cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee.] Though this might be very sad, yet let me hear (according to the confidence I repose in thy mercy) better news, and see my affairs in a more comfortable posture in the morning, (2 Sam. xxi. 22. 23.), I shew me which way I shall direct my course, and provide for my safety, (ver. 24.—27.), for I depend entirely upon thee.

Ver. 9. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.] Let me not fall into the hand of my enemies, from whom I am now flying; but know not whither to go, but only to thee, for shelter and protection.

Ver. 10. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.] Whose guidance I beseech, as well as defence,
that I may do nothing (no not for my preservation) but what is perfectly agreeable to thy laws; for thy favour is my security, which I know is not otherwise to be obtained; and therefore I desire the conduct of thy good Spirit, (which is ready to assist those that seek it,) as well to lead me in the plain path of justice and piety, as to suggest to me the ways and means of escaping the snares of my enemies, and of coming into an honest country, where I may be free from the fear of being betrayed to them.

Ver. 11. Quickien me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake, bring my soul out of trouble.] I have nothing to move thee to, but only the honour it will be unto thy majesty, in respect to which, I hope, O Lord, thou wilt preserve me from perishing, and restore me again to thy kingdom; for though my straits are so great, that my life is in extreme danger, yet nothing can hinder the performance of thy just and faithful promise to me.

Ver. 12. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul that for I am thy servant.] Thy mercy also surpasses all the malice of my enemies, whom I trust thou wilt cut off, and destroy, rather than let me continue in these hazards; for I am thy minister, and though never so unworthy, am appointed by thee to govern thy people, in which office I will do thee all faithful service.

**Psalm CXLIV.**

**A Psalm of David.**

**The Argument.**—The inscription will not let us doubt that David was the author of this psalm; but that it was a triumph after his victory over Goliath, (as the vulgar Latin hath it,) is asserted without ground. For though some Greek copies have such an addition to the inscription, yet Theodoret says, that as he could not find it in the Hebrew, so it was not to be met with in any other interpreter, no, not in the Seventy in the Hexaplaus. And it plainly appears by the second verse, that it was composed after he came to the kingdom, and not till he had got some victories over those that opposed him. Nay, there are so many expressions here, like to those we meet withal in the 18th psalm, that it hath inclined some to think it was made at the same time, and for the same purpose with that, of which it looks like a compendium, and might be intended for a short form of thanksgiving for his deliverance from all his enemies. But if the expressions be carefully examined, their opinion will appear to be true, who think it was composed, not after God had given him rest from all his enemies, but after these two victories over the Philistines, mentioned 3 Sam. vii. if not before them; for as he still mentioned more enemies who were unsubdued, ver. 7.—11. so he doth not say, as in the 38th psalm, that God had cast forth lightnings, and shot his arrows against them, &c. but desires him here, (ver. 5. 6.) that he would appear in that manner for him; acknowledging, that not only his kingdom, but his courage, his victories and successes, were all to be ascribed unto God.

**Ver. 1.** Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.] Praised be the Lord, by me and by all men else, by whom I have been kept in safety as in an impregnable fortress; and who hath given me both strength and skill to handle my arms, whenever I engaged, either in single combat or in battles.

**Ver. 2.** My goodness and my fortress, my high tower, and my deliverer, my shield, and in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.] I ever found him very merciful unto me, when I was in any danger; for he still preserved me as in a strong hold, nay, set me out of the reach of the most potent enemies; either making a way for my escape when they surrounded me, or protecting me in their most furious assaults upon me; and as I reposed a constant trust in him, so he had never failed my expectation, but, after long contests, made all Israel submit themselves unto my empire, 2 Sam. vi. 5. &c.

**Ver. 3.** Lord, what is man, that thou knowest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?] I am astonished, O Lord, at this thy wonderful goodness, and know not what to say, but only admire that thou shouldst take such care of so poor a thing as man is at the best; especially of me, a miserable wretch, whom thou hast honoured with most glorious successes.

**Ver. 4.** Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away.] Man, alas! is but a breath, which presently vanishes; what a marvel is it, then, that I should have strength to achieve such things? His life is exceeding short and uncertain; and yet such is thy stupendous goodness, I am not only alive, notwithstanding all the hazards through which I have run, but in a little time have performed such memorable acts, that the fame of them will last for ever.

**Ver. 5.** Bowl thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.] Proceed, O Lord, to perfect my conquest; and now that new enemies are combined against me, (2 Sam. viii.) let thy majesty appear as it hath done formerly (see. Psal. xviii. 9.) for my assistance and defence; and as soon as the proudest oppressors see that thou art present, they will vanish away like smoke.

**Ver. 6.** Cast forth lightnings, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.] Let them be dispersed by flashes of lightning in their faces; and so terrified with thunder and hail, that they may not be able to re-collect their forces.

**Ver. 7.** Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters; from the hand of strange children.] Send powerful aid unto me from heaven, (Psal. xviii. 16.) for I rely upon nothing on earth; relieve me in all my straits, and deliver me out of these great and manifold dangers, wherewith I am threatened by a foreign power of idolatrous people, which now invade me.

**Ver. 8.** Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right
Psalm CXLV.  

David's psalm of praise.

The Argument.—After David had obtained those favours of God for himself and for the nation, which he begs in the foregoing psalm, he composed (according to his promise there, ver. 9.) this admirable hymn; which is contrived with such art, that it is manifest from hence he made it when he was at much leisure, and God had given him rest from all his enemies, (2 Sam. vii. 1.) For every verse begins with a new letter of the alphabet in order; which are all here, except the letter Nun, which is wanting, ver. 13. I suppose it was lost, when this psalm came to the hands of the collector of this book; and he would not adventure to supply it with one of his own inventing. The Greek, indeed, (that is, the present Greek copies, for Theodotion, and Aquila, and the ancient LXX. had it not,) and Latin and Arabic, (which in effect are but one and the same,) have another verse, which we may well think, if it ever were in the Hebrew, began with that letter Nun; but it differs so little from the seventeenth verse, (when there is no repetition in any other part of the psalm,) that it doth not, in my opinion, look like the true original verse. And it may be doubted, whether there ever was any such verse in that place, (where we suppose one wanting,) for the psalmist might be carried, (see Psal. xcv.) by the strength of the inspiration which was upon him, out of the method he had at first proposed to himself.

Certain it is this psalm was always esteemed so excellent, that the title of the whole book of psalms is taken from this; which is wholly spent in praising God with such admirable devotion, that the ancient Hebrews were wont to say, (as Valentine Schindler hath long ago observed,) "he could not fail to be a child of the world to come, who would say this psalm three times every day." And for that reason perhaps it was composed alphabetically, that so useful a psalm might be the more easily learned and remembered by every body.

Ver. 1. I WILL extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.] I will proclaim to all the world, O my God, the supreme Governor of heaven and earth, how excellent thy majesty is, infinitely surpassing the highest of our thoughts; and will never cease to express the delightful sense I have of all thy glorious attributes, whereby thou art made known unto us.

Ver. 2. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.] This shall be my daily employment, and I will sing joyful hymns in praise of thy glorious perfections, without any end.
Psalm CXLV.

Ver. 3. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.] For the Lord is immensely great in power and dominion, and all other ways, and therefore to be honoured with our highest and with our endless praises; but when we have done all we can, our best praise of him will be, to confess that his transcendent excellencies cannot be comprehended.

Ver. 4. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.] For there are none of thy works, which we see, that we are able to understand; but, though this age transmit its observations to the next, and that recommend the study of them to posterity, yet still we are ignorant, and cannot praise them enough; nor, nor sufficiently declare the prodigious acts of thy miraculous providence, for the preservation of thy people, which shall be perpetually commemorated.

Ver. 5. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.] It shall be my business, in this present age, to speak of the dazzling splendour and beauty of thy majesty; which I want words to express, but appears in thy stupendous works:

Ver. 6. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and I will declare thy greatness.] Which they that come after shall rehearse, and, from the narratives that I shall make of thy magnificent greatness, declare to their posterity, what dreadful things were done by thy irresistible power, for the subversion of our enemies.

Ver. 7. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.] And with the same diligence shall they continue the constant memory of thy numerous benefits to us; which they shall no more cease to celebrate with their praises, than a spring doth to pour out water; but publish, in their perpetual hymns, how just and faithful thou art to thy word.

Ver. 8. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy.] For the Lord (this shall be the subject of their and of my song) is exceeding propense to do us good, and very indulgent when we do amiss; which makes him that he doth not presently punish, but rather chooses to bestow new and greater benefits upon us, if we repent of our faults.

Ver. 9. The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.] Nor is his goodness confined unto us, but extends itself in various acts of bounty to all mankind; who need not doubt of his kindness, when they see he takes so tender a care of all his creatures.

Ver. 10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.] Who all in their several kinds declare, O Lord, throughout all generations, how great, how wise, how powerful and provident thou art; which such as we, who are particularly bound unto thee for special favours bestowed upon us, ought most sensibly to acknowledge with thankful praises.

Ver. 11. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.] It is their duty to discourse of the incomparable wisdom, and goodness, and care, which thou exercisest in the government of the whole world, especially of us; and to recount the memorable acts of thy invincible power among us.

Ver. 12. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.] That all mankind, who regard not such things so much as they ought, may be made sensible how mighty the Lord is, and adore the amazing splendour of his illustrious works, and the admirable order he observes in his government of all things.

Ver. 13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endures throughout all generations.] Which as they are all entirely subject to him, so his empire over them is immovable, and neither ends nor decays; but when earthly kingdoms fail, and are transferred from one to another, his dominion is still the same throughout all successions.

Ver. 14. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down.] In which he doth not neglect any of his subjects that depend upon him, (as mortal princes too frequently do), but supports and comforts the meanest of them that are oppressed with grievous afflictions, and gives them a seasonable deliverance, when they are in danger to sink and perish under the heavy weight of their burdens.

Ver. 15. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season.] He makes a constant provision also for them; which every creature, when their necessities call for supply, daily receive from thee, O Lord, in the proper season for it.

Ver. 16. Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.] And thou art not sparing of thy blessings, but dispensest them with such a bountiful hand, that there are none of them live without satisfaction, but have all their appetites filled, by thy liberality to the smallest of them.

Ver. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.] And therefore let us not doubt, but thankfully acknowledge, that the Lord is not only just in all the dispensations of his providence to us, (though perhaps we do not apprehend it), but exceeding merciful and kind in every thing that befits us.

Ver. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.] We need do no more but piously commend ourselves to him, and he will take care of us; for he is ready, on all occasions, to relieve every one that addresses himself unto him, with a sincere heart, truly disposed to be faithful to him.

Ver. 19. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry, and will save them.] He that satisfies the appetite of all creatures, (ver. 16.), will not fail, we may be confident, to gratify in their desires, such religious persons as fear to offend him; but though he let them fall into troubles and straits, in due time will be moved, by their importunate prayers, to send them a seasonable deliverance.
Psalm CXLVI.

Hallelujah.

The Argument.—This psalm, and the other four which follow, both begin and conclude with the word Hallelujah, i.e., praise ye the Lord. And therefore might, if the Jews had pleased, have been called the great Hallelujah; being all of them exhortations and incitements to the people, to stir up themselves to that heavenly employment; which this psalm recommends to them, from the consideration of several of the divine excellencies, which make him the proper object of our confidence in all conditions. The vulgar Latin and the other ancient interpreters, nor in the Seventy in the Hexa- plus, as Theodoret tells us. And we might rather think it not unlikely to have been composed by David, when Saul, who at first had a great kindness for him, afterwards turned his most bitter enemy; were it not for one word, viz., the mention of Sion, which was not then in David's possession. This, it is possible, inclined those that made the foregoing title to think it was not composed till after times; and they could find none so likely as that after the captivity; when they soon found it was in vain to rely upon the favour of princes, some of which hindered the building of the temple as much as Cyrus at the first had furthered it. I shall not trouble the reader with any other conjectures; but only note, that the eighth verse was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, when he came to give salvation to us.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul, to give the Lord, who gave being to all things, those affectionate praises which are due unto him.

Ver. 2. While I live, will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being. The best resolution thou canst make is this, I will praise the Lord all my life long, and never cease to give thanks unto my God, who never ceases to bestow his benefits on me.

Ver. 3. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. And let all mankind, if they would be happy, preserve his favour, by being grateful to him, and not (with the neglect of his service) court the favour of princes, and settle upon them their dependence; for the greatest king on earth, though never so just, never so bountiful, as well as rich and powerful, is still but a man, who cannot be present everywhere where we are in danger, nor be able always to help us in our greatest needs.

Ver. 4. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that every day his thoughts perish. For there is a time when he cannot help himself, nor by the whole power of his empire, keep his soul from leaving his body; nay, a small accident may carry him away suddenly; and then a cloud of earth can do as much as he; and, whatsoever designs and projects he had laid, (for any man's preferment), suppose they all die together with him.

Ver. 5. Happy is he that bath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God. He, and he alone, is the truly happy man, who expects help from the mighty God, by whom Jacob was fed all his life long, (Gen. xlvi. 15), who trusts to him that is Lord of the world, and hath made him his friend so much, that he can call him his God.

Ver. 6. Which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever. For as he never dies, so there can be no defect in his power, nor want of his presence in every place; the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, being his own works; and, as nothing can hinder him from doing what he pleases, so he will never alter his mind, nor go back with his word, but faithfully keep his promises for ever with those that rely upon them.

Ver. 7. Which executeth judgement for the oppressed; which giveth food to the hungry: the Lord raiseth the prisoners. There are innumerable instances of the careful providence of this great King, who doth not slight or forget the cries of his grieved subjects, but in due time asserts the right of those who are oppressed, and can find no relief in other courts of judgement; he supplies also the needs of the poor hungry wretches, who are ready to famish; and so gracious a Lord, that he sets them at liberty, who by unjust or pitiless men have been held in miserable captivity.

Ver. 8. The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord setteth the righteous. The Lord sends help, when there are no hopes of human cure; for he restores sight to the blind, (as we shall see most remarkably when the Lord Christ appears), and lifts up those who are bowed together by tedious weaknesses, (Luke, xiii. 11), or crushed under other insupportable burdens; and, above all, the Lord delighteth to do good to them who have done good to others.

Ver. 9. The Lord preserveth the strangers; be re-
Psal. CXLVI

Psalm CXLVI. 

1. 

Earth the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.] The friendless strangers are preserved by the Lord from those injuries which men are apt to do them, when they commit themselves to his protection; and so do the disconsolate widows and fatherless children find support and relief from him, against the injustice and violence of their wicked oppressors, whose designs and practices he utterly confoundeth.

Vers. 10. The Lord shall reign for ever;, rent the God, O Sion, unto all generations. [Praise ye the Lord.] Be of good comfort, then, ye inhabitants of Zion, who sincerely worship this great Lord, that doth all these wondrous things; for his power and authority never fail, but from age to age will ever succour those pious souls who are destitute of human help. Therefore praise perpetually this everlasting King.

Psalm CXLVII.

Hallelujah. See cxlvi.

The Argument. —Saint Chrysostom and Theodore think this psalm hath respect to the return of the Jewish nation from the captivity of Babylon; and the instauration of Jerusalem, which followed upon it. And the second and thirteenth verses may well incline us to be of the opinion, that it was made by some holy man at that time, (Haggai or Zachariah, some ancient interpreters imagine, or rather Nehemiah, who built the walls and set up the gates;) especially if we observe, that there are some phrases in it which savour of the Chaldaan language. And though this can be no more than a conjecture, yet it is very certain and evident, that in that deliverance God gave such illustrious proofs of his power, wisdom, mercy, and justice, as the psalmist here exhorts the people to celebrate with their thankful praises. I shall follow it therefore in my paraphrase; it being reasonable to suppose, that devout persons would be as forward to acknowledge the wonderful providence of God in their restoration, as they were to bewail (which they do, Psal. cxxxvii.) the ruin of their country; and that posterity would be no less careful to preserve what was composed in memory of the one, than they had been to continue the memory of the other: And there is no hymn we can find so suitable to that occasion as this.

Ver. 1. [Praise ye the Lord; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.] Let all the nations praise the Lord, who will send us new benefits when we are truly thankful to him, our great benefactor, for the old; for it is a thing highly acceptable to him, as well as delightful to those who are employed therein; and best becomes us of all other things, there being nothing so decent as to see men grateful to him that hath obliged them.

Ver. 2. The Lord hath build Jerusalem; he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.] To which

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we stand bound above all other men; for the Lord hath not only delivered us out of a sad captivity, but, in spite of all the opposition our enemies have made to it, (Ezra, iv. 12.), hath raised Jerusalem out of its ruins; whereby he invites the rest of our brethren, who remained behind, to return to their own country, from whence they are expelled.

Ver. 3. He breaketh the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.] He comforts us after our long sorrows, which had in a manner broken our heart with grief and sadness; and hath in some measure repaired our breaches, which, like a festering wound, endanger'd the life of our nation.

Ver. 4. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.] Whom he knows how to gather out of all their dispersions, and to find every one of them, whereasoever they are, though as numerous as the stars of heaven, (Gen. xv. 5.), which he as directly and exactly understands, (how confusedly soever they seem to us to be scattered in the sky,) as we do those things which we call by their proper names.

Ver. 5. Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite.] Let us not despair of it, for nothing is impossible with our Lord and Governor; who is not like earthly kings, that rule over a few petty provinces, but the great Sovereign of the whole world; whose power and wisdom are so unlimited, that he is able to do whatsoever he pleases, and knows how to compass whatsoever he designs.

Ver. 6. The Lord lifteth up the meek; be casteth the wicked down to the ground.] And doth not, because he is so great, despise the afflicted; but, if they meekly commit themselves to his care, will raise them up to a better condition, and throw down the mightiest princes that proudly oppress them, as low as the very ground.

Ver. 7. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.] Celebrate, therefore, with your thankful songs, (you cannot make a less return unto him), this infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness; begin now, with the usual instruments of music, to sing hymns of praise unto our God, for all his benefits.

Ver. 8. Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.] Particularly for the great plenty he hath given us by his almighty goodness, (Haggai, ii. 1.), which shews itself, first in raising vapours from the earth, and then turning them into clouds, wherewith he covers the face of heaven, and then bringing forth rain out of those clouds, which he sends back to the earth again; and makes not only the green pastures, but the parched mountains and desert places, become fruitful.

Ver. 9. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.] By which wonderful providence he provides food even for the wild goats, and such like beasts, that live upon the top of craggy rocks; for he neglects not the vilest creatures, but satisfies the hunger of the young ravens; though they be so ravenous, that they are continually crying for new supplies.
Ver. 10. He delighted not in the strength of the horse; be taketh not pleasure in the legs of man.] Let us not doubt then, but he that takes care of crows, will much more take care of us; and not be afraid though we are of little force, (Nehem. iv. 3. 4. vii. 4.), and have no armies of horse and foot to defend us; for the Lord (who fights for us, Nehem. iv. 20.) hath no need of these; and will not take part with our enemies, because they are superior to us in the strength of their horses, and the nimbleness of their soldiers.

Ver. 11. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.] But delights to give those his assistance and protection, who, worshipping him devoutly, fear to offend him; and having no help in themselves, nor any earthly refuge to fly unto, depend notwithstanding with a steadfast faith on his infinite mercy.

Ver. 12. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Sion.] Praise the Lord, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; sing joyful hymns unto your God, O ye people of Sion, (Nehem. xii. 27. 31. 40. 43.), who have seen this truth abundantly demonstrated in your days.

Ver. 13. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; be hath blessed thy children within thee.] For he hath made this city, which was lately without walls and gates, so strong a place, that no enemy dare assault it, (Nehem. vi. 15. 16.), and hath increased the number of thy citizens, which were but few, (Nehem. vii. 4. xi. 1. 2.), by the manifold blessings he hath poured on them.

Ver. 14. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.] Which are not confined within the walls of that city, but he hath settled all the country in peace; no enemy appearing to insect thy borders, and to disturb the husbandmen in their labours, which have produced so rich a crop, that plentiful provision is made for all our satisfaction.

Ver. 15. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; his word runneth very swiftly.] This we ought to ascribe to his merciful providence, who shews, by the fruitful seasons he sends, after all things seem to be killed by a hard winter, that he doth not intend by our affliction to destroy us, and that he can easily bring all our brethren hither, who remain still in captivity; for when he would have any alteration made in the earth, it is done as speedily as we can speak.

Ver. 16. He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.] He sends, for instance, a sudden cold, which sometimes turns the moist vapours in the air into flakes of snow, to cover the earth as with a fleece of wool, and defend the corn from the biting winds; and sometimes into hoary frost, which he gently scatters and strews like ashes upon the earth.

Ver. 17. He casteth forth his ice like martels: who can stand before his cold?] And sometimes congeals them into ice, which he breaks into bits, and throws down in violent hail, accompanied with such extremity of cold, that neither man nor beast, nor the fishes in the ponds and rivers, are able long to endure it.

Ver. 18. He sendeth out his word, and melteth them; be causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.] But then, to prevent the hurt that might ensue by its continuance, he issues forth another command, which as suddenly (ver. 15.) makes a thaw, and, by the warm breath of softer winds, loosens the waters which were bound up, and causes them to flow again.

Ver. 19. He speakest his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.] In such things as these the whole world see how powerful and how good he is; but we have more peculiar reasons to depend upon him for a happy return of our nation, whom he doth not teach merely by the snow, the hoar frost, and the ice, but by another sort of word than that which sends them upon the earth, (ver. 15.); even by his ten commandments delivered from heaven, (Exod. xx. 1.), in a most glorious and astonishing manner, (ver. 18.), and by laws of all sorts, which he hath given us for the government of our life.

Ver. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.] This is a privilege which no other nation in the world enjoys, (Deut. iv. 32. 33.). For though they all receive the showers and snow of the clouds, yet laws from thence they have no acquaint ance withal. Therefore let us not dishonour him so much as to distrust his providence, but continually praise the Lord, and acknowledge his bounty to us.

Psalm CXLVIII.

Hallelujah. See cxlvii.

The Argument.—It doth not appear who was the author of this hymn, nor upon what occasion it was composed. But the last verse sufficiently shews the nation was then in a very flourishing condition, and therefore probably it was made by David, when God had given him rest from all his enemies; which filled his heart with such love to God, that it transported him into this rapture. Wherein, finding how short his own praises were, he wishes all creatures in heaven and earth would conspire in a sweet symphony, as Theodoret speaks, of singing praise unto him. And first he calls upon the world above, and all that is therein, from the first verse to the seventh, where he descends to the world here below, and calls upon all things on the earth to praise the Lord; concluding, (ver. 13.), that as there is one Maker of both, so all that they can say of him, when they have joined all their powers together in one choir, falls infinitely short of his most excellent majesty; who hath set forth his most transcendent wisdom, power, and munificence, in such variety of stupendous works, that there is not the smallest of them, but ministers such matter of praise, nay admiration, to those that attentively consider them, that they cannot but wish, with the psalmist here, that every one of them
were able to tell us, how much skill and kindness he hath shewn in their contrivance, or that we were able to find it out, and comprehend it. Thus he is to be understood, when he calls upon all creatures to praise the Lord; or it is as if he had said, The Lord is to be praised by, or in, all these things, as long as the world lasts.

This I take to be the true account of this psalm, which I refer to the times of David, because the two following seem to have been then made; and there is no other we can so well fix upon, unless we will conceive that it was a meditation, when they were perfectly settled in a peaceable enjoyment of their religion, after the captivity; of which there is not the least intimation in this psalm.

Ver. 1. **PRAISE ye the Lord; praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights.** Let all creatures praise the Lord. First let the celestial choir begin, and sing their thankful hymns to him, who hath raised them so high above us in power and might, as well as in dignity and place.

Ver. 2. **Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts.** Praise him, all ye angels, who have the honour to be the prime ministers of his excellent majesty. O let their several hosts and companies, in whatsoever rank or order they stand, praise him whose sovereign authority commands them all.

Ver. 3. **Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light.** Praise him, ye sun and moon, who are his greatest visible ministers, and unwearied in his service; praise him, all the rest of the shining stars, and declare to all future generations, as ye have done for so many ages past, how glorious he is.

Ver. 4. **Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.** Let all the heavenly regions praise him; particularly the clouds, which hang in the air, and distil in fruitful showers to enrich the earth.

Ver. 5. **Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he be commanded, and they were created.** Let all these set forth the adorable wisdom, and power, and goodness of the Lord; for by his omnipotent word, these, whom the mistaken world calls gods, were created, not to be worshipped, but perpetually to proclaim his praise.

Ver. 6. **He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.** Who hath made them not only illustrious, but everlasting monuments of his splendour and glory; having fixed and settled them in an admirable order, which they constantly observe, and prescribed them laws, which they never transgress.

Ver. 7. **Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.** O let all creatures here below accompany those celestial hosts in their praises of the Lord, whose power the vast whales, in their several kinds, and all that move in the profound depth of the sea, abundantly declare.

Ver. 8. **Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind, fulfilling his word.** Let the lightnings, thunder, and hail; the snow, hoary frost, and ice; the winds, storms, and tempests; all make a part of this song, for they constantly execute his sovereign will, and serve his wise designs.

Ver. 9. **Mountains, and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedar.** The lofty mountains also, and the lesser hills, the fruit-bearing trees, with the stately cedars; the pines, the fir, and all the rest, (which he hath created for several ends and uses;) let them all be called upon to tell how great and how bountiful he is.

Ver. 10. **Beasts, and all cattle, creeping things, and flying fowl.** The wild beasts also of the forest, and all the cattle that feed in the fields, whatsoever creeps upon the earth, or swims in the sea, or flies in the air, let it join in this hymn of praise to him, who hath shewn his manifold wisdom and diffusive goodness in them all.

Ver. 11. **Kings of the earth, and all people, princes, and all judges of the earth.** But especially let mankind praise him, who (after he had made these things) brought them into the world last of all, to contemplate his wonderful works: and first let kings (who here on earth resemble the angels or the sun in heaven), and then let their ministers of state, and lieutenants in their several provinces, and next, all the judges of the earth, (who are like the moon and stars), give a good example unto all the subjects, and stir them up to meditate his praise.

Ver. 12. **Both young men and maidens, old men and children.** Let no sex, no age, think themselves exempted from this heavenly employment; but let the young men praise him for their strength, and the virgins for their beauty; they that are going out of the world, for all that they have seen and heard of him; and they that are newly come into it, for all the goodly spectacles that are before them.

Ver. 13. **Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent, and his glory is above the earth and heavens.** Let them praise the incomparable wisdom, goodness, and power of the Lord: for how great soever any other beings are, there is no other God but he, whose most excellent majesty infinitely surpasses all that the earth or the heavens can tell us of him.

Ver. 14. **He also exalted the born of his people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him.** Praise ye the Lord. And ye so great is his condescension unto us, (who are bond, therefore, more particularly to praise him,) he takes a peculiar care of us, and hath set over us a powerful prince, for the defence and safety of his people, (Psal. lxxix. 19;) whose fame he hath thereby raised to the highest pitch of honour, having obliged the children of Israel by many peculiar benefits especially this, that they are a people more nearly related to him than any other whatsoever; for he dwells among them in his holy place, where they approach to him. O praise him there for this singular favour.
Psalm CXLIX.

Hallelujah. See cxlii.

The Argument.—Theodoret thinks this psalm was made for them that, after their return from captivity, had many opposers, but by the divine assistance overcame them; and that it is a prediction of those great things which were done by the Maccabees. Certain it is, that some signal victory was the occasion of it; and thence Saint Chrysostom hath here given us a full account, I think, of the meaning of a new song; which, according to the use of the word new in other places, (when they would express a thing very wonderful, such as hath not been seen nor heard of before, Num. xvi. 30. Jer. xxxii. 22.), he takes to denote an illustrious and famous hymn, made for victories, for great achievements and trophies.” Which were never more remarkable in this nation, than in the days of David; and therefore this psalm may very well relate to his reign, who subdued several kingdoms, which had stood out, and would not submit to Israel till his time, though God had promised to give their countries to them, Gen. xxi. 18. Exod. xxiii. 31. 2 Sam. viii. 2. &c. x. 19.

The interpretation which I have given of the sixth verse, need not seem strange to any one who considers that it hath been and is the custom of all nations, to stir up themselves to fight by the sound of some musical instrument or other. “The ancient inhabitants of Etruria,” with Clemens Alexandrinus, in the second book of his Pedagogus, chap. 4.), “used the trumpet for this purpose; the Arcadians the whistle; the Sicilians an instrument called Pectids; the Cretians the harp; the Lacedemonians the pipe; the Thracians the cornet; the Egyptians the drum; the Arabians the cymbal.” But it was proper to the Israelites to go forth against their enemies, singing psalms of praise to God, (as we read, 2 Chron. xx. 21. 22.), who had given great victories to their ancestors, and had promised never to forsake their posterity, while they served him only, and piously confided in him.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.] Sing a new hymn unto the Lord, for the fresh and singular benefits he hath bestowed upon us; let him be praised not only in private, but in the public assemblies of those, who have received special marks of his favour to them.

Ver. 2. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.] Let all the Israelites rejoice in him that made them his peculiar people, and hath now raised them to great splendour among the nations of the world; let the inhabitants of Zion, more particularly, be exceeding glad, that the Lord, who is our King, hath there settled his royal throne, 2 Sam. v. 9. vi. 12.

Ver. 3. Let them praise his name in the dance; let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.] Let them leap for joy, and unanimously praise his excellent majesty, in their dances to the tune, (2 Sam. vii. 16.) let them testify their gratitude to him, by singing psalms, with the timbrel and the harp.

Ver. 4. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will magnify the works of his hands.] For the Lord taketh pleasure in doing good unto his people; and will not only deliver them after they have been oppressed many years, but, if they meekly depend upon him, make them as great and illustrious, as they have been contemptible and mean, 1 Chron. xiv.

Ver. 5. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds.] Which shall fill the hearts of good men (who are dear to him) with the highest triumph, in the honour that he hath done them; and make them shout for joy, in the security and peace he shall bestow upon them.

Ver. 6. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand.] Which they shall not doubt to maintain against all opposers; for in assured hope of victory they shall go to war, with psalms and hymns in their mouths, concerning the great acts of the Lord; which they shall courageously sing with a loud voice, when they shall fall upon their enemies, and prefer to the two-edged sword which they carry in their hand.

Ver. 7. To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people:] Wherewith they shall take a just revenge upon the heathen, for all the injuries they have done us; and so oblige the inhabitants of the people, that they shall fear again to molest us, 2 Chron. xiv.

Ver. 8. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron:] For their victories shall be so complete, that they shall not only rout their enemies and put them to flight, but lead away their kings captive in chains; and take their great captains and commanders prisoners, and keep them fast in fetters of iron:

Ver. 9. To execute upon them the judgment which was to be on them that dwelt therein.] This honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.

In order to the executing upon them the judgment which God hath long ago decreed, and is recorded in his law, (Deut. v. 24. xxxii. 41. 42. 43.) This is the honour which all Israel shall have, when they are in favour with God; and such shall be their glorious victories, and such hymns and melodious songs shall they sing, saying, Hallelujah, praise the Lord, by whose power and might we have done all this.

Psalm CL.

Hallelujah. See cxlii.

The Argument.—Theodoret takes this also to be "yµΩΩ "Eυνυλαγ", a song of triumph after some victory; and the mention of the mighty acts of the
Lord, ver. 2. seems to countenance this conjecture; which consists well enough with what others conceive, that it was at first particularly directed to the Levites, (by David I suppose), whose office it was to praise the Lord with musical instruments, (1 Chron. xvi. 4. 5.), and excite others to his praises, not only for victory, but for all other his benefits. For if the tradition of the Jews be true, which we read at large in Maimonides, (in a treatise on that subject), when the people of any place brought up their first fruits to present them to the Lord at Jerusalem, (according to the law, Deut. xxvi.), with a pipe going before them, as soon as they came to the mountain of the temple, every one took his basket into his hand, and sung this whole psalm; till they came to the courts of the Lord's house, where the Levites met them singing the 30th psalm.

And, indeed, it might well be used upon occasion of any exceeding great joy; for it seems to be intended (by the repetition of these words, “praise the Lord, “praise him,” thirteen times; and by the calling for no less than ten instruments of music); to express the height and fulness of their joy, and thankfulness to God for his benefits; nor can music be so well employed to any other use, as this divine and heavenly exercise of praising God, by hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs: to which the psalmist seems to me to excite all creatures, in heaven and in earth, from the highest to the lowest. And with this the collector of these five books of psalms thought good to conclude the whole: and not unfairly; for in whatsoever condition we be, (as there are psalms adapted to several purposes), we should never forget to praise the Lord; but after we have prayed, or complained, &c. still end with thankful acknowledgements to God for his goodness to us.

Here are several sorts of musical instruments mentioned, which I have not ventured to explain; because the Hebrews themselves acknowledge they do not understand them. “We have no way (saith Aben Ezra upon these words, ver. 5. which we translate loud cymbals), to know what these musical instruments were; there being many found in the country of the Ishmaelites (i.e. Mahometans) which are not among the men of Edom, (i.e. Christians), and others among them, which the wise men of Ishmael never heard of.”

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in the firmament of his power.] Praise the mighty God, ye angelical ministers that attend upon him in his celestial sanctuary; praise him, all ye inhabitants of heaven, where you see the brightest demonstrations (and most lasting monuments) of his power.

Ver. 2. Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness.] Praise him, all ye ministers of his upon earth, for the miraculous things which he hath done for our deliverance and exaltation; let your praises bear some proportion to the excellence of his majesty, and the multitude of those great and magnificent acts of mercy towards us.

Ver. 3. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp.] Let the priests of the Lord (Numb. x. 8.) praise him with the sound of the trumpet; and let the Levites (1 Chron. xxv. 6.) praise him with psaltery and harps.

Ver. 4. Praise him with the timbrel and dance; praise him with stringed instruments and organs.] Let some praise him with the timbrel and the flute, and others praise him with the stringed instruments and organs.

Ver. 5. Praise him upon the loud cymbals; praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.] Let all sorts of cymbals accompany their psalms and hymns in his praise; both those of daily use, and those that are wont to be employed in times of the highest joy and triumph.

Ver. 6. Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.] Finally, Let every man living join himself to this sacred choir; and at every breath praise the Lord, the giver of life and of all good things. To him let all the world, with one consent, give perpetual praise.

THE END OF THE PSALMS.
A PARA PHRASE
ON THE
BOOK OF PROVERBS.
TO HER GRACE,

THE DUCHESS OF MONMOUTH.

MADAM,

THERE were anciently so many noble women, as well as men, who even then made the study of the scripture their delight, when Christian piety began to decay, that a great part of St Hierom’s pains was bestowed in opening the meaning of them to Blesilla, Marcella, Melania, Paula, and her daughter Eustochium, with several other eminent Roman ladies; whose songs (as he writes to Asella) were nothing but psalms, whose discourse was the gospel, whose pleasure was continence, and whose life was fasting and abstinence.

More particularly he addressed his services of this kind to the last of those ladies, Eustochium, to whom he gives an epithet, importing her prodigious industry, with the most fervent desire in the study of heavenly knowledge; and therefore inscribed to her the most elaborate of all his commentaries upon the prophet Isaiah, (as he did afterward those upon Ezekiel), which were sent her by parts in eighteen books, before every one of which there is a solemn preface to her.

By whose example, and to heighten that esteem and love of divine wisdom, wherewith, in an age of folly and vanity, God hath already inspired your excellent mind, I have presumed to dedicate to your Grace this small work of mine, wherein, with no small labour, I have expounded the most useful book of the Proverbs.

Which commends itself to your Grace’s acceptance, both by the excellence of the matter, containing (as the words are, viii. 6. xxii. 20.) most noble and princely things, choice maxims, built upon the oldest observations, and that will stand firm, and be found true, as long as the world endures; and from the dignity and splendour of the author, whose illustrious name and pedigree is set down on purpose, (as St Basil thinks), in the entrance of the book, to give the greater authority to his words.

It is Solomon, to whom the Lord himself said, 1 Kings, iii. 12. “Behold, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee;” And again it is recorded of him there, iv. 29. that “God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.” For as the sand of the sea encompasses all the coasts of this world where we inhabit, so did his mind comprehend all things, as well human as divine.

This is that admirable person, to the study of whose rare wisdom I invite your Grace; which that it may be had in greater veneration, the name also of his mighty ancestor, saith the same St Basil, is added in the title unto his own, to put us in mind, that he was the wise son of a wise father and prophet, who from his infancy...
had instructed him in the holy writings, and made him fit to succeed him in his throne.

That likewise contributes not a little to the weight of these instructions, that the author of them was a king, and a king in the holy city of God, whose authority he had; which being a name of regular and legal power, (as the same Father still observes), it is manifest that the precepts delivered by such a person, and one who was truly worthy of that high title of a king, are of the greatest worth and moment; because they have respect to nothing but merely the common benefit and public good, and cannot be suspected to have been framed and composed with any aim at private interest. For that is the difference, saith he, between a tyrant and a king; that the former hath regard only to himself in all that he doth and designs, but the other consults the profit and welfare of those whom he governs.

So that, in short, this is the work of him that was truly invested with that threefold glory which the ancients ascribe to Trismegistus, "The power of a king, the illumination of a priest, and the learning of a philosopher."

But the excellence of this book will be best understood by the serious perusal of it, which will discover it to be a Magazine of all sorts of wisdom; "so full of golden sentences," (as king James gives its character in his instructions to his son), "and moral precepts, in all things that concern our conversation in this world, as among all the profane philosophers and poets, there is not to be found so rich a store-house of natural wisdom, agreeing with the will and divine wisdom of God."

And therefore it is most worthy the constant study of all persons who would accomplish themselves with the most useful knowledge; but of none more than of those that are great, whom Solomon instructs how to be greater, and to make their greatness also lasting and durable; and especially of such whose understandings are great and capacious, able to penetrate into the depths even of the civil precepts and advertisements contained in this book, "springing" (as our great advance of learning speaks) "out of the most profound secrets of wisdom, and flowing over into a large field of variety."

In which I am confident your Grace will delight to walk, whose exquisite judgement cannot but find the highest entertainment in weighing the wisdom, as well as the truth and usefulness of these parables; and whose virtue and prudence disposes the hours of your life with such order, as not to let you want time, both to ponder them yourself, and to instil them also into the minds of your children.

Whose future happiness depends upon their being early seasoned with such principles as these; which will be the most effectual preservatives against the infectious air wherein we breathe, and a treasure of such inestimable price, as will keep their minds from being corrupted by all the briberies of fortune, (as we call it), or from being dejected at any cross turn of it, which, in this world, must be sometimes expected.

For such is the inconstancy of all human things, such is the frailty even of our own bodies, as your Grace hath been lately taught by a tedious sickness, (from which I most heartily congratulate your Grace's happy recovery), that we love not ourselves, if we seek not after a better good, which is firm and permanent;
a. good that can withstand corruption, and defend itself against the force of time, and all the accidents of this world.

In the prosecution of which supreme good, I commend your Grace to the blessing of the Almighty, who always favours the least desires of doing good, and therefore will never desert your sincere endeavours of it; which are not unknown to him, while you prefer the closet to the theatre, and look more to the inside of virtue, than to its outward appearances.

But I forget myself and stand in need of a pardon for this long address; which I shall the more easily obtain, if your Grace please to believe, nothing emboldened me to it, but the opinion I have that your goodness is as unlimited as my desires to approve myself, what I stand bound by many obligations to be,

May it please your Grace,

Your Grace's most humble,

and obedient servant,

S. Patrick.

N na
THE

PREFACE.

Next to the Psalms of David, which are an admirable collection of devotion, follow the Proverbs of Solomon, which contain most excellent rules of life. They are commonly called his Ethicks; correcting men's errors, and teaching them how to conduct themselves in all relations; but may as well be called his politics also, comprehending under that word, rules for the government of families, cities, and kingdoms, as well as of particular persons. For, as St. Basil speaks, this book is ἄνθρωπου ἑαυτῷ, an universal instruction and direction for all men, and for the whole life; containing frequent documents of what is to be done on all occasions.

II. And there being two ways of teaching, one by brief sentences and aphorisms, which are delivered also promiscuously, without any great care about the order of them; the other by methodical discourse, according to the rules of logic, proceeding orderly from one thing to another, till all that belongs to the matter in hand be reduced to one body, and make as it were an entire building; Solomon hath chosen the first way, which was the most ancient, as it would be very easy to shew, were there any necessity of it; and were not the great antiquity of this sententious way of speaking apparent enough from that passage of David's, 1 Sam. xxiv. 18. "As saith the prover of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked." which is much like that Greek adage, καθ' ἐξήγερσιν ἐξέστησαν διὰ τῆς φραγμὰς. For it was very usual with wise men of old, (as the lord Bacon observes, in his eighth Book of the Advancement of Learning), when their observations light upon any thing that might prove beneficial unto common life, to reduce it immediately, and contract it either into some short sentence or parable, or else into a fable. As for fables, they were only the substitutes and supplements of examples, to serve instead of them, while they were wanting, and no longer: when the world abounded with histories, they became unnecessary, because the shadows of things are useful only where the substance cannot be had, and because the aim is more exact and more pleasant when the mark is alive. Then those fables were to give place to the sententious way of instruction, comprising wise observations in a few words; which could be illustrated and enforced by a multitude of examples.

III. And therefore, in the fabulous times, we find those even among the poets, who forsook fables, and betook themselves to this more profitable way of instruction; particularly Phocylides and Theognis, whom Julian the apostate is bold not only to compare with Solomon, but to prefer before him. To whom St. Cyril of Alexandria very judiciously answers, (Lib. viii. adv. Juli.), that as Solomon's work is of far greater antiquity, he being contemporary with Homer himself, and they living a long time after with Solon and Thales, in the reign of Croesus; so it is infinitely more weighty than theirs, who said indeed some pretty spruce things, but so weak and shallow, in comparison with the manly and deep sense of Solomon's Proverbs, that they were fit only for the use of nurses to prattle to their babes, or at the most for pedagogues to teach little boys. There is not, for instance, such a wise instruction to be found in all their books, as the very first of all in Solomon's, which he lays as the ground of all wisdom, (but they, alas! did not think of), that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This, as St. Basil observes, is that καθ' ἐξήγερσις (which their philosophers so much talked of, but did not understand), the only thing that can purge the soul, and prepare it to be capable of instruction; which it is as improper, says he, to give to a man of impure affections, as it is to pour a precious ointment into a sordid filthy vessel.

The like I might say of another most admirable precept in his book, to dispose the soul for wisdom, viz. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding." There is no such word in all their writings, not in Isocrates neither, (whom that apostate prince vainly magnified likewise above Solomon), who may be praised for some profitable lessons he gave to youth, but must stoop, as St. Cyril speaks, to this great person, who, as he wrote long before him, so far out-went him in all sort of wisdom, for the instruction both
of young and old. Nor doth he only give precepts of manners, but many excellent admonitions about rewards and punishments; together with lively descriptions of the events of human actions, which serve much for our information. Many things also he discovers of men's most secret affections, of the causes and grounds of the greatest changes in human affairs, of the principal things that are of greatest moment in government, of the way to avoid all manner of dangers, and to preserve ourselves, our fame, our estates; with so many other things of like nature, that the son of Syrac justly said of him, Ecclus. xlvi. 14. 15. "He was as a flood filled with understanding. His soul covered the whole earth, and he filled it with dark parables."

IV. By that name some call these short sentences, which we call proverbs; though the word parable properly signifies only a comparison or similitude. The original of which name is this, (as Grotius hath observed in his Prolegomena to Stobæus,) that the most ancient authors delivered their precepts about manners, or about government, by comparisons; either full and at length, (which the rhetoricians properly call συγγεζηκω, parable,) or curtained, as we speak, and shortened. And these taken either from things plainly fabulous, (as that of the fruit-trees and the bramble, in Judges, ix. and that of the thistle and the cedar, 2 Chron. xxxv. 18.; of the hawk and nightingale in Hesiod; the wolves, dogs, and sheep, in Demosthenes; and the famous parable of Menenius, about the members of our body), or else from things likely and probable, as that of Nathan to David, and most of our blessed Saviour's.

V. But Solomon's sentences in this book are not of this nature, and therefore the LXX. use another word, signifying a saying as trite and common as the high-way; worn, as we say, threadbare, (to use St Basil's phrase), by every body's constant use. And so doth the Latin, and our English word proverb, denote some ancient common saying, which every body hath in his mouth. But the word in the Hebrew, denotes only "any acute and excellent saying, which is as worthy to be known by all, and to be in every one's mouth, as common proverbs are." And thus it is used in the most ancient book of holy scripture for an eloquent speech, much exceeding those that were had been made before, in the beginning of the 27th and 29th of Job. And so the doctors of the church explain it. "A proverb," saith St Basil, "is a profitable saying, delivered with a moderate concealment of the sense," &c. or a pithy sentence in a few words, expressing much sense.

This is the first signification of the word; though in after-times, every saying that was never so little out of the way of vulgar speech, began by the Hebrews to be called מֵאָשַׁל, as may be seen in Ezek. xx. 49. And whether it was figurative, or simple and plain, if it did contain any profitable instruction, it was called by the same name, as we learn from the sentences in this book.

VI. Which consists of a preface, and of the book itself. The preface is in the nine first chapters; seven of which seem to be an admonition what is to be done, and what to be avoided, to make a man capable of wisdom; which in the 8th and 9th chapters sets forth her own praises.

Then begins, as you find in the front of the 10th chapter, the Proverbs of Solomon; which consist of three parts or books. The first part, from the beginning of the 10th chapter, to the 17th verse of the 22d, where a new form of speech, any body may discern, begins, (as I have there noted,) and continues to the 25th chapter; which may be called the second part. And then, from the 25th to the 30th, (which is the last part,) follow such sentences as were collected afterwards out of his writings, or the writings of those who had recorded them, by some persons among whom Hezekiah employed to search the ancient records. For we are told in 1 Kings, iv. that he spoke in all three thousand proverbs; which Josephus seems to think were so many books that perished in the captivity, but St Hierom takes for so many sentences contained in this book, that is, some of them, for there are in all but eight hundred verses. And some of them are not Solomon's; for in the end of the book are added certain sayings of Agur to his scholars, and the instructions of a pious mother to her son Lemuel; of all which I have given an account in their proper places.

VII. And, therefore, must intreat all those that would profit by this book, to read the argument of each chapter, before they proceed to the paraphrase; or, at least, to consult the references which I have made to such passages in it as will help to make the sense clearer, or to explain difficult places, which sometimes are capable of more senses than one: and, therefore, if I have not represented them all in the paraphrase, I do it in the argument; designing all along this alone, to give the fullest and properest explication of every phrase, upon which, as I have not diluted, so I have expressed the meaning in the plainest words I could find. For, as St Hierom speaks concerning his own commentaries upon Ezekiel, (in the preface to the fifth book), "My business was not to study the art of rhetoric, nor of exact composition and graceful language; but to use a careful diligence to hit the sense; resting content with this praise alone, if the wise man's words be understood by my means." And indeed it ought to be the design of every good man, in such works as these, that the holy books, (as he speaks in another place), "may be made more intelligible by his endeavours; and not that his own writings may be commended, by occasion of those books."

VIII. And in his time nothing was commended, he saith, but only that which men fancied to be eloquence. In this the Latins were then altogether delighted, but nauseated the understanding of the holy scriptures. Which provoked God, in his just judgements, to deliver them into the hands of those rough nations, who in his days broke in like a flood upon them, and turned their vain affectation of neatness and elegance of speech, into rudeness and barbarism; which ought to be a caution unto us, not to give up ourselves to the admiration only of the language, and of the wit of the stage; lest our minds thereby be so depraved, that we have no re-
lish of the most serious, no, not of the sacred writings, but reject them as insipid things; with which disease, if any be infected, they might, by God's grace, be cured, if they would be pleased to apply their mind with due attention to the study of this one holy book, which wants nothing to entertain the minds of all men, though of the widest capacity, with the greatest variety of pleasure, if they have not perfectly lost their taste of that which will do them good, and make them truly happy.

IX. It is recorded, by Suetonius, of Cæsar Augustus, that in his reading all sort of Greek, as well as Latin authors, he chiefly observed, and transcribed such wholesome precepts or examples, as might serve him either for public or private use; which upon occasion he produced, for the instruction of his own domestics, or of the commanders of his armies, or the governors of provinces, or the magistrates in his several cities; according as he thought every one had need of admonition; whom if any man have the heart to imitate, Solomon hath saved him the labour which that great person underwent. He need not turn over many volumes, to search for all manner of wise instructions, but be furnished here, and at an easy rate, out of the vast treasure of learning he hath left us in this small book, with the best advices that can be given, either to princes, counsellors, judges, and other public ministers, or to all sorts of subjects in their several relations, and in every condition, to make them both pious and politic; to direct them in the choice of their comforts, in the education of their children, in the management of domestic affairs, and in their transactions with other men; in contracting or conducting their friendships, in giving or taking good counsel and reproof, in making or preserving peace, in judging of men, and of the event of their designs; and, in short, (for it would be a new book to mention every thing particularly), to instruct every one in all sorts of virtue; especially in the government of the tongue, wherein men offend, and whereby they suffer so much, that there is no part of prudence more necessary than that, and therefore none more insisted on in this book.

X. Which contains the wisdom of that excellent prince, who could readily resolve all questions and doubts, penetrate into the nature of all things, and had his own family and kingdom, in such admirable order, that it astonished her who came from the ends of the earth to discourse with him. And it was composed, if we may rely upon the judgement of the Jewish writers, in his best and most judicious years; when his kingdom also was in perfect peace, and there was no disturbance in his affairs.

For the book of Canticles, say they, was wrote in his youth; the Proverbs, when he was of riper years; the Ecclesiastes, when he was old, and repented of the sins he had been drawn into by the snares of woman, who had made this admirable person as great an example of folly as he had been before of wisdom. Whence that common saying of theirs: "Men compose songs, when they are young; parables, when they are grown to be perfect men; and discourses of the vanity of things, when they are old."

XI. But the time of his writing these books is not so material as the design; which is excellently expressed by St. Basil, in a discourse of his upon the beginning of this book, (Tom. I. Hom. xii.) "The book of Proverbs," saith he, "is an instruction of manners, and a correction of the passions, and an entire direction of the whole life; containing abundance of precepts about well-doing. The Ecclesiastes touches upon the nature of things, and evidently shews the vanity of every thing in this world; that so we may not think it worth our pains to be so solicitous as we are about things that swiftly pass away from us, nor waste the thoughts and cares of our mind about empty and vanishing enjoyments. The Song of Songs shews the manner of perfecting souls: For it contains the happy concord of the bridgroom and the spouse; that is, the familiarity of the soul with God the Word."

XII. I conclude this preface, as that great man doth that discourse. "He is wise, not only who hath arrived at a complete habit of wisdom, but who hath made some progress towards it; nay, who doth as yet but love it, or desire it, and listen to it. Such as these, by the reading of this book, shall be made wiser; for they shall be instructed in much divine, and in less human learning; it expelling vice divers ways, and with as great variety introducing all manner of virtues. It bridles the injurious tongue, corrects the wanton eye, and ties the unjust hands in chains. It persecutes sloth, chastises all absurd desires, teaches prudence, raises men's courage, and represents temperance and chastity after such a fashion, that one cannot but have them in veneration."

Let a man but consent to one thing, which this book desires, to make these precepts familiar to his mind, saying unto wisdom, (as you find the words, vii. 4.), Thou art my sister, and calling understanding his kinswoman, and he will not fail to be happy. For this is the sum of all, in a few words:

Love her, and she shall preserve thee.
PARAPHRASE
ON THE
BOOK OF PROVERBS.

CHAP. I.

THE ARGUMENT.—The title of this book is joined to it, as a part of the work, and contained in the six first verses. Where the author uses several words to express the matter he intends to treat of; viz. wisdom, instruction, understanding, knowledge, &c.; the difference of which I have expressed as well as I could in the paraphrase, and shall not here criticize upon them; but observe rather, that the learning they teach is the most necessary of all other; and therefore so contrived, as he tells us, that the most ignorant, as well as the most wise, may receive great benefit by it.

In order to which, the first principle of it must be carefully observed; which is this, [a] That a due sense of God is a most necessary qualification to profit by these instructions, which will signify nothing to Epicures, and such like profane persons. This is the very first word of the book, ver. 7. teaching us, that our first care must be to possess our minds with a lively sense that there is a God; and that the highest wisdom in the world is to study to please him, and to be fearful to offend him, by any neglect of him, or by doing any thing contrary to his will. Which fear of offending God is commonly founded in a dread of his punishments, which perhaps gives the first rise to this fear; however, Nazianzen well observes, (Orat. xxxix. p. 628,;) that we must not, if we would be wise, first begin in contemplation, and so end in fear, (for an unbridled contemplation is very dangerous;) but being thoroughly seasoned and purged, and as one may say attenuated and humbled by fear, so to be carried aloft in contemplation.

This is the first step to wisdom; and the second is, [b] next to God, to bear a great reverence to parents, both natural and spiritual; to God's ministers, that is, and to all teachers and instructors; to whom, if children be not bred to give a great regard, they seldom prove virtuous, ver. 8. Where it is very observable, how much human laws differ from divine; the former generally only providing that due regard be given by children to their fathers, but taking no notice of mothers; as may be seen in the Persian laws, mentioned by Aristotle; the Roman, described in the digests and constitutions, and several passages of the Greek philosophers, which we find in Epictetus and Simplicius, who (as Grotius notes upon the fifth commandment) consult only the honour of the father; but God, in his laws, takes care to preserve a just reverence both to father and mother equally, as the persons whose ministry he uses to bring us into the world. And accordingly not only Solomon, in this place and many other, but the son of Sirach also, (who was bred under that divine institution,) presses the duty owing to both very largely, in the first sixteen verses of the third of Ecclesiasticus.

Now, one of the first things parents should take care of, is to teach their children [c] to avoid evil company, (as it follows here, ver. 10.), and then to represent vice in its true colours, as Solomon here doth one sort of wickedness, ver. 11. 12. &c. the root of which he shews is love of money; which therefore should be looked upon as most odious, and indeed the root of all evil, ver. 18. 19.

Their stupid blindness also is to be represented, who will take no warning; but though destruction be plainly before their eyes in the way wherein they are, yet will go on to complete their ruin, ver. 17.

And they are to be admonished also to hearken to the voice of wisdom presently, wheresoever they meet with it; which is every where, ver. 20. &c. Which is pressed here, (ver. 24. &c.), from this consideration, that there will be a time when they shall stand in need of God's help, but not find it, if they have slighted his importunities to obedience. For he is not only good, but just also; and not so easy as to be moved merely by prayers and intreaties, (and that when we are in distress,) which have more of self-love in them, than love to him. Whose wise providence requires men in their kind, and destroys them by that which they most desire.
"In short, in this chapter he introduces wisdom, speaking to his son, or to her children in general; inviting them to love her, and by no means to tread in the way of sinners; but to keep close to her directions; threatening destruction to those who contemned this counsel."

There seem to be three proverbial sayings in it. One, ver. 17, which may be four or five ways interpreted; two of which I have comprised in the paraphrase, being the most common and natural. Another, ver. 31, like to that in Terence, Tute boc intrivisti, omne boc vorandum est tibi. And the other in the next, ver. 32, where those words, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them," teach us that it is a great part of wisdom, to be able to bear a great fortune, as we call it. Of which, among the Jews, Jason was an example in after-times, who was undone by his successes, 2 Maccab. v. 6. 7. &c.

Ver. 1. THE proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: This book contains some notable and very useful sayings of that wise prince, king Solomon, the son of that devout prince, king David; by whose special appointment he succeeded him in the government of God's peculiar people Israel, for which (according to David's prayer, Psa. lxxii. and his own, 1 Kings, iii. 9.), God endued him with an extraordinary degree of understanding.

Ver. 2. To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding; The scope of them is to make a man know what it is to be truly wise; and instruct him how to avoid those errors which men are apt to fall into, or to correct them if he hath been misled, and run into them; and to make him understand when good advice is given him; nay, to be able to give it unto others.

Ver. 3. To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; For they will furnish him with the most excellent notions, and make him capable to understand things of highest concernment; both how to be just and good in all private transactions; and in public trusts and offices, to judge and act according to right and equity; and every other way to be upright and exactly virtuous.

Ver. 4. To give subtilty to the simple, to the young knowledge and discretion. The most unskilful and incautious persons may here learn to be circumspect and wary; and they who are childish and inconsiderate, get so much knowledge, as to behave themselves with prudence and discretion.

Ver. 5. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. As for him that is wise already, he will not lose his labour in reading this book, which will make him still wiser. And indeed, it is principally designed for the improvement of him that is so wise as to be willing to learn more; who shall both gain a clearer knowledge of what he understands, and also make such additions, that he shall be fit to be a counsellor to kings, and govern the affairs of state in the greatest kingdoms.

Ver. 6. To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. He shall comprehend the most useful maxims; and be able to express them also with the greatest elegance; the weightiest sayings of wise men shall be easy to him, and their abstrusest notions shall not be hidden from him.

Ver. 7. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction. In the first place, these, let all, both simple and wise, look upon an awful sense of God, a devout affection to him, and fear to offend him, as the chiefest point, and the very foundation of all wisdom; without which, men are but fools, and, having no regard to their Creator, will despise the wisest instructions that I can give them. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 8. My son, bear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: And, next to God, let me advise thee, my son, (or whoever thou art that comest to learn of me in this book,) to reverence thy parents; and not only to hearken unto thy father, when he teaches thee to fear God, or tells thee that thou dost amiss, but to let thy mother's commands be a law to thee; especially when she bids thee observe the directions of thy tutors and public instructors, unto whom she commits thee; from which be sure never to depart. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 9. For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. But value their counsels more than the fairest ornaments thy parents can put upon thy head; or the most precious chains wherewith they can adorn thy neck; for they shall add a far greater grace unto thee, and make thee more acceptable, both with God and with all worthy men.

Ver. 10. My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou nor. There will be those who will make it their business to seduce thee from their obedience, but remember, my son, that none can love thee so well as they; and, therefore, if base persons (who have no respect to God, or to their pious parents and instructors) persuade thee to bear them company, by no means yield to their greatest importunities, but flee their society. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 11. If they say, Come with us; let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause. They may represent, perhaps, what advantage it will be to thee, to join with them in the breach of the very next commandment to that of honouring thy father and thy mother; saying, Come along with us to our lurking-places, where nobody can see us, and from thence set upon a wealthy traveller, who is to go that way, and take away his life. What though he be innocent! we shall the more easily dispatch him, when he suspects no danger, and hath given us no provocation.

Ver. 12. Let us swallow them up alive as the grave, and whole, as those who go down into the pit. And though he should have many servants or companions with him to defend him, let not that affright thee; for we are enough of us to kill them all with ease in a moment, or to strangle them, and bury them alive; so that none shall escape to tell any tales; nor shall
they make any noise, nay, it shall not be known what
is become of them.

Ver. 13. We shall find all precious substance, we shall
fill our houses with spoil.] The booty shall be great;
for we are sure to find vast treasures, and all manner
of precious things; enough to enrich us all, and furni-
ish our houses braily, that we may live splendidly
all our days.

Ver. 14. Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have
one purse.] Come in for a share of it; and thou shalt
have as much of it as we, who have been longer at
the trade; for we live like friends, among whom all
things are common; there is but one purse among us
all, in which every one hath an equal interest.

Ver. 15. My son, walk not thou in the way with
them; refrain thy foot from their paths.] But, my son,
(or whoever thou art that wilt learn of me), let them
not prevail with thee to go along with them, or to
betake thyself to such a course of life; but if thou
findest an inclination to it, stop it presently, and stir
not one step in their company, or after their ex-
ample.

Ver. 16. For their feet run to evil, and make haste to
shed blood.] For it is not one single murder (or rob-
bery) in which they will engage thee, (though the
guilt of that is too horrid to venture upon); but they
will be always hurrying thee to some new mischief
or other; and as soon as one mischief is over, they
will be ready for, and make haste to commit an-
other.

Ver. 17. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight
of any bird.] Flee from their society, therefore, now
that I have given thee this warning; and be not so
foolish and incautious as the silly birds, who use to
run into the snare, or the net, which they see the
fowler lay before their eyes, (vii. 23.)

Ver. 18. And they lay wait for their own blood, they
lurk privily for their own lives.] For as he doth not
lay his net in vain, but they are caught therein, so
assure thyself these men are setting a trap for them-
selves, when they lie in wait to take away the lives
of others; for they shall not always escape the hand
of justice, but at last he will take, and suffer, either,
between a special vengeance of God, or by his ministers,
what they have deserved.

Ver. 19. So are the ways of every one that is greedy
of gain, which taketh away the life of the owner ther-
of.] Such is the fate of him that greedily endeavours
to enrich himself by such wicked means. As the bird
enticed by a little chaff, falls into a snare which it doth
not perceive, so he on a sudden loses his life, to
satisfy a vain desire of worldly self, which then he
cannot enjoy.

Ver. 20. [Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her
voice in the streets.] Let me advise you, therefore,
rather to hearken to the manifold instructions of wis-
dom, whose most excellent counsels you cannot but
be as well acquainted withal, as you are with that
which is proclaimed in the open streets; for you hear
them in the plain dictates of your own consciences,
in the laws of God, in the mouth of his prophets and
ministers, in the admonitions and examples of good
men, and in the course of his providence and wise
government, which call upon you more earnestly and
loudly than these lewd seducers, to follow and obey
them.

Ver. 21. She crieth in the chief place of concourse,
in the opening of the gate; in the city she uttereth her
words, saying:] There is no place where this cry of
virtue and piety is not heard; which is not ashamed
of itself, nor lurks in darkness, like those impious se-
ducers, but appears openly in the midst of the greatest
crowds, where no noise can drown its voice, no busi-
ness, either public or private, can thrust by its re-
proof; but still it interposes itself, and every body,
even those wicked men that flee from it, hear it call-
ing to them.

Ver. 22. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love sim-
plicity? and the scorner delight in their scorning, and
fools hate knowledge?] And representing their unac-
countable folly and stupidity, in such unanswerable
questions as these: Is it not apparent by many ex-
amples, that such men as you are deceived and abu-
sed with vain hopes? Why then do you continue the
cheat? Have you not played the fool long enough,
but you will still act against your reason, and against
your interest? Where lies the pleasure of scoffing at
religion and virtue, that you will never give it over?
Is any man so wise, that he needs no monitor? or is
ignorance so laudable, that a man should hate those
who would inform him?

Ver. 23. Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will
pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my
words unto you.] Do not turn away from such checks
as these, but repent in time, and resolve to learn your
duty. It is not too late, for if you will listen to the
secret rebukes of your own consciences, and to the
open reproofs of my prophets, and follow their
directions, I will plentifully communicate my mind,
and infuse the very sense of it into you; it is not
hard to find, nor will I conceal any thing of it, but
plainly shew you all that I require of you.

Ver. 24. [Because I have called, and ye refused, I
have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;] [Which offer if you refuse, nay, go on obstinately
to despise instruction, then hear the doom which God,
whose voice wisdom is, passes upon you: Because
I have pressed you to amend, and ye would not yield
to me, nay, I have been very urgent and earnest with
you, (offering you my assistance, heaping upon you
many benefits, and when they would do no good, ley-
ing on corrections, as well as shewing you the way to
happiness), and none of you would so much as attend
unto me;

Ver. 25. But ye have set at nought all my counsels,
and would none of my reproof.] But, quite contrary,
set at nought all the good advice I gave you, as if
they had been but vain and idle words, and slighted
all my reproofs and threatenings, as if they had been
ridiculous, or of no moment;

Ver. 26. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will
mock when your fear cometh.] Therefore I will repay
you in your kind, and as little regard what becomes
of you in the day of your calamity, (which like a
dismal cloud I will bring upon you unavoidably), I
will be utterly unconcerned, when you know not
which way to turn yourselves, but are become the scorn of those who shall see you quake and tremble at that which before you would not fear at all.

Ver. 27. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you.] Though it prove such a dreadful calamity, as will lay all waste, it shall not move me to relieve you, but I will let it sweep you and all you have away like a whirlwind; and when you fall into the most pinching outward distresses, and into the sorest anguish of mind, you shall evidently see, it was my pleasure to reduce you to those inextricable straits and pressures.

Ver. 28. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.] For then (hearken all you that have not yet sinned in this degree of obstinacy) it will be very hard for these men to think of me, whom before they would not regard; nay, they shall cry to me for help, but I will send them none; they shall seek my favour importantly, but without the least success.

Ver. 29. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.] Because, when time was, they hated that knowledge, of which now they are forced to be desirous; and when they were earnestly solicited to have some regard to God and to religion, they would not consent unto it;

Ver. 30. They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof.] But (as was said before) rejected my good advice with such disdain, as if it had been a grievance to them, and slighted, nay, condemned all those reproves, whereby I would have reclaimed them from their impiety.

Ver. 31. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.] Therefore, as it is just that men should reap what they sow, and eat such fruit as they plant, so these men shall suffer the punishments which their wicked doings naturally produce; nay, be glutted and surfeited with the miserable effects of their own counsels and contrivances.

Ver. 32. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.] For let them alone, and they need nobody but themselves to destroy them; their escaping dangers only making them more audacious to run into them, and their receiving daily additions of riches and honours, supplying their folly with means to hasten their undoing.

Ver. 33. But whose heart is wise unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.] Such a vast difference there is between wicked and virtuous men. For whose follows my counsels, and takes the courses to which I direct him, shall even then be safe, and possess what he hath in peace, when he sees these fools come to ruin; nay, he shall not be so much as disturbed with the fear of any mischief, but rest secure of a watchful providence over him.

CHAP. II.

THE ARGUMENT.—The attention of those that read this book being bespoke in the foregoing chapter, he persuades them not only to read, but to receive and obey these good counsels, by representing the benefits of being wise, that is, good and virtuous, and the mischiefs a man shall thereby avoid. The chief is, that he is sure to be under the guidance and blessing of God, who will impart more and more of himself to those that study wisdom, which is the scope of the former part of this chapter; and as, on the contrary, if he do not order his ways by the rules of wisdom, he is sure to wander most dangerously, so, if he keep close to them, they will preserve him from utter ruin, which is the design of the latter part of it. Where, under the figure of an adulterous woman, ver. 16. some think he persuades us to shun all those [a] doctrines which draw away the mind from God, such as those of the Epicureans and idolaters. But I take this to be intimated before, ver. 12. and therefore understand him literally; and then he seems to give a caution against the breach of the next commandment that mentioned in the first chapter, ver. 16. 17. &c.

This, therefore, is one of the first things wisdom directs us unto, and a principal benefit we receive by it, "to preserve our understandings from being corrupted, by keeping our bodies pure and undefiled." For too many, giving up themselves to fleshly lusts, are thereby wholly perverted, and never recover themselves, but live and die like fools.

And one of the next points of wisdom is, [b] to be taught by the dear-bought experience of others, who have been ruined, body and soul, by those lewd courses to which we are enticed. And here the wise man leads us back as far as the old world, which was wholly destroyed by such villanies as men's brutish lusts and passions carry them to commit. This seems to be implied in the word Rephaim, ver. 18. (concerning which see Mr Mede, p. 42.), who being abominably debauched themselves, had corrupted the rest of the world; so that there was no way left to purge it, but by extirpating the whole race of mankind, except the family of Noah.

In short, here are both promises and threatenings, to excite us to the study of wisdom; together with good directions to make our proceedings successful, which are principally these: 1st. Our own diligence; 2dly, Dependence upon God for help and assistance; 3dly, A due value of that which we seek; 4thly, Avoiding such things as will plainly seduce us; and, lastly, Putting in practice what we know, that we may know more; for want of which, many learned men have proved worse than the most ignorant. Most of these are the sense of the beginning of the chapter, and the last of them is the sense of ver. 10. 11.

[c] There are those who look upon ver. 4. as a proverbial saying, borrowed from those that dig in mines; the former part of it expressing eager desire and great diligence, and the latter invincible:
P R O V E R B S.

Chap. II.

Ver. 1. My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and bide my commandments with thee; And now, my son, whose happiness I most heartily desire, let me tell thee, for thy further encouragement, that if thou dost entertain these exhortations, which I have now given thee, and keep these precepts in remembrance, for the same end that corn is sown and covered in the ground;

Ver. 2. So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; Listening with diligent attention, not to the enticements of such evil men as I have described, but to the counsels and instructions of wisdom; with sincere affection applying thy mind to understand thy duty;

Ver. 3. Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; And, moreover, if thou expressest such a desire of it, as men do of that which they most need, and without which they are in danger to perish; praying those that are able to inform thee, and beseeching God likewise with ardent devotion, that he would bring thee acquainted with it;

Ver. 4. If thou seest a vial as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; If thou dost value this wisdom above the greatest treasures, and shew thy esteem of it by studious seeking for it, as covetous men do for money, laying hold upon all occasions of profiting in knowledge, and pursuing thy advantages (as they do) when thou meetest with them, not giving over thy labour—presently; if thou findest not what thou desirest, but inquiring still, and sparing no pains to know what the will of the Lord is: See Arg. [c.]

Ver. 5. Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Then thou shalt not fail to understand what it is to be truly religious, and that there is no wisdom comparable to it; and shalt find also what reason there is to reverence, worship, and solicitously obey him, who is the Almighty Creator, Governor, and Judge of all the world.

Ver. 6. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. For as wisdom, no less than all other good things, is the gift of the Lord, (without whom all our pains and study about it will be ineffectual), so there is no doubt he will bestow it on those whom he esteem it above all worldly goods; especially this most necessary part of it, which he hath already imparted to us by his prophets and men inspired, who hath given us a true knowledge and understanding of him;

Ver. 7. He layeth up sound wisdom for the rightous; he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. And have assured us, that he hath solid and durable blessings (transcending all the transitory things of this life) reserved in store for upright men; and will protect all those by his almighty providence, whose care it is to perform and complete obedience to him in all things.

Ver. 8. He keepeth the paths of judgement, and preserveth the paths of bis saints. That so he may preserve them in their integrity, and encourage them neither to swerve from the rules of justice, nor to cease to exercise mercy and kindness; for he hath a great favour to such pious persons, and will be their keeper and defender in such proceedings.

Ver. 9. Then shall thou understand righteousness, and judgement, and equity; yea, every good path. By which thou shalt understand that justice and mercy in thy private dealings, and faithful discharge of thy trust in all public offices, and uprightness in every other virtue, are all of them the best, the most plain, easy, and natural way a man can take to be happy.

Ver. 10. ¶ When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul. ¶ And when wisdom has thus taken possession of thy very heart and affections; and thou findest an inward pleasure and satisfaction, by observing the rules of pious, and all manner of virtue;

Ver. 11. Discretion shall preserve thee; understanding shall keep thee. This alone will be a sufficient security to thee, and make thee unwilling to depart from them. For thy own experience will teach thee, that it is the greatest cunning to go in those plain and open ways; and that no men understand their own interest so well, as they cannot be persuaded by any means to forsake them.

Ver. 12. To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; Though otherwise thou mightest be seduced into a wrong course, yet this will deliver thee from that danger; and not suffer thee to be perverted by the mouth of him that would subtly insinuate his lewd principles into thee.

Ver. 13. Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness. Though thou shouldst be assaulted by many of them, thou shalt easily discover their folly, in leaving the straight, plain, and easy paths of virtue, to walk blindly, as they know not whither, in the perplexed ways of vice and wickedness;

Ver. 14. Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked. Being so mad as to rejoice when they have done any mischief, and having no higher pleasure than to pervert others, and make their as bad as themselves;

Ver. 15. Whose ways are crooked, and they are forward in their paths. That is, to draw them aside, and entangle them in intricate ways, directly cross to their own interest, safety, and pleasure; for the whole course of their life is nothing else but a shameful contradiction to their soberest reason and best understanding.

Ver. 16. To deliver thee from the strange woman,
even from the stranger which flattereth with her words:]

But such is that sweet satisfaction which (as I said, 
ver. 10. 11.) thou wilt find in the affectionate love of 
true wisdom, that it will deliver thee, not only from 
the snares of wicked men, but, which is more dan-
gnerous, of a naughty woman; whose company 
though so perrnicious that God would have thee per-
fectly estranged from her, if she were not of the com-
monwealth of Israel, yet) hath powerful charms in 
it, to flatter thee into her embraces. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 17. Which forsokeb the guide of her youth, 
and forgetstb the covenant of her God.] Above all 
other, from that filthy adulteress, who is so lewd as to 
leave her husband, (though a worthy, and perhaps 
noble person,) to whom she was joined in her youth, 
when love was in its greatest warmth, and took him for 
his guide and governor, but hath wickedly broken 
the laws of God, and violated the solemn vow of 
fidelity to him, which she made when they were mar-
rried.

Ver. 18. For her house inclinetb unto death, and 
her paths unto the dead.] The least degree of that disre-
cction which wisdom infuses, will teach thee to avoid 
her society, who loves nobody, now that she hath 
forsoaked him that had her first affection, but seeks the 
ruin of all that go to her house; where, by one 
means or other, they are in danger to meet with their 
grave, and be sent to keep company with those old 
giants, who corrupted mankind with such filthiness 
and violence, that they brought a deluge upon the 
earth, (Gen. vi. 4. 5. 11.) See Arg. [b]

Ver. 19. None that go unto her, return again; neit-
er take they hold of the paths of life.] And this is 
very remarkable, that it is rarely seen that any body 
who is drawn into her impure embraces, ever gets out 
again; but she holds them all so fast by her enchant-
ments, and they are so blinded and bewildered by her 
arts, that, like men who have quite lost their way in 
a strange country, they seldom or never can hit into 
it, and recover themselves, to a virtuous way of li-
ving. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 20. That thou mayest walk in the way of good 
men, and keep the paths of the righteous.] In which 
the sincere love of wisdom, (ver. 11. 12. &c.), will 
so secure thee, that, escaping her snares, as well as 
those of wicked men, thou mayest imitate those ex-
cellent persons the patriarchs and prophets, and be 
preserved in the paths of those righteous men who 
have followed after them.

Ver. 21. For the upright shall dwell in the land, 
and the perfect shall remain in it.] Which is as much 
as to say, that thou mayest be perfectly happy, for 
men of integrity (according to God's promise, Deut. 
xi. 8. 9. 21.) shall peaceably enjoy this good land 
which God hath given us; and they that study 
sincerely to please him in all things, shall leave it in 
possession to their posterity after them.

Ver. 22. But the wicked shall be cut off from the 
earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.] 
But such impious men as I spoke of (according to 
what God himself hath also denounced, Deut. xi. 17. 
and other places) shall be cut down from the earth,

where they may flourish, like a tree, for a time; nay, 
they that give themselves up to do wickedly, and 
keep no faith with God nor man, shall be plucked 
up, like a tree, by the very roots, and leave none to 
preserve their memory behind them.

CHAP. III.

THE ARGUMENT.—In this chapter he continues to 
press obedience to the precepts of wisdom, from 
the consideration of the benefits that are to be reap-
plied thereby. Which he began to speak of in the 
foregoing chapter, (touching also there upon the 
mischiefs on the contrary side,) but here handles 
more largely; and explains it not only in general, 
but in several particular precepts; for instance, 
liberality to God's ministers, ver. 9. 10. pa-
tience in adversity, ver. 11. 12. The foundation 
of which is an entire trust in God and his fidelity, 
who will honour those that honour him in his mi-
nisters, and never desert those in their trouble, 
who do good when they are in their prosperity, 
ver. 5. 6.

After these things he returns to the general exhorta-
tion, ver. 13. &c. advising every one to learn the 
doctrine delivered by God, and to be obedient, and 
not to be so foolish, as to prefer their own wisdom 
or craft before it. To which he adds promises and 
comminations, together with several advices, which 
I need not note particularly, because they lie 
plainly before their eyes who will read the chapter.

I shall only observe, that he represents wisdom, [a] 
(ver. 16. 17. &c.), that is, religion and virtue, as 
other authors have done (particularly Cebes, in his 
Tables), in the shape of a beautiful woman, or 
rather queen, with her arms extended, in the pos-
ture not only of directing, but also of rewarding 
her lovers and followers. For she holds forth in 
her right hand the great blessings of health, and 
length of days, unto all those that will walk in the 
way to which she points. And it was but just to 
place this in her right hand, that is, to give it the 
predominance, because it was the chief promise of 
the law; and, indeed, the most desirable of all 
earthly blessings, without which nothing can be 
enjoyed, no, not ourselves.

And then, after this, follow wealth and reputation, 
and also things that mankind mightily covet; which he 
places in her left hand, as inferior blessings, but 
that come also from her gift.

And as for cheerfulness in all conditions, there are no 
pleasures, he affirms, like those which wait upon 
her, and attend her motions. Safe and secure ple-
asures, which not merely gratify us for the present, 
and then expose us to danger, and leave us sad af-
therward; but give us a peaceable possession of per-
petual joy; which never dies nor decays, but, like 
the tree of life, remains fresh for ever. This he 
proves, ver. 19. 20. and amplifies in the rest of the 
chapter.

[b] In which some observe three proverbial sayings; 
one, ver. 8. which seems to be but a metaphorical
representation of that firmness, that vigorous health, and clearness of mind, which virtue imparts; the other in ver. 12. [c] "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth," which Theodore, upon Heb. xii. 6, calls indeed μακροθυμον χαρισματα, a proverbial admonition, belonging to such parents, guardians, and masters, as are careful of those committed to their charge; but he names it so, I suppose, only because he found it in the book of the Proverbs. The last in ver. 18. [d] "tree of life," which seems to be a proverbial speech (used afterward more than once in this book) for that which prolongs life; and makes it very delightful and pleasant, as well as firm and durable; if we understand it of Christ, the wisdom of God, (as Origen, St Ambrose, St Austin, and others do,) or of his doctrine, which is the same; it is literally true, that he gives immortality, as the tree of life in paradise would have done.

VER. 1. MY son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments. Let me then again intreat thee, whosoever thou art that comest to learn of me, (who loveth thee with a fatherly affection,) not to be careless and negligent in the observance of these instructions; but remember them, and love them, and set thyself heartily to do whatsoever I command thee.

VER. 2. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. For this is the surest way to that which all men naturally desire, and seek so attain; a long life, in firm health, vigour, and strength, with all manner of happiness and prosperity, Deut. xxxi. 18. 20.

VER. 3. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thine heart. Of this thou cannot miss, if thou wilt be steadfastly good and just; for the infinite bounty of God, and his faithfulness to his promises, will secure these blessings to thee: therefore let my commandments be ever before thine eyes; fix them in thy memory, and in thy affections, as if they were graven upon thy heart; and look upon it as the greatest ornament to be obedient to them.

VER. 4. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Which is as much as if I had bidden thee acquire favour with God, and understand, on all occasions, what is good for thyself; ordering all thy affairs with such judgement and prudence, as to be in high esteem with him and with men.

VER. 5. [f Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. And assure thyself there is no rule of prudence like this, to confide in God entirely, and to depend wholly on his providence, for good success in well-doing; not imagining, that by thy own wit and policy thou canst contrive such events as thou desirest, and bring about what thou designest.

VER. 6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. No, in all thy undertakings, both private and public, be sensible of his over-ruling power, observe his laws, and implore his favour and blessing; and he shall guide thee in thy proceedings, and bring them to an happy issue, as he in his wisdom sees best for thee.

VER. 7. [g Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.] Never be guilty of such folly, as to conceive thine own wit to be so great, that thou canst manage things thereby in thine own way (neglecting the rules that he hath prescribed thee) to thy satisfaction; but have a religious regard to him, who can either disappoint or prosper thee as he pleases, and, fearing to offend his majesty, avoid most cautiously those practices that he hath forbidden thee.

VER. 8. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. This is the way to preserve a good habit both of soul and body; and in all conditions to remain undejected, nay, cheerful and fully satisfied, whatsoever happens. See Arg. [b]

VER. 9. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase. As, for example, there are those who think it prudence to save all they can, though it be by robbing God himself: but, if thou wilt be truly wise and happy, honour him in his minister, by paying them their tithes duly, and bringing oblations to his house at the three solemn feasts, (Exod. xxii. 14. 15.), together with the first-fruits of all that thy estate produces, (Exod. xxii. 29. 30.), in token of thy gratitude to him, and that all thou hast is his, and cannot thrive without his blessing.

VER. 10. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. Which he will pour upon thee abundantly; and convince thee, by lading the earth with fruit, and sending a seasonable as well as plentiful harvest and vintage, that this is the way, not to diminish, but to increase the estate which God hath given thee, Deut. xxviii. 4. 5. 1 Chron. xxxi. 10.

VER. 11. [h My son, desire not the chastening of the Lord: neither be weary of his correction.] And suppose it be his pleasure that any affliction should befall thee, my son, (ver. 1.), let not that dissipate thee, nor make thee either doubt of his gracious providence over thee, or out of impatience take any unlawful course to remove it from thee;

VER. 12. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. But rather submit unto it, as a part of his fatherly discipline, which cannot hurt thee, but only correct something that is amiss in thee; for we are sure he loves those that keep his commandments, and therefore, nothing that proceeds from his love ought to be despised, or received with an abject mind, but duly esteemed by them, and raise their expectation of some good from the affliction; which should no more make him suspected of any unkindness, than a tender parent is, when he whips the child in whom he delights, and to whom he wishes so well, that he will not let him be unchristian. See Arg. [c]

VER. 13. [i Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that geteth understanding.] Happy, more happy than can be expressed, is that man, who attains
to this degree of wisdom, and acquires (though it cost him the greatest pains and labour) such an understanding of God, and belief of his providence, as notwithstanding any troubles that befall him, still to adhere unto him in faithful obedience, (ver. 7.)

Ver. 14. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof, than fine gold.] If it were to be bought for money, one would purchase it at any rate, for the profit of it is infinitely to be preferred before all the advantages that can be made by silver and gold.

Ver. 15. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her.] The most precious pearls are not so valuable, nor can our boundless fancy present any thing to our wishes, that is worthy to come in competition with it.

Ver. 16. Length of days is in her right hand: and in her left hand riches and honour.] For true wisdom presents us, as we say, with both hands; teaching us in the first place such prudence and moderation, as by the divine blessing prolong our days, (which none of those things can do for us;) and in the next place, adds both riches and honour, which men foolishly and vainly seek to get and to keep by other means. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.] And besides all this, there is a singular pleasure, nay, the highest delight, in all the acts of virtue to which wisdom directs her followers; who are always, either in perfect safety by well-doing, or, if any trouble come upon them, have that inward tranquillity and satisfaction, which nothing else could give them.

Ver. 18. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her.] In short, wisdom leads into a paradise, and supplies the place of that tree of life, from whence our first parents were banished; that is, gives not only a present, but an immortal satisfaction, to all those that strongly apprehend and retain her precepts; and therefore, I again pronounce him happy (ver. 14.) above all other men, and above all expression, who constantly and firmly adheres unto them. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 19. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.] For they are a participation of that wonderful wisdom and understanding, whereby the Lord settled the earth in that place where it remains fixed, and disposed the heavenly bodies in that admirable and unchangeable order, which he would have us imitate.

Ver. 20. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.] In works of mercy and goodness especially, whereby we plainly communicate with him in that knowledge, by which the Lord made fountains of water gush out of the earth for the use of all living creatures, and the clouds drop down plentifully their refreshing dews, for the cherishing of plants and grass, which in hot countries many times have no other moisture.

Ver. 21. ¶ My son, let them not depart from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion.] ¶ My son, (to whom my affection is so great, that I cannot but again repeat it, ver. 1. 11.) let me prevail with thee to fix these good instructions in thy mind; look upon them as the most solid wisdom, and the greatest cunning and policy; and accordingly observe them.

Ver. 22. So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.] For they will revive and cheer thee, when other things fail thee; and enable thee also with acceptable words to comfort those, whom the fame of thy wisdom shall invite to learn of thee.

Ver. 23. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.] When thou goest abroad about thy business, thou shalt dispatch it the more cheerfully, because thou art sure of God's providence over thee; and wisdom will direct thee to avoid those stumbling-blocks, by which others fall into sin and danger.

Ver. 24. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.] And when thou comest home to rest from thy labours, thou shalt not be troubled with fear of what may happen whilst thou art asleep, but (having nothing within to discomfit thee) shalt lie down securely, and, by a sound and sweet repose, be refreshed, to return to thy employments.

Ver. 25. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh.] In which, if thou shouldst be interrupted by any rumours and reports of unexpected and approaching danger, let not that disturb thee; no, though thou shouldst see the wicked ready to lay all waste, or the divine vengeance bringing utter desolation upon them for their wickedness.

Ver. 26. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.] For a firm hope in the Lord shall be thy support, even when thou art in a tottering condition; nay, when thy skill quite fails thee, and thou knowest not what to do for thy safety, he shall so direct and guide thee, that thou shalt be preserved from falling into the hands of those that lie in wait to destroy thee.

Ver. 27. ¶ With-hold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.] ¶ And, as it will give thee great security of mind and confidence in God at such a time, not to be conscious to thyself of any wrong done to thy neighbour, by denying to pay thy just debts when thou art able; so the remembrance of having done good to others will be a far greater, and therefore let me advise thee to take a special care, not to with-hold relief from those whose needs entitle them unto it, when thou canst not pretend disability, but hast wherewithal to do it.

Ver. 28. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.] And as thou wouldest not have God to defer his help in such distresses as I speak of, (ver. 25. 26,) so do not thou put off thy neighbour, when he begs a kindness of thee, saying, I cannot now; come another time; to-morrow thou shalt see what I will do for thee; when, if thou hast a heart to it, thou couldst supply him now as well as then; and who can tell what shall be to-morrow?
Ver. 29. *Deuis not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.* And let not the quietness of any man's temper, much less the confidence he hath of thy honesty and goodness, tempt thee to contrive any mischief to him; for the more securely he relies on thy virtue, and the less mistrust he hath of any harm from thee, the greater wickedness it will be, so much as to have it in thy thoughts to do him any injury.

Ver. 30. *Strive not with a man without cause, if be have done thee no harm.* [¶ For instance, do not bring false actions against any neighbour, nor vex him with causeless or unnecessary suits at law, no, nor so much as pretend a cause for quarrelling and falling out with him, when he hath done nothing to deserve it of thee.

Ver. 31. *Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.* [¶ And what though thou shouldst see men thrive by oppression and violence, let not that provoke thee to emulate them, that is, to wish thyself in their condition, by imitating them in any of their injurious proceedings.

Ver. 32. *For the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous.* [¶ For he that perversely departs from all the rules of truth and justice, is above all expression abominable to the Lord, even in his highest prosperity; but the Lord is a friend to men of sincere integrity, who know the secret of his providence in raising those wicked oppressors so high, that they may have the more dreadful fall.

Ver. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just.* [¶ The evil-doer is under the curse of the Lord, though he live in the most stately palace; but just and good men ought to look upon themselves as under his care and blessing, and therefore very happy in the meanest cottage.

Ver. 34. *Surely be scorned the scorner; but be givest grace to the lowly.* [¶ Those proud oppressors, and scoffers at good men, he will undoubtedly not only confound, but expose to scorn, and make them ridiculous in the eyes of the world; but cause the humble, modest, and meek, (who bear even their insolent scoffs patiently), to be had in honour, and highly esteemed.

Ver. 35. *The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools.* They may be despised and debased for a time, but in the issue they shall be accounted the only wise men, and leave an excellent never-dying fame behind them, when those impious men shall be famous for nothing, but the shame and disgrace that shall fall upon them.

The whole chapter, from ver. 4. may be conceived to be the words of David, as well as Solomon's. But I have extended David's advice no further than unto ver. 10. and there make Solomon to resume his exhortation, and urge upon his son what his father had taught him.

There is one proverbial speech in ver. 27. which needs no explication. Some would have another, ver. 16. but I can see no reason for it.

The principal instructions in this chapter are these: The care that parents ought to take to instruct their children diligently; and the greater they are, (suppose princes), the more accurate ought their education to be, as Solomon's was, ver. 3. 4. And above all things, the excellence of wisdom and virtue is to be inculcated; for this excites a desire of it, and that is the very beginning of it, as some expand those words, ver. 7. In which sense they are admirably explained in the book of Wisdom, vi. 12. 13. 14. 17. Next to this, they are to be cautioned against evil company, as the bane of youth; and the wretchedness of their life that live wickedly is to be represented, and the happiness, comfort, and satisfaction of theirs that live virtuously, which increases as their days and their virtues do, ver. 18. Next, they are to be taught how necessary it is to be constant in reading pious books, especially the holy scriptures, ver. 21. and to have an upright heart, sincerely disposed to follow such directions, upon which all depends, both their well or ill doing, and their well or ill being. Watchfulness also over the senses is commended, as of great use to preserve the affections from being corrupted.

Ver. 1. *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.* Listen, then, all ye that are desirous to learn, unto the instructions which, out of a paternal affection, I bring from God unto you; hearken to them, though they correct your present manners, and let your mind be so attentive, that you may know what it is to have a right understanding in all things.

Ver. 2. *For I give you good doctrine; forsake ye.
not my law.] They are no frivolous or indifferent matters which I teach you, but the most excellent things, and absolutely necessary to your happiness; therefore do not merely attend to them, but strictly observe my precepts, as the law and rule of your life.

Ver. 3. For I was my father's son, and tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.] Do as I myself did, who remember that, when I was a child, the son of a most wise and pious father, and under the careful eye of an affectionate mother, who loved me most dearly above all her children, and while I was soft and flexible, and apt to receive good impressions, looked to my education with great circumspection.

Ver. 4. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine ears retain my words; keep my commandments, and live.] My father was wont to tutor and instruct me, (1 Chron. xxviii. 8. xxxix. 2.), saying, Mind my words, and faithfully retain them, not only in thy memory, but in thy affections; observe my commandments, and thou shalt enjoy long happiness.

Ver. 5. Get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth.] And this is the thing I require of thee, not so much to seek after riches, as to treasure up wisdom, and endeavour to understand how to behave thyself upon all occasions; and when thou art well informed in thy duty, do not forget it, nor turn aside from the way into which I will direct thee.

Ver. 6. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her, and she shall keep thee.] Quit all things in this world, rather than forsake the precepts of wisdom; stick to them, and they will preserve thee from innumerable mischief; love them sincerely, and they will be a stronger guard than money can procure thee.

Ver. 7. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding.] And as there is nothing comparable to wisdom, so the first step to it is to know as much, and to prize it accordingly. Begin therefore to be wise, by looking upon the fear of God as above all earthly possessions, and by being willing, if it were needful, to give all thou art worth to know what is pleasing to him.

Ver. 8. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her.] Thou canst not speak nor think too highly of this wisdom, as thou shalt find by happy experience. For if thou magnify it above all things, it will raise thy esteem, and make thee great in the world; yes, when thou entertainest it with ardent love, thou shalt become most illustrious in the sight of God and men.

Ver. 9. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.] Whatever else thou hast to commend thee and gain thee honour, this shall add unto it, and make it far more amiable; the fairest ornaments, or the most beautiful crown that can be set upon thy head, shall receive lustre from hence, and be settled there the most securely.

Ver. 10. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.] Thus my father was wont to discourse to me, as I do to thee, my son, whom I earnestly again intreat (ver. 1.) to consider what I say, and to believe it, and then I promise thee, what he did me, (ver. 4.), that thou shalt lead a long and happy life.

Ver. 11. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.] I have already taught thee, and will still inform thee, in the wisest course unto it, not in those crooked ways of fraud and falseness, &c. which many take, but in the direct paths of integrity and truth, in which I intend, as I have done hitherto, to lead thee.

Ver. 12. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.] And if thy actions and designs have no other rule, thou shalt be at ease, and free from those straits and difficulties which others meet withal; and in case thy business shall require haste, this will be the safest, as well as the most inoffensive, (if not the shortest), way to accomplish thy ends.

Ver. 13. Take fast hold of instruction, let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life.] Resolve to try it, and though it shall be contrary to thy present sense, yet do not receive this instruction which I give thee, but take such fast hold of it, as never, for want of care and pains, to let it slip out of thy mind; keep it as a most precious treasure, for all thy happiness depends upon it.

Ver. 14. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.] And if thou really intendest to be guided by me, remember the advice I gave thee in the beginning, (chap. i. 10.), not so much as to enter upon their wicked course of life, or to keep them company, who regard not God, and are injurious to men; or if thou hast been seduced into it, be not persuaded by their seeming prosperity, and thriving condition, to continue in it.

Ver. 15. Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away.] Avoid it, therefore, with a just abhorrence; come not near it, but get as far as thou canst from their society; and decline all occasions that might invite thee into it, as dangerous temptations.

Ver. 16. For they sleep not except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.] For as mischief is their business, so they pursue it with a restless diligence; there being those among them, for instance, that cannot be quiet, nor have any satisfaction, till they have executed their villainous intentions, but perpetually disturb themselves, that they may ruin others.

Ver. 17. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.] For they live by robbery and spoil, having no other meat and drink, but what is the fruit of rapine and violence, and not of their honest labours.

Ver. 18. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.] Which makes a wide difference between them and righteous men, whose pure and innocent life is full of honour as well as joy, which increases continually together with their virtue, proceeding like the splen-
dour of the sun, which nothing can extinguish, nor hinder in its course) till come to the highest pitch of joy and glory.

Ver. 19. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble.] Whereas those wicked people live most uncomfortably, as well as basely and vilely, going on blindly to their own destruction, (of which they are in constant danger, and grows more and more upon them), and yet they know not, (no more than men in thick darkness), what mischief it is that suddenly maybefal them.

Ver. 20. [My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.] [¶ Therefore I do, not without reason, once more repeat my request unto thee, (ver. 1. 16.), that thou wilt give diligent heed to my advice, and seriously consider those exhortations, which proceed from a sincere affection to thy welfare.

Ver. 21. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.] Read them over and over again, and keep them perpetually in mind; or rather, preserve them studiously, and lay them up, as a most precious treasure, in the closest affections of thy heart.

Ver. 22. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.] For they will make all those exceeding happy, both in body and soul, that come thoroughly acquainted with them; and how various soever their temper and condition be, will prove an universal remedy for all their griefs and troubles.

Ver. 23. [¶ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.] [¶ And charge thyself with this, above all other cares, to set such a strict guard upon the inward thoughts, motions, and affections of thy soul, (which are besieged with many enemies), that thy consent be never obtained to anything which thou oughtest to refuse; for thy living well or ill depends on this, and such as thy caution and watchfulness is in this, such will the actions of thy life be, which flow from thence.

Ver. 24. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.] And as thyself that defend a city against an enemy, set a strong guard at the gates and posterns, so do thou upon thy mouth; never speaking things contrary to truth, honesty, and religion thyself, nor listening unto those that do, but banishing both, as far as is possible, from thy familiarity.

Ver. 25. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.] The eyes also are dangerous inlets into the heart; and therefore watch them well, that they do not gaze about, and fasten on every object that invites them; but be fixed upon one scope, as thy thoughts ought to be, from which let nothing divert them.

Ver. 26. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.] And before thou fixest and resolvest upon any action, examine and weigh it thoroughly, whether it be agreeable to the rule of life, and the end thou aimest at, and so thou shalt be constant to thyself, and confirmed in a steadfast course of well-doing.

Ver. 27. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.] From which do not suffer thyself to be drawn aside, either to superstition on the one hand, or to contempt or neglect of religion on the other; let neither love of friends, nor hatred of enemies, neither hope of pleasure and gain, nor fear of pain and damage, neither prosperous nor cross events, ever move thee to turn into either extremes from the rule of virtue; but, whatsoever inclination thou findest that way, do not proceed to commit the least sin against God, or against thy neighbour.

CHAP. V.

The Argument.—There being nothing to which youth is so prone, as to give up themselves to satisfy their fleshly desires, and nothing proving so pernicious to them, if they do it with harlots, the wise man gives a new caution against those impure lusts, which he had taken notice of before, (ch. ii. 16. 17. &c.), as great obstructions to wisdom; and with repeated intreaties, begs attention to so weighty an argument, which here he prosecutes more largely, and presses not only with singular elegance, but with powerful reasons. Which in the heat of youth, men are not forward to consider; but if they would be so sober, Solomon hath said enough to deter them from whoredom.

Whose miserable effects he describes by several apt resemblances, (ver. 4. 5.), which shews how, by this vice, men lose their honour, their time, their health, and estates; and at last, (as he shews afterwards), lie down in sorrow, and end their days in an unprofitable repentance. And, therefore, for the prevention of this, he commends the use of marriage, and a passionate love for a man's own wife; which he describes allegorically; first, [a] under the comparison of a domestic fountain, where a man may quench his natural thirst, and from whence swarms (i. e. children) may be derived abroad to serve the public good, &c.; and, secondly, under the comparison of a young hind, and a young wild goat; which are taken notice of by authors that write of animals, (particularly Oppianus), to be loving creatures; and which in ancient times were play-fellows, (as one may call them), for the greatest persons, who kept them in their palaces, and diverted themselves with them, as a lovely sort of creature, whom they delighted to adorn with chains, and garlands, and such like things. About which Boccharus among others may be consulted; who hath demonstrated, that the Jaalub, (which we translate a-roco), is a creature that lived in mountainous places, and could climb up the steepest rocks. Unto which, as well as to a young hind, Solomon compares a good wife, because of the simplicity, softness, and good-nature of this kind of creature, and other qualities mentioned by ancient authors; who abundantly satisfy us, what reason the wise man
had to make choice of these comparisons, to represent the pleasure of ardent love between man and wife, when it is natural without constraint; sincere, simple, gentle, without moroseness, suspicions, or pride; which good qualities are not to be found in harlots, but may be met withal in a wife. From whence he shews the unreasonable ness, nay, unaccountable folly of preferring fornication and vagrant lusts before the innocent joys of a married life, (ver. 20.), to which a man, who considers his own good, would choose to be tied, that he may avoid the inconveniences, or rather miseries, to which the lusts of uncleanness reduce him; but especially the heavy judgement of God, who, having ordained marriage for the comfort of mankind, and the preserving society, (ver. 21. &c.), will not therefore let the contempt of it go unpunished.

The principal things to be learnt in this chapter are:—not to believe every thing to be good for us, that pleases the flesh for the present, ver. 3. &c. but in the beginning of any pleasure, to look to the end of it; to avoid the company of harlots; to use due care in the choice of a wife; to love her too much rather than too little; to restrain ourselves from inordinate affection, by the consideration of God's omnipresence, &c.

The proverbial sayings are obvious enough, in ver. 3. 4. 15. I shall only give an account of my translating it ver. 14. [b] the assembly of judges; for in many other places, besides those quoted there in the paraphrase, it signifies the 70 elders or senators, who judged the people, as in Josh. xx. 6. and Numb. xxvii. 21. where R. Solomon thus expounds it ver. 12 all the congregation. And so truly it seems plainly to be used, Numb. xv. 24. &c. where the sacrifice is different from that prescribed in Levit. iv. 13. &c.; and therefore the sin was different, and the congregation for whom this was offered were the representatives of the whole congregation, or, as they now speak, the great Sanhedrin.

Ver. 1. *My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding.* I cannot too often awaken thine attention, (whoever thou art that puttest thyself under my instruction, see chap. ii. 1. iii. 1. 21. &c.), especially in things of such moment as I am going to treat of; and therefore again I beseech thee, both to mind diligently, and to consider what I take to be true wisdom, and more than ordinary prudence.

Ver. 2. *That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.* Which, if thou observest, it will make thee so skilful and discreetly cautious, that thou shalt not only be able to preserve thyself from the most subtile and dangerous deceits, but upon occasion to advise others, and keep them from being cheated;

Ver. 3. *For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.* As too many are by the arts of an harlot, from whom thou oughtest to estrange thyself as much as if she were not of the commonwealth of Israel; for she,

pretending the greatest love, allures inexperienced youth by her flattering speeches, and sweet voice perhaps and songs, wherewith she enchants them; and making them believe they shall taste nothing but the most delicious pleasures, her soft and smooth enticements slip down gladly into their unwary hearts which are taken with her.

Ver. 4. *But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.* But the beginning of this love is not so sweet, as the conclusion is bitter; and, therefore, think of both together, and believe what I now tell thee without making a trial,—that after a short pleasure follows long pain, by the impairing men's health, strength, estates, and credit; which they cannot reflect upon without trouble and vexation, and (if she do not quite destroy their reason) be filled with remorse of conscience and anguish of spirit; for, like a sword that cuts on both sides, she wounds both soul and body:

Ver. 5. *Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.* In short, leads those that follow her to an untimely, shameful, and miserable end; to have never so little to do with her, is to approach to certain and inevitable destruction, not only here, but in another world.

Ver. 6. *Lest thou be as one that ponders the path of life, her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them.* For though thou mayest think to make a retreat in time, thou wilt be deceived; she having more ways than thou canst ever know, (winding and turning herself into a thousand shapes), to keep thee from so much as deliberating about thy return to a virtuous course of life.

Ver. 7. *Hear me now, therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.* All which considered, should incline those that read these things to be obedient to me, who do not desire to restrain them from any thing that will make them happy, but in tender affection advise them, not to be enticed by her flatteries to depart from those fatherly counsels, which out of mere kindness I give unto them.

Ver. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.* If all will not be governed by them, yet do thou, whose mind is awakened to attend unto me, wholly shun all familiarity with her; may, so much as the least aspect towards her; avoid her as thou wouldest the plague; and be so far from going into her chamber, as not to come near the door of her house.

Ver. 9. *Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.* Lest thou forfeit all the reputation which perhaps thou hast got by worthy actions, and grow contemptible among thy friends and acquaintance; who see thee prefer the company of harlots, and their base attendants, before that of the most virtuous persons; and thereby thou lose, not only the fame, but sacrifice the flower of thine age, and thy precious time, to one that doth not love thee a jot, but could see thee perish without any pity.

Ver. 10. *Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of a stranger.* And that will be the issue of thy impurity, which wastes first,
the strength and vigour of thy body, and then thy money and estate, upon a strange family, perhaps of another country; whose filthy lusts are satiated at thy expense of thy spirits, and whose house and table are furnished with the fruit of thy care and labours.

Ver. 11. And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.] And when things are come to this pass, that thy credit, thy friends, thy precious time, thy health, thy estate, and thy pleasure too, are all gone, and nothing left but an heavy heart, and skin and bone, then thou begin unprofitably to groan and lament; nay, perhaps to roar out thy grief in a most deplorable manner:

Ver. 12. And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof!] Saying, How stupidly foolish have I been, in not considering all this sooner! how senselessly bent upon my own ruin! I am amazed to think how I hated the cautions that were given me to avoid her company, and inwardly despised (how civilly soever in outward show I received them) the just reproofs I had afterward for going to her.

Ver. 13. And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers; nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me.] I wanted no good instructions of my parents, tutors, friends, and God's ministers, who informed me of the danger, and taught me how to escape it; but, alas! I was so sottish as not to obey them; so contumacious, that I did not so much as consider what they said unto me.

Ver. 14. I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly.] But gave up myself to follow my lusts, which in a short time engaged me in almost all kind of wickedness; from which the reverence of no persons could restrain me; but openly, in the face of the most public and solemn assemblies of God's people, even before the magistrates and judges, (Numb. xxv. 7. xxxv. 12.) I boldly committed them. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 15. Drink waters out of thine own cistern; and running waters out of thine own well.] Such are the fruitless moists of a man, that hath quite exhausted himself in those lewd courses; which shew how much better it is to follow the advice which I now give thee; marry, and in a wife of thine own enjoy the pleasures thou desirest, and be content with them alone; innocent, chaste, and pure pleasures; as much different from the other, as the clear waters of a wholesome fountain are from those of a dirty lake or puddle.

Ver. 16. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.] Of whom thou mayest have a lawful issue, which thou needest not be ashamed to own; but openly produce and send them abroad like streams from a spring, to serve the public good; nay, a numerous progeny may be derived from your happy society, and match into divers other honest families.

Ver. 17. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee.] Children that acknowledge no other father, because they spring from one whom they enjoy (like a fountain in thy own ground) to thyself alone; being taught by thy confining thyself to her, never to admit any stranger to thy bed, but to keep it solely unto her.

Ver. 18. Let thy fountain be blessed; and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.] Happy shalt thou every way be in such a wife; whom I advise thee to take in thy youth, and, avoiding those filthy cruel harlots, (ver. 9.), to solace thyself in her innocent and delightful company; whereby thou wilt long preserve thy youth, which they speedily deflower, ver. 10.

Ver. 19. Let her be as the loving hind, and the pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love.] Love her and cherish her, with a most tender affection, and let her always seem amiable in thy eyes: if thou wertdest recreate and disport thyself, (as some are wont to do with young fawns, and other beautiful creatures of like kind), let it be with her, as the sweetest companion, in whose embraces take such satisfaction, as to forget all other, and to be excessively transported with her as long as you live. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 20. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?] Consider, my son, (ver. 1.), what I say, and deny if thou canst, that it is an unaccountable folly to seek that in a vile harlot, (to whom thou oughtest to be as great a stranger as to her religion), which thou mayest more fully, more pleasantly, securely, and constantly, as well as more innocently, enjoy in a pious wife of thine own nation;

Ver. 21. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and be pondered all his goings.] And, which is most considerable, enjoy with the approbation and favour of the Lord; from whom no man can hide his most private actions, but he plainly sees and weighs all he doth, wheresoever he be; and will exactly proportion rewards and punishments, according as he behaves himself.

Ver. 22. ¶ His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and be shall be bolden with the cords of his sins.] ¶ If he be a wicked fornicator or adulterer, for instance, let him not think to escape, because he is so cunning that nobody observes him, or so powerful that none can call him to account, for his own manifold iniquities shall arrest and apprehend him; and he shall need no other chains to bind and hold him fast to answer for them to God.

Ver. 23. He shall die without instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.] Whose sentence upon such a person is this; that he shall inevitably perish, (ver. 5.), because he refused to follow those instructions; and not only miss of his aim of being happy, but, like men that wander from the right way, precipitate himself into unexpected ruin, (ver. 9. 10. 11.), because he was such an egregious fool as to take no warning, by all that could be said to him, but still to commit innumerable sins, (ver. 13. 14.), though he was told the many inconveniences, nay, mischiefs they would bring upon him.

CHAP. VI.

The Argument.—For the securing of the peace and
happiness of a married life, (which the wise man had commended in the foregoing chapter,) he here adds two cautions; one against sureship, the other against sloth, which make great discontents in a family, by bringing it to poverty. He illustrates both by elegant similitudes, especially the latter, by the example of the ant; who borrows of none, and yet is not in danger to starve, laying up in store, by a notable industry, sufficient provision in due season against a time of need. Which the great Lord Bacon ingeniously applies (in the beginning of his sixth book of the Advancement of Learning) to the improvement of arts and sciences, by every one's bringing his grain. And in this business he defines the slothful to be, whose only care it is to live upon the main stock, but not to improve it by sowing the ground of sciences over again, and reaping a new harvest. This is the sum of the eleven first verses.

And upon this occasion he annexes the description of a deceitful knave, (ver. 12. &c.,) who cares not by what wicked arts he lives, when he is reduced to poverty. Whose character he gives from his mouth, his eyes, feet, fingers, heart, and tongue. And after a septenary of vices, (ver. 16. &c.,) which he represents as most odious to God, he returns to his former argument, to give cautions against uncleanness, especially adultery, (ver. 20. 24. &c.) which, as it is many times the effect of idleness, so he shews is the way to bring one to poverty; may, to endanger one's life, or to bring inevitably upon him some other mischief, not only infamy, but the hatred and revenge of that person who is wronged by the adulterer, who hereby puts himself into a worse condition than that of a thief.

They that would see the terrible effects of this jealousy fully and lively described, let them read Saint Chrysostom, πονηρίας, chap. iii. where he observes, among other things, that τὸ ἰᾶμα τῶν παιδῶν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, &c. this disease is wont to breed and bring forth, not only an intolerable heaviness of mind, but an insupportable rage; and that such is the madness of this distemper, that it is not cured, no, not by the revenge it takes upon him that is the cause of it.

The principal points of wisdom to be learned in this chapter are these:—care of our family; caution in engaging for others; diligence in some honest employment; hatred of idleness, as contrary to nature; not to content the meanest instructor, but to learn something even of the smallest creature; and to improve the present time; to dread the mischievous effects of poverty, especially that which comes by idleness, (the effect of which is too oft the loss of all conscience, ver. 12. 13. &c.) to give good heed to the admonitions of our parents and instructors, when they teach the will of God; and above all things, to fortify ourselves against the sins of uncleanness. About which the wise man gives the more frequent cautions, because youth is not more prone to them, than they are pernicious to youth; who ought therefore not only
to weigh diligently the miserable consequences of them, especially of adultery, (which he represents in the conclusion of the chapter,) but carefully to avoid the occasions of such sins; and faithfully to suppress the first motions towards them, ver. 25. &c. [c] Where he gives a particular charge to watch over our eyes, (which are the inlets to love), and uses a remarkable phrase to express the danger of gazing upon an evil woman, lest he be taken or caught with her eye-lids; which he seems to compare to nets, as other authors do; particularly Philostratus, in his Epistles, where he often speaks of the θαλάσσαι τοιαύτης, nets of the eyes; and hath in these elegant words expressed the power of love which resides in the eye-lids, here mentioned.

Ἐγὼ ὁ δοκείοντος μακροκρατείναι, ἡ δὲ ἐκλογὴ ἀδύνατον, καὶ ἄν μόνων ἐπικαθησάμενος, τυχόν ἰσχὺς μακροκρατεῖ, ἔπιστ. Τυρανν. Epist. Tyanii.

It would be too long to note the proverbial speeches in this chapter. I shall only give a brief account of them, and of one phrase in this chapter, that needs a little explication.

As for the proverbial speech, it is ver. 11. upon which the Lord Bacon had made a very ingenious observation, distinguishing in this manner between the poverty that comes as a traveller, and the want that comes as an armed man; that the "shipwreck of fortune falls upon prodigals, or such as are careless of their estates, by insensible degrees of the first; with soft silent paces, like a traveller, and is hardly perceived; but soon after, necessity invades him, like an armed man, that is, presses upon him so hard, that he feels it plainly, and perceives there is no resistance to be made." And thereupon he gives this prudent advice, "to prevent the traveller, and to be well provided against the armed man." But it is sufficient to have noted this here, (out of the eighth book of the Advancement of Learning, chap. ii. par. 5.), which they that please may make use of on occasion. In my paraphrase I have waved this exact curiosity, because I observe the wise man generally repeats the same thing in other words, without any such distinction.

[c] As for the phrase I spoke of, it is ver. 31. where it is said, a thief shall restore sevenfold, (as we translate the word), when the law of Moses enjoins no such restitution, but much less, (Exod. xxiii. 1. 4.) and there is no reason to think the law was altered in after-times. Therefore I have followed another use of the word Schivatvirjum, which signifies not any determinate number, but only such as is perfect and complete in its kind; as may be seen, Gen. iv. 15. 24. Psal. xii. 7. Isa. xxx. 26.

Ver. 1. MT, son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger. And now, my son, (see chap. ii. 1. iii. 17.) that no difference may arise between thy wife and thee, be advised by me not to pass thy word rashly for the money which thy neighbour or friend borroweth of another, much less stand bond for a
stranger, whose honesty or ability is unknown to thee.

Ver. 2. Thou art smarred with the words of thy mouth; thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.] Young men, indeed, think this no great matter, but if thou hast been so incautious, as to be drawn into such engagements, look upon thyself as no longer a free man, but harnessed and enslaved in dangerous obligations.

Ver. 3. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the band of thy friend; go, tumble thyself, and make sure thy friend.] And therefore, in that case, immediately follow the counsel which I now give thee, my son; do thy utmost endeavour to be discharged, by pressing thy friend forthwith to satisfy the debt, or to give thee security against the creditor; make no delay, and stick not, if need be, to cast down thyself before him on the ground, and beseech him as readily to grant thy request, as thou wast forward to comply with his; be not modest at all, nor cease to urge and importune him by thyself and by thy friends, till thou hast prevailed with him.

Ver. 4. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids.] Be not quiet till this be accomplished; nor take so much as a wink of sleep till thou art eased of this care; which, if thou understandest thyself, may well disturb thy rest.

Ver. 5. Deliver thyself as a roe from the band of the hunter, and as a bird from the band of the fowler.] For thou art in the same condition with a young roe, or silly bird, that is taken in the toil of the hunter, or the snare of the fowler; and therefore struggle, like them, with all thy might, to get loose, (if it be possible) and be released from the bond wherein thou art entangled.

Ver. 6. Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.] Nor is industry and diligence requisite in this alone, but in all thy affairs; to which, therefore, if thou art slothful, I must exhort thee by the example of the ants, whose orderly and unambitious diligence, in collecting and preserving food for themselves, if thou wilt mark and observe, thou mayest be ashamed to be an idle spectator of their labours; and learn hereafter to imitate their provident care.

Ver. 7. Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler.] Which is the more remarkable, because they have none to lead and direct them, (as mankind have), no overseer to exact their labour, no supreme governor to call them to an account for any negligence.

Ver. 8. Provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.] And yet they never omit the opportunity they have in harvest, to make provision against the winter, but toil perpetually in gathering and carrying food into the cells they have digged for it in the earth, where they lay it up, and secure it with admirable art, that it may neither be injured by the weather, nor stolen from them by other creatures.

Ver. 9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?] O the strange idleness of mankind! who have many monitors and governors, that call upon them again and again, and stir them up in vain to labour. What wretchedness is this, which makes thee, O sluggard, indulge thyself in idleness and sloth! as if thou wert made for nothing else but to sleep and take thine ease!

Ver. 10. Yet a little sleep, a little folding of the hands to sleep.] Rolling thyself in thy bed, and ridiculously desiring thy pains may be spared, and thou mayest be suffered still, without any disturbance, to enjoy a little more sleep; when thou hast loitered too long, and put off the care of thy affairs from time to time, till thou hast none left to do it in.

Ver. 11. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.] But poverty comes upon thee, and before thou art aware, leaves thee as naked as if thou wast stripped by a highwayman; may, extreme want seizes on thee unavoidable, like an armed man, which thou canst find no means to resist. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 12. A wicked person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.] By which means thou mayest be tempted to become the worst of men, a perfect, shrew, void of all faith and honesty, whose mouth never speaks a word of truth; but makes it his business, by lies, or flatteries, or slander, or perjuries, to maintain himself in his idle courses.

Ver. 13. He walketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.] His very eyes are instruments of deceit or mischief, for he makes signs with them to his companions, when they are to play their pranks; or if that be too broad, he secretly treads upon their toes, or signifies his mind by the motion of his fingers; for every part of him is employed to make his wicked meaning understood.

Ver. 14. Dwairineis is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.] How should it be otherwise, when his heart is a shop, furnished with nothing but all manner of perverse inclinations, which are perpetually at work to contrive some mischief or other; and if they can do nothing else) by casting suspicions into men's minds one of another, to stir up hatred, dissension, strife, brawlings, law-suits, and all manner of discord, which is the destruction of families and kingdoms.

Ver. 15. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall be broken without remitting.] And shall prove his utter ruin; which, for this very cause, shall sooner than he thinks of, in a terrible manner come upon him; when he fancies he hath carried his matter so cunningly, that nobody discerns his villainy, he shall on a sudden be looked upon as the worst of mankind, and, like a vessel broken into little bits, be incurably undone.

Ver. 16. These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him:] For, among offences of this kind, nothing is more odious to the Lord, (who is the dispenser of rewards and punishments), nothing more opposite to the divine nature, and which be more severely punished, than these six or seven things; which are commonly
found in loose companions such as I have now described.

Ver. 17. A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.] First, Pride and haughtiness of spirit, which, swelling a man with a vain opinion of himself, makes him contempt all others, and overlook them as below his notice. Secondly, Falsehood, or treachery, which stick not at any lies, or flatteries, or calumnies. Ahd, thirdly, A violent, cruel disposition, which makes a man rather imbrue his hands in the blood of an innocent person, than not have him removed, who stands in the way of his designs.

Ver. 18. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief.] To which add, the fountain of all these, and of those that follow, a mind that studies nothing but how by fraud or force (though never so injurious to others) to satisfy some desire of pleasure, covetousness, or revenge; which produces three other abominable vices. First, Forwardness to execute such mischievous intentions and desires cheerfully, without any check or delay.

Ver. 19. A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.] Secondly, An atheistical impudence, which makes a man, in open court, (when he is upon his oath,) testify any falsehood against his neighbour; and, lastly, such malicious envy as loves to make the dearest friends fall out, and takes pleasure to see those at variance, who ought to be most closely united in brotherly affection.

Ver. 20. [My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.] ¶ And here, my son, I must remember thee of what I said in the beginning, (chap. i. 8.), about a reverend regard unto thy parents; especially when they warn thee against such wickednesses as these; do not make light of their admonitions, but observe the precepts of thy father, and let thy mother's commands be a law to thee. See chap. i. 8.

Ver. 21. Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.] Fix them in thy mind, and link thy affections so fast to them, that they may not only be continually before thine eyes, but seem the greatest ornament to all thy words and actions, when they are ordered by their directions.

Ver. 22. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awaketh, it shall talk with thee.] Thon wilt find the benefit of giving early entertainment to such good counsel from thy parents, in every passage of thy whole life, for when thou goest about any business, it will guide thee to do it honestly and successfully; when thou liest down to sleep, it will make thee rest secure of the guardianship of the divine Providence over thee; and when thou awaketh in the morning, suggest to thy thoughts how thou oughtest to behave thyself at home and abroad.

Ver. 23. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproof of instruction are the way of life.] In the darkest times, and the most dubious cases, it will both direct and comfort thee, for every particular commandment of God (which they teach thee) is like a candle, and the whole law is like the light of the sun, to shew thee thy way, and to exhilarate thy spirits, while thou walkest in it; nay, the severest reproofs, which correct thy errors, and reduce thee to obedience, are the way to the greatest happiness;

Ver. 24. To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.] As those instructions and reproofs, for instance, ought to be accounted, which preserve thee from being deluded by the flattering speeches and enticements of a lewd woman, from whom thou oughtest perfectly to estrange thyself, as from a sink of all wickedness.

Ver. 25. Lust not after her beauty, in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eye-lids.] Let me advise thee again (though I have done it oft, ii. 16. v. 3. 4. 8ce) not to gaze upon her beauty, or upon her fine attire, but suppress the very first desire which a glance of her may have kindled in thy heart; do not consent to pursue in the least, much less suffer thyself to be caught in the nets of her wanton eyes, and thereby drawn into her dangerous embraces. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 26. For by means of a whoremonger, a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.] For such is the cunning of a harlot, that having got a silly youth into her toils, she will hardly let him go, till she has reduced him to the extremest beggary; and if she be another man's wife, a train is laid for that which is more precious by far than all the treasures he hath spent, viz. his dearest life, which he foolishly loses for the short pleasure of a sinful lust.

Ver. 27. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt?] He may think, perhaps, to enjoy his pleasure so privately, that none shall know it; but that is as unlike, as that a man should take fire secretly into his bosom, and so conceal it that it shall not break out, and burn his clothes.

Ver. 28. Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?] Who ever heard that fire will do no hurt, because it is closely lodged? or that any body ever walked barefoot upon red-hot coals, and his feet escaped from being burnt?

Ver. 29. So be that goeth in to his neighbour's wife, whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.] Even so it is sottish folly to imagine that a man shall suffer nothing, who lies with his neighbour's wife: let him be who he will that commits that crime, he shall not escape unpunished:

Ver. 30. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.] For he is not a common thief, who only steals a man's goods, and that perhaps out of extreme necessity, merely to satisfy his hungry appetite, which he knows not otherwise to fill; such an one we are apt to pity, and do not expose him to shame, by whipping him, and laying stripes upon his back.

Ver. 31. But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of bis house.] But when he is found out, he shall make as complete a restitution (Psal. lxxix. 14.) as the law requires,
(Exod. xxii. 1. &c.), though that perhaps may be no less than all that he is worth. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 32. But whoso committeth adultery with a wo-
man, lacketh understanding: he that doth it, destroyeth his
own soul.] But the adulterer robs a man of his wife,
without any such necessity, there being other and
honest ways to satisfy his desires; and therefore hath
no excuse, but must be looked upon as a stupid fool,
void of common understanding; and when he is found
out, be punished, not merely in his estate, but with
the loss of his life, Lev. xx. 10.

Ver. 33. A wound and dishonour shall be get, and his
reproach shall not be wiped away.] And, besides the
quarrels and other troubles wherein this sin may engage
him, his reputation shall receive a deadly wound, and
it will make him infamous as long as he lives, and
when he is dead; for while his name lasts, it shall not
be mentioned without reproach, but have a brand
of disgrace set upon it, which shall never be blotted
out.

Ver. 34. For jealousy is the rage of a man: there-
fore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.] For no
restitution can be made, nor satisfaction given in this
case, as there may be in the other; no prayers, neither,
or submission, shall prevail with the injured husband,
whose justly provoked indignation rises up to a fa-
urious rage, which will not pity or spare the adulterer,
(though the public justice should be asleep), when
he finds an opportunity to be revenged. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 35. He will not regard any ransom; neither
will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.] Though
he may be willing to expiate his crime, and
redeem his life at any rate, it will not be accepted; the
largest gifts will be refused, and though greater and
greater be still offered, they will not appease his
wrath, which pursues the adulterer implacably, and
never rests contented but in his utter ruin.

CHAP. VII.

THE ARGUMENT.—Chastity is a virtue of that con-
sequence, and impurity such a pernicious bane of
youth, that the wise man thought he could not too
often make mention of the danger of the one, to
move men carefully to preserve the other. And
therefore is not contented with what he had already
said about this matter, in the latter end of the 2d
chapter, and in the whole 3d chapter, and now in
the latter part of the 6th; but again repeats it
with renewed importunities, desiring to be heard
attentively, especially in the cautions he gives re-
against adultery, the avoiding of which he re-
resents as a high point of wisdom, ver. 1.—4.

And the better to secure those that desire to be hap-
py from this snare, he represents, together with
the silliness of young men, the cunning and crafty
devices of an impudent adulteress. Which is ad-
mirably set forth from ver. 6.—21. Where he be-
gins to shew the effects of her courtship, and its
famendable conclusion. And therefore, ver. 24.
renews his intreaties to beware of such women,
who have undone many and great persons, and to
stop at the very first motion or inclination towards
her.

The sum of all is, that it is a singular benefit a man
hath by true wisdom, to be preserved from such
sins and such miseries; and therefore we should
study wisdom, which alone can secure us from
being deceived by such flatteries, as bewitch silly
and incautious souls to their ruin. And herein the
vigilance of magistrates is required to watch and
observe (as Solomon did, ver. 6. 7.) the manner of
their subjects, that they may the better obviate and
correct their vices; but especially every man's dili-
gent consideration is necessary, of such things as
Solomon here sets before him, to divert him from
such wicked courses. Particularly the character
of these lewd women is to be studied, who are
then most abominable, when they put on the mask
of piety and devotion: As this strumpet doth
(ver. 11.) in her speech which she makes to the
young man; where there are two things in my
Paraphrase, of which I owe some account to the
reader.

[a] The one is in the beginning of it, ver. 14.
Where I have taken Scholamin, peace-offerings, of
which there were three sorts, (Lev. vii. 11. 12.
16.), for the last of them, offerings of thanksgiv-
ing for blessings already obtained, not of prayer
for the impetration of blessings from God (as Gro-
tius and others understand the word) not yet re-
ceived. My reason is, because she was so solici-
tous to have company at her feast upon this sacri-
fice that very day. Every body knows that such
sacrifices were to be of the best, either of bullocks,
sheep, or goats, (Lev. iii. 1. 6. 12.), and that the
greatest part of them fell to the share of the per-
son who offered them, that he might feast with
God; that is, all except the fat upon the kidneys,
and rump of the sheep, and the breast and right
shoulder, which was sufficient to make a liberal
entertainment for his friends. But this is not so
commonly observed, that though they might keep
this flesh two days, before it was all spent, be-
cause there was such plenty of it, yet that is to be
understood only of the two first sorts of peace-offer-
ings, for obtaining blessings; not of the Eucharisti-
cal, or thank-offerings, which, as Philo observes,
were to be eaten the very same day they were of-
fered; that they who had readily received favours
from God, might as readily, and without delay,
communicate to others. Which is the account
Abarbinel also gives of this matter; and it is ob-
servable, that all sorts of bread were to be joined
with this sacrifice, that every thing might be ready
for the feast.

[b] The other thing is at the latter end of her speech,
ver. 20. where by the word Hacec electromagnetic translations
they that can consult Lud. de Dieu, upon Psal. lxxxi. 3. will find good reason to take it quite otherwise; for the full moon, which giving light then all the night, made it a fit time for a journey, either in winter, (as by the darkness of the night, ver. 9. I suppose it might now be), when the days are short, or in summer, when the heat made them unfit for travel.

The proverbial sayings in this chapter, some make three, others four; all contained in two verses, 22d and 23d. With which I shall not trouble the reader, because I have made them plain enough in the paraphrase, and intend not to fill this book with like sayings out of other authors.

[3] I should only add, that rabbim, in the first verse but one, signifying great men as well as many, I have expressed both; and Solomon himself, as well as Sampson, became an example of the mighty men there mentioned, who were undone by lewd women.

Ver. 1. My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.] There is great reason, says, my son, (Prov. iv. 1.) to repeat the caution I have often given thee, against this and other vices; and to beseech thee to observe my instructions, and to lay up my commandments in such faithful remembrance, that they may not fail to produce the fruit of obedience.

Ver. 2. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.] For if thou wilt be ruled by them, assure thyself (as I have said before, iv. 4.) thou shalt enjoy long happiness; therefore observe them carefully, with a tender affection to them, and, looking upon them as thy safest guide and director, consent as soon to wound the apple of thine eye, as in the least to violate any of my laws.

Ver. 3. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.] Do not merely read what I write, imagining thou canst have continual recourse to them here in this book, but be so well acquainted with them, as to have them (as we speak) at thy fingers ends; or rather, let them be transcribed from hence into thy very heart.

Ver. 4. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.] There embrace them with ardent love, and set such an high esteem on wisdom, that thou mayest invite it more and more unto thee, till it be as familiar with thee as an only sister, born at the same time with thee, and thou understand and delight in all her precepts, as so near a-kind to thee, that thou find them to be the very reason and sense of thy own mind.

Ver. 5. That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.] Which will be a powerful preservative to thee from the snare of the ungodly woman; who, though her company be so pernicious, God would have thee perfectly estranged from her, as if she were not of the commonwealth of Israel, yet hath powerful charms about her, to baffle those into her embraces, who are not heartily in love with wisdom.

Ver. 6. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement;] Of which a memorable instance comes now into my mind; for looking one day from my chamber, through the lattices of the window of my palace,

Ver. 7. And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youtbs, a young man void of understanding.] I observed, among the undisciplined and inexperienced striplings of the city, one that was as childish and void of consideration, as he was youthful and eager in his desires;

Ver. 8. Passing through the street near her corner, and be went the way to her house.] Who, as if he had a mind to be undone, passed idly through the street, till he came to a corner where naughty women used to haunt; walking in so stately a manner as he could devise, directly towards one of their houses.

Ver. 9. In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:] It was in the twilight, while he might see his way and yet hope to be concealed, in the close of the day, which was followed by a night as dark as pitch, and fit for such works of darkness.

Ver. 10. And behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.] There, on a sudden, I was surprised with the sight of a woman starting forth, who did not stay till he came up to her, but went to meet him in a gaudy lascivious dress, apt to allure a weak young man; who thought presently she was in love with him, when her heart, as full of subtility as his was of folly, is reserved only to herself.

Ver. 11. (She is loud and stubborn, her feet abide not in her house.)] This is her character; she is full of talk, and of bold unseemly courtship, unruly, and not to be controlled or broke of her will; idle also, and always gadding abroad, as if she had no business (but with her foolish lovers) at home.

Ver. 12. Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.] Sometimes she stands before her door; and, if that will not do, she goes further into the streets and places of greatest concourse; and more especially, waits at every corner (where she may look into two streets at once) to insnare such as are apt, like silly birds, to be taken by her.

Ver. 13. So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him.] At one of those corners (as I said) she met this young fool, and, contrary to all the rules of modesty, caught him hard about the neck, and kissed him; and after these amorous caresses put on still a bolder face, and without any blushing made this following speech to him:

Ver. 14. I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows.] I am a happy woman, in many blessings that God hath bestowed upon me, for which I have given him solemn thanks this very day; and, as religion and custom bids me, I have provided as good a feast as those sacrifices would afford, which I formerly vowed, and now have paid, having no want of anything; but of some good company at home to rejoice with me. See Arg. [a].

Ver. 15. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face; and I have found thee.] Which made me go abroad to try if I could meet with thee,
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(who art the very person whom I came to seek), that I might invite and earnestly beseech thee to be so kind as to bear me company; and to my great joy, this is added to all my other happiness, that I have found thee speedily and most opportunely.

Ver. 16. I have deck'd my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. There shall no other pleasures be wanting when our feast is done, but from the table we will remove to my bed, which I have richly adorned with everything that may please the eye, and made it as soft also as hear' can wish.

Ver. 17. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Where thou shalt be entertained likewise with the sweetest perfumes that ours or the neighbouring countries could furnish me withal, such as myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon, wherewith I have sprinkled my bed, to render it more grateful to all thy senses.

Ver. 18. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with love. Why do we waste our time then here in the street? Come along with me, and let us go thither, and there satisfy our desires to the full with love; we will solace ourselves with the sweetest pleasures, which shall not end till the morning-light.

Ver. 19. For the good man is not at home, be is gone a long journey. For there is no fear they should be interrupted or disturbed, the man (whom they call my husband) being from home, and not likely to return in haste; for he is gone to a place a great way off:

Ver. 20. He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. Where he hath much business to dispatch, which will detain him so long, that I am sure it will be full moon (and now the new doth scarce yet appear, ver. 9,) before he can be at home again. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 21. With much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. In the representation of these, and many other like specious pretences, (of great affection to him, of all sorts of pleasure, of secrecy and safety in their enjoyments,) she showed herself such a mistress of her art, that she bowed the heart of the young man to become her disciple; and, having wrought upon his inclinations, she pursued her advantage with so much cunning, that she rather compelled than attracted him, by her charming voice, and her soft alluring language.

Ver. 22. He went after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks. For he made not the least objection, but away he went immediately, and followed her, like a great calf, (as we speak in our language), or a stupid ox, that fancies he is led to the pasture, when he is going to be killed; or like a fool, who takes it for an ornament, when the stocks are brought for his correction, to be clapt upon his legs.

Ver. 23. Till a dart strike through his liver, as a bird struck to the snare, and knowest not that it is for his life.] Just so he hastily threw himself into her embraces, and dreamt of nothing but pleasure, till, like a rash soldier that falls unexpectedly into an ambush, he received a mortal wound by that which he fancied would be his highest satisfaction; or like a silly bird, that, greedy of the bread which is laid to entice it, never minds the snare that is laid together with it; so he, eagerly longing to taste of her Feast and the following delights, had not so much as a thought that this was a design upon his life, and would not end but in miseries infinitely greater than all his joys.

Ver. 24. ¶ Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. This is a true representation, my dear children, (whom I love unfeignedly, not deceitfully, like those harlots,) of the folly and danger of these lewd courses, in which youth is prone to be engaged; and therefore do not look upon it as an idle speculation, but give diligent heed unto it, and be ruled by my advice.

Ver. 25. Let thine heart decline to her ways; go not astray in her paths. Let not one of you so much as entertain a thought of going to such a woman, much less of consenting to her enticements: or if any of you have been so unhappy as to be engaged in her company, let him think it is too much that he hath adventured to turn aside out of the right way, and wander till he hath utterly lost himself in those strange paths, and cannot find his way back again.

Ver. 26. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her.] Do not presume of being safe in such courses, and of making a good retreat at last; for many have been the examples of no mean persons, who have fallen in their reputation, their estates, their healths, their comforts of life, and in truth have utterly perished by her: innumerable are the mighty men, both for valour and for wisdom, whom she hath brought to ruin. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 27. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chamber of death.] In short, to follow her unto her house, as this young man did, is the direct way to hell; every step that is taken to her bed, (unto which she invited him to ascend,) is in truth a going down to the dismal chambers of death, and to the most horrid miseries.

CHAP. VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.—The folly and danger of yielding to those brutish lusts and affections whereby so many are misled, having been plainly discovered and lively described in the foregoing chapter, the wise man proceeds in his design, by appealing to all that read these things, whether they be not sufficiently cautioned against those courses which ruin them, and abundant care be not taken to make them really wise and happy. For he knew none could answer those questions negatively which he asks in the beginning of the chapter, (ver. 1. 2. &c.,) but all must confess they have been informed in the doctrine of wisdom. Whom he represents as present every where, and commending itself to all sorts of persons with a sincere affection, (ver. 6.
This is expressed in such magnificent language, that though Solomon, I suppose, thought of nothing but the wise direction God had given them in his word, revealed to them by his servant Moses and the prophets, yet the ancient Christians thought his words might better be applied to the wisdom revealed unto us in the gospel by the Son of God, nay, to the Son of God himself, the eternal Word and wisdom of the Father.

[2] Whom the Arians, by a false interpretation of a passage in this chapter, ver. 22, endeavour to prove a creature; but according to the Hebrew verity, if this text belong to that matter, appears to have been, as St John speaks, with the Father in the beginning, being his only-begotten before all worlds. And so the word נֵזֶה which we translate possessed, sometimes signifies in scripture; and as it is thus rendered by the LXX. in Zach. xiii. 5, so ought it to be translated in Gen. iv. 1. (not I have gotten or possessed, but) I have brought forth a man from the Lord; as Bochartus discourses in his Phileg. p. 784.

But I said, if it belong to that matter, because the Fathers themselves are not resolved, whether these words, ver. 22, may not rather be applied to our blessed Saviour, according to his human nature. For so the great Athanasius himself sometimes expounds them, (though at other times he goes the other way,) allowing the Arian sense of issues, he created me: This is not to be understood, saith he, (in his Expositio Fidelis, p. 242. Tom. I.), o: the divinity of Christ, but βαφθομενος αν τον γενεσθαι, is written of Jesus bodily, as he was born of the Virgin Mary. For of this ζητεθησθαι, (as he speaks), whom he sent for our salvation, it may be said truly that he was the beginning of God's ways; we have access by him to God the Father; as he himself saith, I am the way which leads to the Father. And afterward, in his epistle about the decrees of the Nicene council, p. 262. he glosses upon these words in this manner: The person who here speaks, is indeed our Saviour, who is to be conceived to say this, when he took a body, The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways. For, as with respect to his being the Son of God, it is most agreeable to say, he was always, and in the bosom of the Father; so being made a man, this saying was very becoming, The Lord created me. And, to name no more places, he interprets it thus several times in his third Oration against the Arians, p. 415. 417. &c. where he hath these words, It is as if he had said, My Father made me a body, and created me to be among men for their salvation. But this not being the sense of the words which Solomon first intended, I shall not build my paraphrase upon it; but take wisdom here, as it signifies in other places of this book, and hath been hitherto described. Whom Solomon now celebrates for her most venerable antiquity, (as Aristobulus observes to Ptolomy, in Eusebius his Praep. Evang. i. xiii. p. 667.), and introduces like a most beautiful person, no less than a queen; or rather some divine being, (infinitely to be preferred before that base strumpet, spoken of in the foregoing chapter). Who having finished her own praises, which, the truth is, better agree to that heavenly doctrine afterwards delivered by our Lord Jesus Christ, (who was the wisdom of the Father, both as the eternal ΛΟΓΟΣ subsisting with him before all worlds, and as he was anointed by the Holy Ghost to declare to us all the counsel of God), concludes with an earnest invitation unto all to become acquainted with her instructions, if they meant to be happy, and would avoid the greatest miseries, ver. 23. 33. &c. There are so many notable lessons to be learnt out of this chapter, that it would make this preface too long, if I should mention them all. I shall therefore name only one doctrinal point, that if this chapter be at all to be understood of the divinity of the Son of God, (which the Arians believed), then both his eternity is most plainly here asserted, and also his distinct subsistence and personality, as we speak, ver. 22. 30. And these two practical. First, that it is a vain pretence we make to wisdom, if the fear of God and true virtue be wanting, ver. 13. 20.; and, secondly, the whole chapter supposes what the last verse more particularly expresses, that every man's death and destruction is from himself, who wrongs his own soul, and that against the desire and earnest frequent importunities of the wisdom of God; unto which he will not hearken, but perversely rejects the seasonable reproofs, and the wholesome advices, which, on many occasions, he meets withal to prevent his ruin.

They that follow the vulgar Latin, fancy they find a proverbial saying, ver. 13. where that which we translate a froward mouth, they translate a mouth with two tongues; but I have followed the Hebrew, which speaks of a worse sort of perverse language than that phrase alone signifies.

Ver. 1. DOTH not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? Can you then hereafter pretend ignorance, and say you never had any caution given you against these snares? Or rather, have I not the greatest reason to chide you for your stupidity in hearkening unto those secret allurements to the deeds of darkness, when their shamefulness is so apparent; and you have had so many open and loud admonitions given you to be wiser; and such serious and earnest endeavours have been used, by repeated instructions and reproofs, to reclaim you from your folly?
Ver. 2. She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.] There is no public crier better heard and understood by all, when from an high place he makes proclamation to the people, than the rules of wisdom and virtue; which do not lie concealed, nor can be altered at our pleasure, but present themselves continually to men's thoughts wheresoever they go, being as plain as the high-way, and remaining unmoveable and fixed, notwithstanding all the attempts that have been made to subvert them.

Ver. 3. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.] Let their business be what it will, whether in the courts of judgement, or among those that traffic in the city, or in their own private habitation, still they know what their duty is; which their own conscience, as well as God's ministers, rings so continually in their ears, that they cannot avoid such informations.

Ver. 4. Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.] Which they hear as plainly and distinctly, as if wisdom itself should call them from above, saying, Hearken, O men, of whatsoever rank and condition you be, whether high or low, rich or poor; for my instructions are common to you all.

Ver. 5. O ye simple ones, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.] Your fault is, that you are inconsiderate, and easily cheated, (vii. 21. 22.), or, which is worse, stupidly bent to follow your sensual appetite, as if you had no better inclinations; but if you will attend, I will make you more circumspect and wary, and dispose you to be led by prudent counsels.

Ver. 6. Hear, for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.] Do not turn away your ears, but listen to my words; for I will teach you things most worthy of your notice and choice; which will conduct you safely in all the passages of your life, and lay before you such a plain, direct, and easy path, that if you walk in it, you shall not miss of being happy.

Ver. 7. For my mouth shall speak truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.] For I will utter nothing rashly, or contrary to the truth; all falsehood, deceit, and whatsoever may do hurt, being so detestable to me, and so far from my thoughts, that the correction of such wickedness is the aim of my discourse.

Ver. 8. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.] Every word of which is exactly conformable to the rule of righteousness; there isnothing I enjoin or forbid, merely to hamper and perplex you, or to bridge you of your just liberty; much less to misguide and pervert you in the pursuit of what is good for you.

Ver. 9. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.] But, whatsoever they may seem to inconsiderate and prejudiced minds, they will all manifestly appear equal and just unto him that uses his reason, and approves themselves, as I said, exactly conformable to the strictest rules of righteousness, unto well-disposed minds, who will be at the pains to know the difference between right and wrong, or between that which is good and that which is evil for them.

Ver. 10. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.] They will not think me unreasonable, when I recommend the very rebukes which I give them, (though administered by some sharp affliction, iii. 14.), and set such a high price upon them, as to advise every one to accept them rather than silver; and to value the knowledge of God, and of themselves, and of all things else, (which these corrections teach them), above the choicest gold.

Ver. 11. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it.] For true wisdom is such an inestimable jewel, that the most precious pearls are trash to it; nor can our boundless fancies present any thing to our wishes, that is worthy to come in competition with it.

Ver. 12. Wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.] For what is there comparable to a prudent mind, which is not crafty to deceive, but so cautious as not to be deceived! and this I may boast is solely in my power to endow men withal; who ever give the safest, nay, infallible advice, and direct men to discreeter resolutions in the most difficult cases, than the subtlest head in the world, that consults not with me, can invent for his clients.

Ver. 13. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.] And my rules are as short as they are sure; for I teach men, in the first place, religiously to worship and stand in awe of the Divine Majesty; which is but a vain pretence, I further instruct them, if it do not make them abominate all manner of evil, though but in design; more particularly, I hate that vain opinion men have of their own abilities to compass their designs, which makes them forget God, and despise the wholesome advice of honest men; as I likewise do the use of all unlawful means, though the end be good; especially lying, calumni, distraction, breach of faith, which every one must renounce who will have my friendship.

Ver. 14. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.] Who am the ablest counsellor in all deliberations, and give men the most certain, solid, and never-failing advice, for the effecting their desires, or being contented with disappointments; for I comprehend whatsoever is fit to be done or omitted in all undertakings, and inspire men also with courage to persist in good resolutions, which are neither rashly taken nor wrongfully pursued.

Ver. 15. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.] Kngs themselves sit not fast on their thrones, though placed there by God himself, unless they be ruled by me; the wisest senators cannot support themselves and them, but by persuading them to enact and execute just and merciful laws, for the government of their people.

Ver. 16. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.] In vain do their great captains,
or other ministers endeavour to defend them, but under the conduct and protection of my virtuous discipline; nobles, and all the judges of the land, lose their authority, if they do not faithfully observe the rules that I prescribe them.

Ver. 17. I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.] Which are no less amiable than they are easily known; there needing no more to come acquainted with me, but only to love me; for they that love me are beloved of me; and as they will not fail to seek what they love, so they shall certainly find what they studiously seek.

Ver. 18. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.] And together with me, they shall find such riches and honour, as shall add to the greatness, and splendour, and stability of their kingdoms and dignities; for not merely riches and honour are in my donation, but durable possessions, which will last the longer, because they are not gotten either by oppression or by nigardize; for I teach men both to do justly and to love mercy also, (Dan. iv. 24.)

Ver. 19. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.] Whereby I bring them in greater treasures than gold, though never so massy, never so refined; a revenue of higher value than the purest and choicest silver in the world.

Ver. 20. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.] For I set their minds and hearts right, and enrich them with excellent thoughts; which teach them how to use those earthly goods, and govern themselves with such exactness in all their private transactions or public administrations, as never to swerve from the steady rules of justice and equity.

Ver. 21. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.] In order to their happy settlement in a state of eternal peace and substantial satisfaction, which I confer on all those that sincerely love and adhere unto me; whose souls I will fill as full with abundance of inestimable riches, as their treasuries are with silver and gold, and all other stores.

Ver. 22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.] For the Lord himself hath no greater riches than me, who lead men to a participation of him, and communion with him, (iii. 19. 20.), with whom I was ever present, (as well as always most dear unto him), not only when he began to create this world, but before he had made any of his works; when as yet there was nothing but himself.

Ver. 23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.] My sovereignty and dominion is from everlasting, and hath no superior to it; all antiquity comes infinitely short of mine, who was before the earth itself, the common mother of all mankind, (Gen. i. 1.)

Ver. 24. When there was no depth, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.] When as yet there were no depths, (Gen. i. 2.), I was conceived in the mind of God long before the sources and springs; whose excellent waters, which are of greater value than any other, owe their rise unto me, the inexhausted fountain of all things.

Ver. 25. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was brought forth:] Who had a being before the mountains, from whence those waters ran, were settled; or there was so much as a hillock to be seen in the earth.

Ver. 26. While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world:] For as yet the Lord had not made the earth itself, (as I said before, ver. 23.), much less adorned it, and put into this form of lofty mountains and spacious plains; no, there was not so much as the first atom of this globe wherein you tread.

Ver. 27. When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:] But why do I speak of the earth alone? I was present when he disposed the heavens into this wonderful order wherein we behold them, as well as when he moved upon that confused abyss which they inclined, and fashioned the earth into a regular shape.

Ver. 28. When he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:] When he made the watery clouds also, with admirable wisdom, so firm in the air, that they shall not fall down altogether, but by drops upon the earth; and provided strong cisterns for the waters pent up there; from whence they gush out forcibly, and yet wear not away the passages he hath opened for them.

Ver. 29. When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth:] When he prescribed also to the sea its limits, that the waters thereof (though they swell and toss up and down) shall not pass over the shores wherein he hath confined them; and when he settled the earth so stedfastly, like a building upon sure foundations, that it remains unmoveable in the place he appointed for it.

Ver. 30. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him:] Then was I with him, nay, very near unto him, contriving all these things; nor had he any higher pleasure than me, who day by day, during the creation of the world, produced some lovely work or other; in which he rejoiced to see how good and agreeable they were, Gen. i. 4. 10. 12. 18. 21. 25. 31.

Ver. 31. Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.] More particularly I displayed my skill in the vast variety of creatures, wherewith I have beautified this earth wherein you dwell, which afford a most delightful spectacle unto me, and unto all wise observers; who may see, that above all the rest my principal thoughts were fixed upon the children of men, (Gen. i. 36.), in whom I delighted exceedingly, (as the Lord doth in me, ver. 20.), beholding them made in the image of God, and after his likeness, capable to converse with me.

Ver. 32. Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways:] Who may therefore, justly expect (all these things considered) that you should cheerfully embrace my repeated
counsel, and, as dutiful children, take the greatest pleasure in being obedient to them; for blessed, you cannot but see, blessed beyond all expression, are they who observe (as all other creatures do) the laws that I have prescribed them.

Ver. 33. Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.] Hearken, I beseech you, and yield to the voice of your own reason, and of God's holy word and Spirit, which checks the irregular motions which you find at any time in you, and be so wise and considerate as not to slight and reject it.

Ver. 34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.] But rather invite such instructions, by giving them thankful entertainment, and going thither where you may meet with them; for happy, more happy than can be expressed, is that man, who not only hearkens obediently when he is told his duty, but makes it his business to be rightly informed, neglecting no opportunity, but constantly and diligently attending there, where he may be taught how he ought to live, most earnestly desiring to become my disciple, and to be governed by me.

Ver. 35. For whose findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.] In which whatsoever pains he bestows, he shall not lose his labour: for as he shall not fail to find what he seeks, so shall he find withal, that I will make his life a perpetual pleasure to him; for I have demonstrated that he must needs be beloved of the Lord, to whom I am most nearly allied, and from him he shall obtain his heart's desire.

Ver. 36. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death.] From whence it is manifest, that he who violates my laws, doth the greatest injury unto his own soul; and who soever they be that hate to be reproved for it, and can neither endure to be told of their faults, nor receive any good advice, they love to be miserable, and wilfully bring upon themselves utter destruction.

Chap. IX.

The Argument.—In this chapter the wise man seems to me to illustrate more fully what he had delivered in the conclusion of the foregoing, (ver. 32, 34, 35,) concerning the satisfaction and happiness they might expect to find, who would attend at the gates, and submit themselves to the government of that heavenly wisdom; which he had described to be acquainted with all the secrets of the Almighty. And which he here again represents as a glorious queen, the daughter of heaven, adorned with all perfections, (and [2] therefore uses a word of the plural number (ver. 1.) whereby to express her excellencies), living in a stately palace; unto which she invites all misguided souls, and promises them, if they will forsake their follies, the most delicious entertainment. [b] Which is set forth under the notion of a feast, whereby the holy writers are wont to express (as the apostle resembles of it that can be found) the high satisfaction, joy, and pleasure, which the princes of wisdom and virtue fill our hearts withal, when we have a true relish of them, that we embrace them and digest them, and are enlivened by them to a pious life.

This is the substance of the parable, every part of which is not to be minutely scanned; nor shall I go about to say what is particularly meant [c] by the seven pillars of wisdom's house, (though, taking her house for the world, the seven pillars may well be thought the seven planets,) what by her meat, what by her drink, &c. but look upon them only as a description of the ability of wisdom to impart complete satisfaction unto those that entertain her precepts. Which were principally taught in the schools of the prophets, whose business it was to instruct the people (as the scribes did afterward) in the law of God; and being dispersed in several places of the country, I have conjectured their schools might be the house here spoken of, where wisdom had her habitation. I cannot say certainly how many of them there were, much less that there were just seven principal schools, which might be looked upon as the main supporters of religion and virtue; but there were more than one, it is evident from the sacred history, where in one city, 1 Sam. ix. 13, 14, we find Samuel seated, (in whose times these schools began to flourish,) who no doubt had there a college of prophets with him, as he had afterward, we find, at Ramah, xix. 23; and in another place called the Hill of God, where the Philistines had a garrison, we meet with another company of prophets, 1 Sam. x. 5, 10. And in after times there were sons of the prophets, both at Bethel, (where they seem to have been more anciently, 1 Sam. x. 3,) and at Jericho, 2 Kings, ii. 3, 5. and at Gilgal, iv. 38.

These schools also were seated in high places, it appears from 1 Sam. ix. 2, x. 5, 10. [d] 2 Kings, i. 9. (and might be one reason of their sacrificing in such places,) which agrees exactly with what is said here of wisdom's crying upon the "highest places of the city," ver. 3, to call all those who had an appetite, to come and partake of her instructions. Which there was some hope all those might do, who were merely incommodate and decided, (ver. 4,) though scorners (as he observes, ver. 7, 8, who perhaps called the prophets madmen) are so incapable of correction, that nothing will move them to become better; and therefore she passes them by, and leaves them to their basely folly, which inclines them rather to listen to the enticements of such filthy strumpets as he had described, chap. vii.

Against whom there cannot be too much caution, the strumpet's house being, as St Chrysostom (Hom. 2. upon St Matth.) calls it, "the very shop of the devil;" and therefore the wise man again gives her character in this chapter, (ver. 13, 14, &c.); and represents the danger of being drawn in by her, that, if it was possible, he might make men sensible, there is nothing more inconsistent with wisdom, than to give up themselves to those
impure lusts, which have been the ruin of all those that have been led by them.

That is one of the profitable lessons to be learnt from this chapter, in which the wise man concludes his preface to the book of Proverbs. And therefore again repeats once more, (ver. 10.), that first principle upon which all religion is built, wherewith he began this preface, (i. 7.), "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Which they that want, will be apt to make a laughter of all good instructions; and it is well, if they be not angry at those who are so kind as to reprove them. If they be, it is best to let them alone, and not cast pearls before swine, as our Saviour teaches, [a] agreeable to the doctrine of the wise man, ver. 7. 8. 9. of this chapter.

Where the lord Bacon (L. viii. Advanc. of Learning, c. 2. Parab. 9.) is very curious, and distinguishes between a scorner and a wicked man, (mentioned ver. 7.), and between shame and reproach, and a blot; and consequently, between reproof given to the one, and rebuke to the other. "For a scorner," saith he, "only makes us lose our labour; but the other repays us with a stain and dishonour. When a man instructs a scorner, his time, indeed, which he thus employs, is thrown away, and others deride his pains, as a labour ill placed, and the scorner himself also despiseth the knowledge which he is taught. Thus a man is put to shame. But the matter is transacted with greater danger in the reprehension of the other, because a wicked nature not only gives no ear to advice, but turns head against his reprehender, now made odious to him, whom he either wounds presently with contumelies before his face, or traduces afterwards to others behind his back."

But I have not been thus nice in my Paraphrase, because it is the manner, I observe, of the wise man to repeat the same thing in the same verse, in other words, throughout all this book; and a scorner signifies the worst of men.

[f] In the ninth verse, also, the same great person, following the vulgar, and reading the words thus, "Give occasion to a wise man, and his wisdom will be increased," makes this witty observation, (in the same chap. Parab. xxiii.), that "occasion, when it is offered, shews the difference between wisdom that is ripened into habit, and that which swims only in the brain and conceit, or is boasted in speech, but hath not taken deep root. For the former, upon occasion presented, whereby it may be exercised, is instantly quickened, addresses itself to the business, and is so enlarged and dilated, that it seems greater than itself; but the other, which before occasion was brisk and busy, now occasion is given, becomes amazed and confused; so that even he who presumed himself possessed of it, begins to be in doubt whether his pre-conceptions of such wisdom were not mere dreams and empty speculations."

But there being no such word as occasion in the original, and the word give seeming to me rather to refer to what the wise man is speaking of, viz. reproof or instruction, I have waved this observation, which will do well alone, but not be connected with the discourse, which is my design to represent. And here note this as a mark of a hopeful person, that is likely to become wise, if he be not galled with reproof, at which fools are wont to kick. This is a truth to be considered most seriously, by which every man may take a measure of himself, whether he be likely to come to good or no. "If he cannot endure to be told of his faults, it is a shrewd sign he is in the way to be undone, and hath not as yet so much as approached to the gates of wisdom."

Which admonishes us here of another great fault of mankind, [b] who are most eager after that which is prohibited to them. An observation which is as true of their fondness and readiness to embrace heretical doctrines, (to which the Fathers apply ver. 12.), if they be preached in a corner, and made a great secret, as of their appetite after those pleasures from which they are restrained, and cannot have with public approbation.

Ver. 1. [Wisdom hath built her house, she hath set forth her seven pillars;] Do not imagine that I commend unto you some meaner piece of knowledge or skill, but the most absolute and accomplished wisdom, whose worth and dignity is inexpressible; for as this great world, I told you, (viii. 26. 27. &c.), was built by wisdom in most excellent order and perfect beauty, so from every part of it we may learn what regard we ought to have to her holy precepts, which are taught everywhere, but especially in the schools of the prophets. See Arg. [a] [b] [c] [d] [e]

Ver. 2. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table;] There, above all other places, a most plentiful provision is made for all hungry and thirsty souls, (that are desirous to know what is good for themselves), who shall find no less life, and vigour, and strength, and joy, communicated to them from her sacred instructions, than the body doth when it partakes of a liberal and most delicious feast.

Ver. 3. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city;] For nothing is wanting there, but only guests to accept of her entertainment, unto which her attendants and ministers (persons of uncorrupted purity and sincerity) are sent to invite you, with a loud voice and earnest entreaties, which cannot but be heard by whole cities and countries, unto whom the dwelling-places of wisdom and the food of souls lie openly exposed. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 4. Weso is simple, let him turn in thither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,] There is no man so silly but he may be welcome to it; or rather, all such persons are desired to be think themselves how inconceivably they have been seduced, and to forbear the prosecution of their foolish desires so long, as to take advice of her. Let a man be never so much besotted with vice and wickedness,
she doth not reject him, nor despair of him, if he will but hearken, when she makes this gracious motion to the whole knot of them;

Ver. 5. *Come, eat my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.* Draw near, consider and lay to heart the wholesome instructions which I pronounced to you; credit me so far as to rely upon the promise which I make you of the highest comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction, in embracing and obeying my precepts.

Ver. 6. *Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.* Do but make a trial, by forsaking all ill company, and those childish desires, and senseless courses of which you can give no account to yourselves; and immediately you shall have a taste of happiness, which will invite you to perfect it, by following hereafter the deliberate dictates of sober reason, and the grave counsels of prudent persons, who have discerning minds, and practise themselves what they commend to others.

Ver. 7. *He that reprovetb a scorner, getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth to himself a blot.* As for those that deride religion, and scoff at all good admonitions, it is in vain to meddle with them; for reproves are fittest for such persons; and he who performs that charitable office, not only loses his labour, but is like to be requited with reproaches; whatsoever he be that rebukes one of those impious wretches, hath commonly all the dirt thrown upon him that their malice can make together. See Arg. [4] [6]

Ver. 8. *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee; rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.* Therefore men of that wicked temper wisdom doth not invite to her instructions, nor require her ministers to call upon them; but rather to pass them by, when they find by experience that they can do no good to such persons, but only draw their hatred upon themselves; from such it is wisdom to turn away, and bestow reproves upon those who have so much understanding as to see God's ministers intend their good, and accordingly thank them for it, and give them opportunity to do them further service,

Ver. 9. *Give instruction to a wise man, and be with him that is more wiser; teach a just man, and be with him that increaseth in learning.* For this is an undoubted maxim, that a man disposed to learn will grow wiser even by reprobation; and the instructions given to a man inclined to goodness, will make him better, and much improve him, not only in knowledge, but in the practice of virtue; (whereas a scorner grows worse by endeavours to reform him, and is only made more incapable of good advice, by being exasperated and enraged at it.) See Arg. [7]

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.* And the very first, and indeed the principal thing that is to be instilled into all men's minds, without which they will learn nothing else, is a religious sense of the divine majesty, and an awful regard towards him, (as I have observed already more than once, i. 7. ii. 5. viii. 13. but it cannot be too oft repeated). And next to this, that no knowledge deserves the name of understanding, but that which is delivered by the holy men of God, and disposes us to devote ourselves unto him in holy obedience.

Ver. 11. *For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.* Other knowledge may make thee sublime and cunning in thy worldly affairs, but this alone can make thee happy; and will certainly both prolong thy life, (as I have frequently said, iii. 2. 16. iv. 10. 13. &c.), and lengthen it in health, peace, prosperity, and pleasure.

Ver. 12. *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it.* This is the true reason I invite thee so earnestly to imbibe my doctrine, (ver. 5.) not for my own sake, but for thine, who alone wilt either reap the profit of being truly virtuous, or suffer all the harm and mischief (which will not in the least redound to me) of thy profane scoffs and jeers at religion and goodness.

Ver. 13. ¶ *A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knoweth nothing.* ¶ Unto which profaneness there was once no temptations, so there is none more dangerous, I think, which makes me mention it so often, (ii. 16. v. 3. vi. 24. vii. 12. 11. &c.), than the lewd and impious adulteress, who is no less bold and importunate, than she is bewitching and powerful to besot the minds of her stupid lovers, but perfectly ignorant of God and religion, and a stranger to all the principles of virtue.

Ver. 14. *For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city.* Which she openly opposes, for (as if she would put a manifest affront upon them) in that very place where the ministers of wisdom call men to learn the fear of the Lord, (ver. 3. 10.) she sits in state at the door of her house, to divert their minds from all such thoughts, and drown them in sensual pleasures.

Ver. 15. *To call passers by, who go right on their ways.* That is the very business of her life, to defeat all good designs, by drawing even those aside into her chambers of impurity, who were going straight forward to the schools of wisdom and goodness.

Ver. 16. *Whoso is simple, let him turn in bitber; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him.* Whose words (ver. 4.) she no less impatiently than profanely returns, and tells them. It is not she, but wisdom and virtue, that makes men fools; by confining their desires, and denying them the liberties which she invites them to come and enjoy in her embraces; where their dulness shall learn this unknown secret.

Ver. 17. *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.* That there are no pleasures comparable to those which a man gets by stealth from them to whom they properly belong; no morsel so sweet, as that which is forbidden, but, having been long desired, he finds at last a private opportunity to taste of without danger. See Arg. [8]

Ver. 18. *But be known not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.* But the
poor deluded wretch considers not all this while, (which I have often already represented, ii. 18. v. 3. vii. 27. and is all that I shall oppose to those sinful enticements), that she invites him to his utter ruin both of soul and body, (see ii. 18.), and sinks all those down who accept of her invitation, to the very bottom of that pit where the old giants are, who corrupted mankind with such filthiness and violence, that they brought a deluge upon the earth, Gen. vi. 4. 5.

CHAP. X.

The Proverbs of Solomon.

The Argument.—Here now properly begins the book of the Proverbs, (as the title of this chapter tells us); what hath been delivered hitherto being rather a preface, to awaken attention, and from sundry arguments to commend the wise instructions which now follow, to every one's practice; and to caution those, who would receive benefit by these instructions, from such things as may hinder their edification in the school of wisdom.

Whose lessons, in this first part of the book, (which reaches to the 17th verse of chap. xxxii.), are delivered in short sentences, every verse being a lesson by itself; which commonly hath no connection with that which goes before and follows after; or if there be any, it is not so clear as to be easily made out. And these lessons are for the most part delivered, either by way of Antithesis, i.e. comparing opposites one with another; the wise, for instance, and the foolish, the diligent and the sluggisht, the rich and the poor, and, in general, virtue and vice, assigning to each their proper rewards and punishments; or they are mere parables, that is, similitudes, in which one thing is compared to another that resembles it.

And he intending to instruct all sorts of men in their several kinds of life, these lessons are very various, and do not merely inform them about their manners; but about the events also which are wont (either frequently or sometimes) to accompany or follow such and such estates, offices, and actions of human life. And some are directions for single persons, others for the ordering of household affairs, and others for the government of kingdoms. In short, some are divine precepts, others civil advertisements for the management of ourselves in several passages of human life; to the observance of which he excites the reader sometimes by promises, sometimes by threatenings.

It is not to be expected that in the paraphrase I should preserve the sharpness that is in many of these sentences; and it will be hard to abridge, as I have done hitherto, the contents of each chapter. Yet I shall attempt something in it; and though I cannot say there is an order observed in them all, (they being only a collection of wise observations and aphorisms, in which method it is wont to be neglected by other authors), yet the first sentence of this chapter seems not to have been casually, [a] but desirously set in the front of the rest. Because nothing contributes so much every way to the happiness of mankind, as a religious care about the education of children. Which parents are here admonished to attend to, if they desire their children should not prove a grief and shame to them; and children are put in mind of the obedience they owe to their instructions, that they may be a joy to their parents.

The Lord Bacon, in his Advancement of Learning, (l. viii. c. 2. parab. vii.), thinks that the gladness and heaviness which are in fathers and mothers, according as their children prove good or bad, are here so accurately distinguished by Solomon, "that he would represent a wise and well-governed son to be chiefly a comfort to the father, who knows the value of wisdom and virtue better than the mother, (which account the Hebrews also give of this matter), and therefore rejoices more at the towardliness of his son, which he not only better understands, but hath taken perhaps so much more care about his education, that the good fruits of it give him a greater joy than they can do to the mother. Who on the other side is more grieved and discomfirmed at the calamity of a son, both because the affection of a mother is more soft and tender, and perchance is conscious to herself, that by too much indulgence she hath tainted and corrupted his tender years." She is more at home also, (it may be added), and therefore having her son's folly more in her eye, hath a greater share in the grief that it causes.

But this is not to be too much pressed, I think; for both of them have such a share either in the joy or in the sorrow, that it is as hard to distinguish between them constantly, as it is to make a difference between the joy and the grief for the well or ill doing of a son, and the well or ill doing of a daughter; which may be, and oft-times are equal. And therefore I have but just touched upon this in my paraphrase of the first verse. Concerning which I shall note this farther, that whether these instructions were written with a peculiar respect to the education of Solomon's own son, or indifferently for all, it was most judiciously done to begin with such as this first part chiefly consists of; there being so great a necessity, (as the fore-named writer observes in his 7th book, chap. 3.), "That men drink deeply all pions and moral knowledge before they taste of politics; that they who are bred up in the court of princes, and in affairs of state from tender years, rarely attain to inward and sincere probity of manners. For not being seasoned with religion and the doctrine of manners, and offices of life, their judgements are corrupted, and made to think that there are no true and solid moral differences of things, but all things are to be measured by utility and success." And in this false opinion they are the more immovable-settled, if to ill education there be added the fuel of bad books; which all those will reject with disdain, who shall be so happy as to make this book their early study.
In which there follow here immediately (and very properly) some instructions about getting riches, and about the keeping and using them aright, (ver. 2, 3, &c.), that a curse may not be entailed upon them, and descend with them unto our children. And then, ver. 7. memorable observation is annexed [b], (which Plato, as Eusebius observes, translated into his seventh Book of Laws,) concerning the fame of good and bad men after they are dead. About which the same great man before named (the Lord Bacon) hath this note in the same eighth Book, Parab. 8. that the name of good men, after envy is extinguished, (which crop the blossom of their fame, while they were alive,) presently shoots up and flourishes, and their praises daily increase in strength and vigour; but for wicked men, though their fame, through the partial favour of friends, and of men of their own faction, may last for a little time, a detestation of their name springs up not long after, and at last those vanishing praises end in infamy, and, like bodies that purify, expire in a filthy and noisome odour. And thus the LXV. in this place, instead of the memory of the just is blessed, or is with blessing or benediction, have these words, the memory of the just is with encomiums, or praises; which is the true explication of the phrase. And accordingly the church commemorates the saints of God, recounting their worthy deeds, and praising him for them. Of which see Mr Mede, Discourse XXI.

The rest of the chapter consists of mixed observations, concerning the difference between wise men and fools, idle persons and diligent, ill-natured people, and those who are candid and kind, (ver. 12.), and especially between the vices and virtues of the tongue, and their rewards and punishments, ver. 13. 14. &c. And one remarkable observation is inserted, ver. 22. which belongs to [c] that head of diligence and laboriousness; upon which, he remembers us, no man is so to depend, as to imagine to obtain what he would have by that alone, but to look up to God as the donor of all good things, and giving success to our industry. Which was a thing little thought of by heathens, who were too prone to imagine all things requisite unto happiness to be placed in themselves. But the scriptures everywhere inculcate this, that it is God who gives wisdom to the wise, and victory to the valiant, and riches to the diligent, and good success to the prudent and potent, &c.

[34] Unto which add that observation also, ver. 24. which may be further improved this is expressed in the paraphrase, to this sense, that wicked men many times draw upon themselves, that they feared, by those very means whereby they study to avoid them. An example of which (as Bochartus observes in his Phileg. 1. i. c. 16. part 1.) we have in those that built the tower of Babel; who for fear of dispersion designed to build a city and a tower, saying, "Go to, let us build." Sec. 44 last we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," Gen. xi. 4. But God so ordered it that this very attempt was the occasion of their dispersion, and brought what they feared sooner upon them, atque ipsum multum remedium illis cessit in periculum; the very remedy of the evil they would have avoided, leading them directly into it.

R. Levi hath an observation, that the precepts of wisdom, from the beginning of this chapter to the 10th verse of the 18th, are in a manner all concerning the danger of several sorts of vice and wickedness, and afterward they are all concerning other subjects. Which, how true it is, I shall there consider.

Ver. 1. THE proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.] Let the father's care in educating his children, (especially his son, the heir of his family), be equal to the joy he will have in their well-doing; and let the mother beware that her indolence do not spoil them, for she will have the greatest share in the heaviness which their untowardness will give them. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing; but righteousness delivereth from death.] This is more necessary than the care of heaping up riches for them, (which many times tempt men to fraud and oppression); for though great treasures be gotten by such means, they will be so far from availing the owners in time of distress, that they will rather expose them to be a prey, when justice and mercy, with a little wealth, will procure safety and deliverance from the greatest dangers.

Ver. 3. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish; but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.] The reason is, the Lord hath treasures in store for the just, especially for the merciful man, and will send him such supplies in his straits, that he shall not starve, but rather have enough; but he will drive the wicked out of their ill-gotten possessions, whereby they think to secure themselves for want.

Ver. 4. He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.] And next unto virtue, let children be bred up to industry, without which indeed they cannot be virtuous, for both poverty and fraud are commonly the fruit of negligence and sloth, when an active diligence is wont to enrich men, without the help of deceit.

Ver. 5. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.] Especially if prudence be added to diligence, and opportunity be not neglected; for as he that makes hay (as we speak) while the sun shines, is commended for his provident care, so he that, by taking his ease when he should gather the fruits of the earth, loses all the benefit of his former labour, is a shame to himself, and unto those that bred him.

Ver. 6. Blessings are upon the head of the just; but violence overreth the mouth of the wicked.] The blessings of heaven shall visibly descend in great plenty upon the just and merciful man, but their own ini-
quity shall violently overwhelm those, to their utter confusion, who wickedly defraud and oppress their neighbour.

Ver. 7. The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot.] And though envy may sometimes cloud a good man for the present, yet after death an honourable mention shall be made of him, and he shall be commemorated with praises; when the memory of the wicked, who now perhaps are exalted, shall either perish, or sink and be abomini-
tated. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 8. The wise in heart will receive commandments; but a preening fool shall fall.] He that is truly wise, will thankfully receive such good advices as these, and avoid the dangers of which he is admonished; but he whose wisdom lies only in his tongue, (which moves upon all occasions, and will not let him learn of others), ruins himself, even by his own imprudent prating.

Ver. 9. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but he that perverteth his ways, shall be known.] He that deals sincerely in all his actions, is both safe and sure; but he that relies upon fraud and tricks of deceiving, shall find his cunning fail him at the last; and besides, can never be secure that he shall not be detected, and made a public reproach.

Ver. 10. He that winketh with the eye, caveth forrow; but a preening fool shall fall.] But he especially, that under pretence of kindness betrays his neighbour, and gives the sign to others, when he would have them circumvent him, is a common grievance, and shall himself, in the end, feel the miserable effects of his falseness; for he is worse than a man, who openly professing his malice, rails perpetually, and thereby sooner hurts himself than others.

Ver. 11. The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life; but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.] The discourse of a good man (like a perpetual spring of wholesome water) always tends to the profit, comfort, and refreshment of those that receive it; but a wicked man, how fair soever his language be, doth but conceal the mischief, which (like pestilent waters out of a deep pit) he designs to produce when opportunity serves.

Ver. 12. Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins.] Such is the difference between hatred and love, that where all things are in quiet, hatred raises up disturbance, and makes men quarrel about trifles; when love pacifies the minds of those that it finds provoked by real offences, and composeth all those contentions, for which there was too much occasion.

Ver. 13. In the lips of him that hateth understanding, wisdom is found; but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.] He that would be wise, must seek the acquaintance of some intelligent person; but the most knowing person in the world cannot make him wise that is void of consideration, who will never learn, unless perhaps by some great affliction.

Ver. 14. Wise men lay up knowledge; but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.] Wise men treasure up knowledge, and reserve it till a fitting opportunity to make use of it; but a fool is always talking, and seldom opens his mouth but it proves a present mischief to himself or others.

Ver. 15. The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty.] Riches are a powerful defence to their owners against a great many evils, to which we are subject in this life, and naturally raise men's minds, and make them confident; whereas poverty exposes men to injuries and abuses, and is apt to depress and deject their spirits.

Ver. 16. The labour of the righteous tendeth to life, the fruit of the wicked to sin.] Which is a great motive to an honest diligence; but then remember this, that the end of a virtuous man's labours after riches, is only that he may provide himself the necessaries of life, and that he may do good with them; but the great revenues, which perhaps are left to a wicked man by his ancestors without any pains of his own, are employed to satisfy his sinful lusts and passions.

Ver. 17. He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction, but he that refuseth reproof, perisheth.] He that carefully observes, and puts men in mind of those wholesome admonitions, which may teach them to correct and amend their lives, is in the way to make himself and others happy; but he that leaves off to give reproof, encourages men in their errors, from which he who shuneth those who are wont to re-

Ver. 18. He that biddeth hatred with lying lips, and that uttereth slander, is a fool.] He that dissemblith his hatred, by great professions of friendship before one's face, and then goes and vents it in slander behind his back, they seem a cursing man, but is really an impious fool.

Ver. 19. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; for he that refraineth his lips, is wise.] Nor are calumnies, and flatteries the only vices of the tongue, but much speaking is rarely innocent; therefore he that is sparing of his words, and considers well both when, and where, and what he speaks, is a truly prudent person.

Ver. 20. The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.] The words of such a man are exceeding valuable, because they are both solid and sincere; but let wicked men devise and study what they please, it will be good for little, or rather very mischievous.

Ver. 21. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom.] Many are preserved from perishing by the discourses of a good man; but a fool, for want of consideration, receives no benefit by them, and doth not so much as take care to save himself.

Ver. 22. The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.] It is not merely men's industry, and provident care, to which they owe their riches, but the blessing of God prospering their endeavours, which when he favours, wealth flows in space upon them, and is enjoyed also without anxious thoughts and labours. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 23. It is as a sport to a fool to do mischief, but...
a man of understanding hath wisdom.] A senseless
sinner makes a jest of the most horrid impieties that
can be committed by himself or others; but a man
that weighs things wisely, considers that this is no
laughing matter, and takes that pleasure in doing
well, which fools take in mischievous wickedness.

Ver. 24. The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon
him; but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.]
Yet there is none so wicked but he is sometimes
afraid, and since this will not amend him, he shall
feel what he fears; but this is the comfort of righ-
teous men, who have reason to hope that they shall
at length obtain their desires. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 25. As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked
no more; but the righteous is an everlasting founda-
tion.] Though the wicked, like a whirlwind, may bluster
terribly, and overthrow all that stands in his way, yet
he quickly vanishes, and destroys himself by his own
violence; but the righteous, as he is fixed and settled
in his virtue, which is peaceable and quiet, and makes
no disturbance, so he enjoys the solid fruits of it, in
a durable and immovable felicity.

Ver. 26. As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the
eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. Vine-
gar is not more offensive to the teeth, nor smoke more
vexations to the eyes, than a remiss and negligent mi-

Ver. 27. The fear of the LORD prolongeth days,
but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.] The best
way to prolong life, is religiously to observe the laws of
God; but wickedness generally (both by its own
natures and by God's righteous judgements) brings
men to an untimely end.

Ver. 28. The hope of the righteous shall be gladness;
but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.] And
what a lamentable case is a wicked man in, when he
finds himself unexpectedly undone! For this is an-
other difference between a good man and a bad; that
the hope of the former, concludes in a joyful pos-
session of what he waits for, but the other, falling of
his expectation, ends his days in sadness and sorrow.

Ver. 29. The way of the LORD is strength to the
upright; but destruction shall be to the workers of in-
justice.] Whence it follows also, that a faithful ob-
servation of the rules of virtue, which the Lord hath
prescribed us, inspires the upright man with great
courage and undaunted resolution; when any evil
threatens him; but the workers of injustice being
weak and feeble-spirited, are terribly shaken, nay,
broken with the fear of that destruction which is
coming on them.

Ver. 30. The righteous shall never be removed; but
the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.] There is no
way like piety, justice, and mercy, to establish a fa-
mily in perpetual prosperity; but the wicked (how
successful soever they may be for a time) shall not be
able to settle themselves and their posterity in the
good land which God hath given us.

Ver. 31. The mouth of the just bringeth forth wis-
dom, but the froward tongue shall be cut out.] The
very discourse of a righteous man is so profitable to

 instruct others in wisdom and goodness, that it shall
be a means to perpetuate him, like a fruitful tree, in
a flourishing condition; but he that uses his tongue
perversely, to abuse, cozen, or raise dissensions amon-
g his neighbours, shall be cut down, like a tree that
numbers the ground.

Ver. 32. The lips of the righteous know what is accep-
table, but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.]
The righteous knows very well how to speak those
things (and accustoms his mouth unto them) which
are grateful to men, and yet not displeasing to Al-
mighty God; but the wicked are odious to both, be-
cause they are skilled altogether in lying and flattery,

fraud and calumny, and such like subtle but detes-
table arts of doing mischief.

CHAP. XI.

THE ARGUMENT.—This chapter consists of many pro-
miscuous observations, concerning such things as will
make men happy or miserable. It begins with an
admonition concerning justice in our dealings one with
another, without which society (which God designs,
and takes a special care to uphold) cannot be pre-
served. And mankind being very apt to be regard-
less what they do towards God, or towards man,
when they grow rich and great, he next gives a
caution against pride and insolence, as a certain
forerunner of ruin. For it consisting in forgetful-
ness of God, confidence in men's selves, despising
others, slighting good counsels, and attempting
things out of the bounds of men's place and call-
ing, (all which proceed from stupid folly), natural-
ly leads men headlong into destruction.

Then he commends sincerity and charity, (ver. 3.
4.), and represents the vast difference between vir-
tue and wickedness, in order to men's private safe-
ty, (ver. 5. 6. &c.), and to the public security,
(VER. 10. 11.) after which follow a great many
prudent observations and advices, for men's pri-

Ver. 21. (translated thus by us, "Though hand join in hand, the wick-
ed shall not be unpunished,"), upon which there
are as many glosses, almost, as there are interpre-
ters. But I have only put together those two senses
of the former part of the verse, which are most
agreeable to the latter, and do not think fit to trouble
the reader with the other, any further than merely
to inform him of this one thing,—That most inter-
preters by hand in hand understand the hands of
divers persons; but some few take it for the hands
of one and the same person, who puts one hand
into the other. And these last named make the
sense one of these two ways; either, that though a
sinner endeavour to hide his sin, (as a man doth
a thing which he holds in one hand and covers with
the other), he shall notwithstanding be found out,
and suffer for it; or that, though wicked men do
nothing, but, like an idle person, have their hands
folded one in the other, yet they are not free from
sin, which they are devising in their mind, and will
draw a just vengeance upon them.

[b] In the next verse I have followed Bocharus de
Animal. Sac. (part I. 1. ii. c. 57.) in his translation
of those two words, πόνος, which he renders, her
mind departed, viz. from the love of her husband;
but I have not neglected the other sense of which
I think those words are capable.

[c] In the 29th verse, I have adhered to the opinion
of the Lord Bacon, (Book viii. of the Adv. of
Learning, chap. 2. Parab. 9.) "Who takes it for
a profitable admonition touching discords in fami-
lies and domestic breaches, (but may as well be ap-
plied to whole kingdoms, which are larger fami-
lies), which whosoever cherishes among his chil-
dren or servants (or people) as a means to have his
affairs better administered, when they have an evil
eye upon, and hate one another, commonly finds
his hopes turn into wind. For those alterations
and changes for the most part succeed ill; and
those disturbers of their own families oftentimes
meet with vexations and ingratiations from those
very persons, whom (passing by others) they adopt
as the objects of their special favour: nay, by this
means they draw upon themselves ill reports and
doubtful rumours; for it is not ill observed by
Cicero. That all reports, both good and bad fame,
comes from domestics. Which two evils (he thinks)
Solomon expresses by inheriting the wind;
for the frustrating of expectations and raising of
rumours are rightly compared unto winds." I have
added in the paraphrase two other things belonging
to wind, which makes a great noise; and leaves
nothing behind it; for all make it an emblem of
empire.

[d] The last verse is a wise consideration suggested to
good men, when they are under the oppressions of
the wicked; that if the just be afflicted, (as Mel-
anchthon glosses), who seriously endeavour amend-
ment of life, God will take a time to reckon with
those sedent men, who contumaciously and furiously
persist in their wickedness. So the wise man (says
he) admonishes us of two things. First, that the
church is subject to the cross, which the cruelty of
tyrans may lay upon it: But, secondly, "Those
tyrants must one day answer for their cruelty; by
sharp punishments upon themselves; nay, though
they flourish for some time, at last, says he, they
are shaken out of their empire. Hither he applies
those known words of the poet, "Ad generum
Cereria sine cæste," &c.

Ver. 1. A FALSE balance is abomination to the LORD;
but a just weight is his delight.] It is
not so small a sin as men imagine, to cheat their
neighbours, (though it be only in a little matter),
but extremely hateful and detestable to the great Lord
and Governor of the world; as, on the other side, exactly
just and equal dealing in all our commerce one with
another, is highly pleasing to him.

Ver. 2. When pride cometh, then cometh shame; but
with the lowly is wisdom.] Do not entertain an haughty
contempt of thyself, nor insult over others; for the
folly of this appears, in drawing along with it that
contempt and disgrace, which above all things such
men would avoid; therefore, be humble and modest,
the wisdom of which is manifest from the universal
respect which it gains every where.

Ver. 3. The integrity of the upright shall guide them;
but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.] The
integrity of those that uprightly observe the rules
of virtue, is their highest prudence, and safest guide
through all manner of difficulties and dangers: but
the crafty wiliness of peridious men, who will be
tied unto no laws, is more folly, and shall be so far
from preserving them, that it shall prove their certain
destruction.

Ver. 4. Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but
righteousness delivered from death.] Heaps of wealth,
assumed by extortion or covetousness, shall as little
avail as subtily and cunningly, when God in his righ-
teous displeasure shall punish the world by a common
calamity; but justice accompanied with mercy, (as
hath been observed already, x. 2.), will befriend him
that hath constantly practised them, and rescue him
even when there is no hope of safety. (See Ezclus.
xxix. xi. xii. xiii. and xiv. 2.)

Ver. 5. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct
his way; but the wicked shall fall by his own wicked-
ness.] Remember this, (and be not astonished at
the repetition of it, for it is a weighty truth), that there
is no sure guide to direct men in the plain way to
safety, or any other good, than a sincere and impartial
observance of all God's laws; but that the wicked
shall perish, by those very impious courses, (of
liens, oppress, breach of promises, perjuries, and oppression),
whereby they think to gain or to secure
themselves.

Ver. 6. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver
them; but transgressors shall be taken in their own
righteousness.] Remember it, I say, (for it cannot be
too often inculcated), that the virtue of unfeignedly
and entirely upright men, shall be their preservation
when they are in danger; but they that are governed
wholly by their own depraved desires and interest,
shall be entangled, and inevitably perish in their own
naughty contrivances.

Ver. 7. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation
shall perish; and the hope of ungodly men perisheth.] Do
not imagine, therefore, that they have the advantage
of others, who are loose from all laws. They
may seem so to have for the present; but, beside
what I have now said, it must be considered that death
(and how suddenly death that sometimes overtakes them!)
utterly destroys all their projects and hopes: whatso-
ever they expected to accomplish by their riches, or
their power, or their friends, it perisheth together with
them.

Ver. 8. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and
the wicked cometh in his stead.] Nay, before that, it
is frequently seen, that a just man is unexpectedly
drawn out of those straits and difficulties wherein he
was perplexed, and the wicked (who perhaps brought
him into them) takes the place which he hath left, falling into those very distresses from which the just is happily freed.

Ver. 9. A hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.] And more than this, a good man hath this advantage by his wisdom, that it sometimes instructs many how to evade those snares, which the profane hypocrite, with counterfeit professions of friendship, lays to destroy his neighbours.

Ver. 10. When is goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.] We see also in this how amiable virtue, and how hateful vice is, that the inhabitants of a city generally leap for joy when good men prosper and are advanced unto power, but are so far from pitying the downfall of the wicked, that they shout when they behold them tumbling from the high places to which they were raised.

Ver. 11. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted; but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.] Men of unbiased virtue make a city flourish by the blessings they procure for it from heaven, by their prayers, by their prudent advice, their pious admonitions, and their constant study of the public good; but the wicked, by their blasphemies, their evil counsels, their pestilent maxims, their impious doctrines, whereby they corrupt men's manners, utterly subvert the good estate thereof.

Ver. 12. He that is void of wisdom, despiseth his neighbour; but a man of understanding keepeth his peace.] It is a great weakness to speak contemptuously of any man, or to render him ridiculous, (for no man is so mean but he is sensible of despisal, and may find ways to shew his resentment,) therefore a thoroughly prudent person, whatsoever he thinks of others, saith nothing to their reproach.

Ver. 13. A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.] A man whose trade it is to ingratitude himself by defaming others, will not stick most treacherously to discover the secrets wherewith they have trusted him: but a man whose mind is steadfastly fixed to be true and faithful to his neighbours, will study (though they have not desired him) to hide those things which, being known, may prove injurious to them.

Ver. 14. Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsel there is safety.] Where prudent counsellors are wanting, a nation goes to wreck, as certainly as a ship doth without a pilot; nor is one sufficient, but then a country is safe, when there are many wise men to govern affairs; that if one fail, there may enough still remain, or what one or two sees not, others may be able to discern.

Ver. 15. He that is surety for a stranger, shall smart for it: and he that hath surfeiture is sure.] He is in great danger to be undone, who stands bound to pay the debts of another man, especially of a stranger, (ver. 1.), whose ability and honesty is unknown to him; and the way to be secure from that fear, is not only to avoid such engagements one's self, but to abhor to see other men enter into them.

Ver. 16. A gracious woman retaineth honour; and strong women retain wisdom.] Beauty and virtue in a woman advances her to honour, as formidable strength and power in men advances them to riches; and as their principal care is to keep their treasures, so her's should be to preserve her reputation.

Ver. 17. The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel, troubleshoots his own flesh.] He that hath a heart to be kind and bountiful unto his neighbours, will have this advantage by it, among many others, that he will not deny what is fit and convenient to himself; whereas the covetous and hard-hearted, as he hath no regard to his nearest relations, so he pinches his own flesh by his sordid way of living.

Ver. 18. The wicked worketh a deceitful work; but to him that sowereth righteousness, shall be a sure reward.] He thinks, perhaps, hereby to raise himself or his posterity to greatness, but, like all other wicked men, will be deceived in his expectation, for the event of his actions never answers the design; but virtuous men shall infallibly reap the fruit of their pious, just, and charitable labours.

Ver. 19. As righteousness tendeth to life: so that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.] Thus God orders it in his providence, and thus it is in the nature of things, that virtue tends to make men happy; but the more eagerly any man pursues an evil thing, the more he is bent upon his own destruction.

Ver. 20. They that are of a forward heart, are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way, are his delight.] Of all other men, they are most odious to the Lord, who pretend to justice, kindness, and truth, but study and advise how to compass their ends, though it be by the wickedest means; as, on the contrary, they whose exact observance of the rules of righteousness in the whole course of their lives, testify the integrity of their hearts, are highly in his favour and love.

Ver. 21. Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.] Though the wicked endeavour to strengthen himself and his family by powerful leagues and confederacies, and his successors also have mighty associates to maintain his acquisitions, they shall not be able to defend themselves from the punishment their iniquity deserves; but the posterity of the righteous need not be at such pains; but though deserted by men, escape the danger into which the other fall, by the help of God alone. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 22. As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.] As a golden ring is ill placed in the snout of a swine, which is always rutting in the mire; so is beauty ill bestowed on the body of a woman, whose mind having lost all savour and relish of virtue, carries her from her husband, to wallow in filthy lust and adulterous pleasures. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 23. The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.] The righteous desire nothing but that it may be well with all men; but the wicked wish for trouble and disturbance,
especially that they may execute their malice and wrath upon those whom they hate; and accordingly God will deal with them: good things shall be the portion of the righteous, but his just indignation shall frustrate the expectation of the wicked.

Ver. 24. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.] You may see by this how miserably they are mistaken, who imagine none so wise as the penurious, that you shall find here and there a man who communicates readily and liberally to the necessities of others, and yet his estate is so far from being impaired thereby, that it increases; when others, who are so saving that they will part with nothing, no, not upon the most just occasions, do not thrive at all, but by one means or other become beggars.

Ver. 25. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also by himself.] Let not him, therefore, that bestows benefits, imagine thereby he shall be impoverished, for it is the certain way to enrich himself; and the larger his charity is, and the more diffused for the refreshment of others, the greater abundance shall be poured on him, and the abler still shall he grow to do more good.

Ver. 26. He that withholdeth the corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be upon the head of him that soweth it.] He that hoardeth up corn in a time of scarcity, on purpose to raise the price, shall fall into the popular hatred, and be loaded with many a curse; but he who then opens his granaries, and sells at a moderate rate, shall not only have the people’s good word, but the blessing of God.

Ver. 27. He that diligently seeketh good, procureth favour; but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.] He that, from the time he rises, studies nothing but how to do good to others, shall obtain favour both with God and man; but he whose business it is to do mischief, shall draw upon himself the evil he designs against others.

Ver. 28. He that trusteth in his riches, shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.] He whose confidence in riches, as the surest support and defence, makes him covetous, unjust, and unmerciful, shall fall to decay like a withered leaf; but they whose pious dependence upon God makes them just and charitable, like a flourishing tree, shall thrive and prosper.

Ver. 29. He that trusteth in his own house, shall inherit the wind; and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.] He that makes or cherishes dissipations and factions in his own family, (or kingdom), may, by making a great bustle and stir, seem to be a notable man; but will not only be deceived in his expectations, but defame his government, and bring his estate to nothing; nay, it is oftentimes seen, that he who is thus foolish, loses all his authority, and becomes a servant to him who administers his affairs with more prudent care. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 30. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.] The benefit the world receives from a just and charitable man is so great, that it may be compared to the fruit of the tree of life, which keeps mankind from being miserable; but he is the greatest benefactor of all, who communicates wisdom so charitably and seasonably, that he draws souls to the love of virtue.

Ver. 31. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.]

But who is there so good as to do or to suffer no evil? and if God do not let the just and charitable man, (mark what I say), they who are so useful and beneficial to the world, go without correction, who can think that the wicked, who is so good for nothing, but obstinately contemns and breaks all the laws of God and man, shall escape the just punishment of his many crimes? See 1 Pet. iv. 18, and Arg. [d]

CHAP. XII.

The Argument.—This chapter begins with an admonition, often inculcated in this book, concerning the affection wherewith a man that would be wise and good, ought to receive charitable reproofs. And there are several things also repeated, concerning the providence of Almighty God, in punishing men according to their wickedness, and delivering good men from those who seek their destruction, which is notably expressed in three verses, one after another, ver. 5, 6, 7. where he observes how the wicked, labouring to compass their ends, by censure, or by violence, even by blood, (especially if they can privately make a man away), not only miscarry in their designs, but are unexpectedly overturned, and subverted out of their places, wherein they behave themselves with such injustice and cruelty.

There are divers instructions also here repeated about several virtues and vices; especially those of the tongue. Among which Melancthon commends this to the remembrance of the reader, ver. 22. [a] “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord”; who recommends to us, says he, the love and care of truth; both in doctrines concerning himself, and in arts, and in all honest covenants and contracts. For truth being among the chiefest and most conspicuous virtues, therefore the contrary vice is condemned, by a terrible word, and called abomination, i.e. such an evil as God detests with a singular indignation, (for idols are called idolatries, abominations, or abominable things), which is principally true of such lies as are on purpose invented to destroy men’s fame; and much more of such as are devised for the taking away their lives, and the ruin of their families; such as those which David often complains were contrived against him.

The Lord Bacon hath made notable remarks also upon another passage in this chapter, ver. 10. where he observes, concerning the former [b] part of the verse, “That there is implanted in man’s nature a noble and excellent affection of pity and compassion, called here mercy; which extends itself even unto brute creatures, that are by divine ordination subject to his command. And therefore, this com-
passion hath some analogy with that of a prince towards his subjects; nay, further, it is most certain, that the worship any soul is, the larger is its compassion. For contracted and degenerate minds imagine these things appertain not to them, but the mind that looks upon itself as a nobler portion of the universe, is kindly affected to inferior creatures, out of the communion there is between them; wherefore we see, that there were under the old law many precepts concerning this, which were not so much merely ceremonial, as institutions of mercy; as that of not eating flesh with the blood in it, and such like." I suppose he means those mentioned, Exodus xxiii. 19. Deuteronomy v. 4. xxii. 6. 7. xxxv. 4. For, as Grotius excellently observed, it is very laudable to exercise kindness towards brute creatures, that we may keep ourselves the more remote from all manner of cruelty towards men. Which the angel, the Jews think, reproved in Balam, when he chid him for striking his ass three times. For thus they bring in the angel, speaking to him, in the great commentary upon Numbers: "If I am required to demand satisfaction for the injury done thy ass, concerning whom there is no law of justice, nor covenant of our fathers, how much more for this, that thou goest about utterly to root out a whole nation?"

I omit what the same Lord Bacon there says, (book viii. of the Adv. of Learning, c. 2. para. 14.), concerning the ancient Essenes and Pythagoreans, and concerning some people now in the Mogul's country, and the present Turks, who are full of affection to brute creatures; and only observe, that he looks upon the latter part of the same verse, as a kind of caution added by the wise man, lest we should think he patronises all sorts of mercy and compassion. "No, the mercy which spares wicked persons from being cut off by the hand of justice, is not mercy, but more cruel than cruelty itself. For cruelty is exercised upon single persons only; but this kind of mercy, by the grant of impiety, arms the whole band of impious men against the innocent." So, by the mercies of the wicked, he understands mercy shewn to the wicked, which is an unusual form of speech, and disagreeing to the opposition which the wise man, in this proverbial saying, makes between the righteous and the wicked. And, therefore, it is not to be embraced, nor to be looked upon as a true exposition; in which, though I believe he followed Darius, yet he hath very little company besides. And the sense rather lies, as I have expressed it in the paraphrase; in which, if I have added more than interpreters do, I am confident it will appear to him that considers, not to be without reason. For these words, "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel," seem to me to have the same sense with that proverbial speech among the Greeks, "ex meto atque atque.

In the twelfth verse I have expressed both senses of which the word wisdom is capable; which signifies both a net and a fortress. And so I have done in the next, (ver. 13.), which may be rendered two ways: Either, that by prevaricating with his lips, a wicked man lays snares, or [c] that he is himself insawi by his prevarications. In the same manner, I have comprehended more senses than one, in several other verses; which, if I should particularly mention, it would enlarge this preface beyond its just length; else I should have made some remarks upon ver. 15, where the danger of self-love and self-conceit is represented, which hath ever this effect, that it makes men slight, if not reject good counsel, out of a vain opinion, that none can advise them better than themselves; which is to follow the direction of a fool. For it is as certain a note of folly, to rely wholly upon a man's own judgement, as it is of prudence to hearken to the advice of others.

Ver. 1. Whoso loveth instruction, loveth knowledge; but be that hateth reproof is brutish.

It is an excellent sign that a man will be wise and good, who not only patiently bears with those that tell him of his faults, but loves and is thankful for reproof; which he, who not only declines, but hates, and is thereby enraged, gives way to such brutish passions and desires, that there is little hope he should ever be a man.

Ver. 2. A good man obtainteth favour of the Lord; but a man of wicked devices will be condemned.

He that studies how to do good to others, attracts the good-will and blessing of the Lord upon himself; but he who contrives mischievous designs, under a specious shew of religion and the public good, shall be judged by him who knows the heart, to suffer what he deserves.

Ver. 3. A man shall not be established by wickedness; but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

For no man, though never so subtle or powerful, shall be able to establish himself and his family, who lays the foundation of his greatness in wickedness; but the righteous, like a tree that hath taken a deep root in the earth, though shaken with storms and tempests, shall remain unmoveable in a flourishing estate.

Ver. 4. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband; but she that maketh ashamed, is rottenness in his bones.

A wife that strenuously employs herself in her domestic affairs, and can prudently command her own passions and desires, is a singular ornament and honour to her husband, who may well glory in his happiness; but she whose laziness, or lasciviousness, or other infamous quality, makes him hang down his head for shame, is an incurable grief and vexation, consuming him and all that he hath.

Ver. 5. The thoughts of the righteous are right; but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

The designs of good men are managed with exact justice and truth; but the contrivances of the wicked are carried on with fraud, dissimulation, and all manner of deceit.

Ver. 6. The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood; but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.

Nay, (such is the height of their wickedness), they consult one with another, and lay plots to take.
away secretly the life of those who stand in the way of their designs; but men sincerely good give the best advice they can, to deliver such innocent persons from their bloody snare.

Ver. 7. The wicked are overthrown, and are not; but the house of the righteous shall stand.] And God befriends them also; who not only defeats those wicked projectors in their designs, but so totally overthrows them and their families, that no footsteps of them remains; whereas he not only continues, but settles the just man's family in a durable succession, (as I have often said, ver. 3. and x. 25. 30. xi. 35.), when they that assaulted them are quite extinct.

Ver. 8. A man shall be commended according to his wisdom; but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.] True prudence directing a man to effect his ends by fair and honest means, will procure him the greatest esteem, and the most lasting praise; but he who contrives by fraud, and such like crooked ways, to attain his aim, shall fall into utter contempt, and be scorned by all as a foolish knave.

Ver. 9. He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.] He is far happier who makes no shew in the world, but hath a competent estate, than he who appears in great splendour and pomp abroad, but wants bread to eat when he is at home.

Ver. 10. A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.] A good man takes care that his beast be well used, and have food and rest convenient for it; which is more than men bent upon wickedness will do for their neighbours; for their very kindesses, being treacherous, are a cruel cheat; nay, the highest expressions which they make of tenderness and compassion, (whereby they induce others to repose a trust in them), are intended merely as a cover for the mischief they mean more securely to do them. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 11. He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread; but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.] He that takes pains in an honest employment, suppose in tilling his land, shall find it require him with sufficient, if not plentiful provision for himself and his family; but he that is idle, falling into the company of loose and wicked persons, will find at last, (by the desperate courses into which they will lead him), that he wants not only bread, but understanding.

Ver. 12. The wicked desireth the net of evil men; but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.] The wicked desires two things; first to do as much mischief as he can by wiles and arts of deceiving, and then to be secure in his wickedness: but the righteous make every body the better for them, and thereby enjoy that safety which the other have only in their wishes and desires.

Ver. 13. The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips; but the just shall come out of trouble.] The wicked insinuates himself by that deceitful talk whereby he designed to have ensnared others; but the righteous escapes the danger; nay, by his prudent discourse, avoids very great difficulties, wherein otherwise he might have been entangled. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 14. A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, and the remembrance of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.] There is no man gives good counsel and advice, (especially in public affairs), but he shall reap the fruit of it abundantly himself; and there is no good work he doth for the benefit of others, but God will requite it, and make it turn to his own good account.

Ver. 15. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that heareth counsel is wise.] A fool is so conceived that he consults nobody but himself; for whatsoever he doth, in his own opinion he is always in the right; but a wise man will not rely upon his own judgement alone, but, suspecting himself, make use of the sound advice of other men.

Ver. 16. A fool's wrath is presently known; but a prudent man覆reth shame.] A fool (like a beast) is no sooner provoked but he grows angry; and, which is worse, it appears immediately in his countenance, words, and actions; whereas a prudent man is not unseemly transported by his passion, but strikes his resentments, even of the most reproachful injuries that are done him.

Ver. 17. He that speaketh truth, sheweth forth righteousness; but a false witness, deceiveth.] He that freely and boldly speaks the truth, and all the truth, and nothing but the truth, demonstration himself an honest man, and doth justice unto others; but he that conceals the truth, or forges falsehoods, and testifies unto lies, declares himself both a deceitful and mischievous person.

Ver. 18. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword; but the tongue of the wise is health.] A cat-throat is not more pernicious than he; and they are not much better, whose business it is by secret calumnies to wound the reputation of their neighbours, or to make discord and divisions among them; which a good man uses all his skill to cure, persuading them to love, unity, and peace.

Ver. 19. The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment.] He that speaks the truth (being always conformable to himself) hath this advantage, that he can never be disproved, not consequently discredited; but a liar, though he may at present be believed, is soon confuted; for he is apt to contradict himself, and blast his own reputation for ever.

Ver. 20. Dread is in the heart of them that imagine evil; but to the counsellors of peace is joy.] They do but deceive themselves, who look for any satisfaction from dissensions and disturbances, which they cannot contrive without much fear and anxiety of mind; but as they are always cheerful who consult nothing but peace, concord, and happy settlement, so they will have great joy, whatever the issue be, of such good designs.

Ver. 21. There shall no evil happen to the just; but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.] For the divine providence takes a peculiar care of good men, to
avert the harm that the iniquity of the wicked intends; which shall fall upon themselves in such abundance as to overwhelm them.

Ver. 12. Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight.] It is thought no great matter if a man break his word, or any way deceive his neighbour; but know, that this is a thing exceeding hateful to the Divine Majesty; and on the contrary, they that faithfully perform their promises, and in all things deal truly with their neighbours, are no less acceptable to him. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 23. A prudent man concealeth knowledge; but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.] A prudent man conceals his knowledge, and will not make a shew of being so wise as really he is; but a fool publishes his ignorance, as if he was ambitious that every one should know he is a fool.

Ver. 24. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule; but the slothful shall bear tribute.] He that taketh pains in an honest employment, shall take his ease at last; nay, raise himself to dominion and power; but he whose sloth makes him live by shirking and deceit, shall bring that toil upon himself which he would avoid, when his poverty and villainy have reduced him to be a slave.

Ver. 25. Herowness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad.] Anxious cares and solicitude how to live, depress the spirit of a man, otherwise magnanimous; but the kind and encouraging discourses of a friend (much more the gracious promises of God) erect it, nay, make it glad.

Ver. 26. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour; but the way of the wicked seduceth them.] As in other things; so in this, a righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour, that he doth not delude himself with vain hopes, nor miss his end, as the wicked doth in all his designs.

Ver. 27. The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting; but the substance of a diligent man is precious.] There is nothing more vile than a lazy fellow that lives by cheating, who, if he catch, shall not be able to keep his prey; but he is a valuable man, who by honest diligence gotteth wealth, which shall durably remain with him.

Ver. 28. In the way of righteousness is life; and in the path-way thereof there is no death.] True goodness leads unto endless prosperity and happiness; nor is there any one action of virtue that tends to make a man miserable; at all manner of wickedness doth.

Several observations, not much different from what he made before, of the advantage which the righteous have of the wicked in a great many instances, which are easy to observe in the paraphrase.

And in the eighth verse he seems to me to teach [a] contentedness of mind, by showing that the poor have a great advantage of the rich in an evil time. Some indeed take the sentence quite otherwise, as if the wise intended to represent the great advantage rich men have of the poor, in this sense; “a rich man, when he fears any evil from his enemies, can divert it by a sum of money; but a poor man, when he is threatened, dare not stay, but runs away.” And others there are who go a middle way, and think he intends to shew, that each of them have their advantages of several kinds. But considering the opposition that is usual in this book, between one part of the verse and the other, it seems not to be the meaning; yet I have mentioned it, that they do not take the opposition to lie as I have expressed it in the paraphrase, may have their choice, and follow which sense they like best. As for that of Clemens Alexandrinus, L. iii. Paedagog. chap. 7, who thus glosses upon the former part of the verse, ιεροδικαϊ νυμφατηθησαντα, “if a man be rich, he shall be saved by giving away to those in want;” it doth not answer to the opposite part of the verse, unless we should interpret it thus; “as for the poor, they shall have no rebuke for not giving, because they have nothing to give.” But I look upon this as not genuine; though his admonition upon this occasion be excellent, which is this; “he that earnestly presses to go up to heaven, must have many virtues which he possesses, carry about with him that good staff of beneficence; and by relieving those that are afflicted, partake himself of true rest and refreshment.

Which it is impossible to find any way but in [b] virtuous courses, as the 15th verse suggests to us; the sense of which, according to the plain import of the Hebrew words, I have expressed in the paraphrase. But as the last part of it sounds in our language, it will not be incongruous to take the meaning of the whole thus: “If a man have understanding enough to be thoroughly good, he will find things favourable to his honest desires; but they that take evil courses meet with great difficulties, and are forced to go backward and forward, and wind and turn every way, to bring about their ends, or save themselves perhaps from ruin.”

[c] There are several other notable sentences in this chapter, upon which if I should enlarge, it would be to write a book. The only two which Melanchthon singled out for the observation of his scholars, are, the one of them in ver. 10, concerning pride. Upon which he remembers them of the Greek proverb, ὁ ἄχος ὅπως τοῖς μεταφύτευσαι. “A mountain cannot mix with a mountain;” i.e. two high men will never agree together; and of another excellent saying among the Latins, Credo mihi, sapere, est num. multis sapere. “Believe me, to be wise, is no to be over wise.” For they whose minds are in-

Chap. XIII.

The Argument.—This chapter begins, as the foregoing did, with an admonition about receiving instruction and reproof with due regard to them, especially from parents, who cannot be thought to intend any thing but the good of their children.

And as he did there, so here again the wise man gives fresh advice about the government of the tongue, about diligence and industry; and hath
fected with a vain opinion of themselves, either
cannot see the truth, if it be against their thoughts,
or if they do, they will not acknowledge it, for
fear they should yield, and confess themselves
overcome.

[4] The other is ver. 23, the latter part of which he
renders differently from all that I have read.
"There is much food in the furrows of the poor,
et alii sine modo cumulant, and others heap up with-
out any measure;" that is, to no purpose, when a
little will suffice. Which is a wise saying, but not
agreeable to the Hebrew text.

I shall only add, that as the chapter begins with an
admonition to hearken to reproof, (especially from
parents), which is repeated again in the middle,
ver. 13, 18. so it concludes, [e] in the last verse but
one, with an advice to parents not to spare the rod,
if reproof will not do; which is but necessary in
very young children; because there is no other
means perhaps to make them understand the dif-
ference between good and evil, decent and unseem-
ly, but only to make them smart for the one, and
to give them some sensible pleasure for the other.
Some children there are, are so disposed, that they
must be thus treated; and it seems a wonderful piece
of wisdom in the Lacedaemonians, (as Plutarch re-
lates in his Laconical Institutes), that, out of an
universal love and care for each other's good, made it
lawful for any man to correct the child of another
person, if he saw him do amiss. And if the child
complained of it to his father, it was looked upon
as a fault in the father if he did not correct him
again for making that complaint. Such was their
confidence in each other, that every man being as
much concerned for another man's children as for
his own, would never do them any injury, nor un-
reasonably check them without cause. For this is
the character Plutarch gives of them, that they
did not, as in other cities, "look every man only
after his own children, servants, and cattle, but
every man looked upon what was his neighbour's
as his own, ὡς ἡμῖν γενέσθαι τὸν κοινὸν ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις;
that there might be, as much as was possible, a
communion among them, and they might take
care of what belonged to others, as if they were
their own proper goods.

Ver. 1. A WISE son heareth his father's instruction;
but a scorner heareth not rebuke.] A good
child will reverently receive and obey both the in-
struction and reprehension of his father; but there is no
hope of him that laughs and scoffs when he is admo-
nished or chidden for his faults.

Ver. 2. A man shall eat good by the fruit of his
mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat vi-
olence.] He that speaks well of others, or gives them
faithful counsel, shall reap the benefit thereof himself;
and so shall they that perfidiously calumniate or
deceive them, suffer themselves that injury which they
desired to do their neighbours.

Ver. 3. He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life;
but he that openeth wide his lips, shall have destruc-
tion.] It is worth a man's pains to watch over his
tongue, for he that carefully observes every word he
speaks, preserves himself from much trouble and
danger; but he that blunts out every thing that comes
into his head, not minding what he saith, is in the
ready way to ruin.

Ver. 4. The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath
nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.
There is nothing gotten by sloth, neither riches nor
learning, which he in vain desires that will not
labour for them; but the diligent and industrious shall
never want satisfaction, but enjoy perhaps a great deal
more than he desired.

Ver. 5. A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked
man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.] A good man,
not only avoids, but hates all manner of falsehood,
both in word and deed; but the wicked delights to
abuse others with such abominable lies and frauds,
as make him no less loathsome than a stinking carcass,
and so contemptible, that he dare not shew his face
for shame.

Ver. 6. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in
the way; but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.] The
justice of all honest and upright designs will be a su-
ficient security to them; but all wicked contrivances
are overthrown by their own iniquity.

Ver. 7. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath
nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great
riches.] You will be deceived, if you judge of men
by the outward appearance, for there are those who
have the vanity to make a great show in the world,
when they are not worth a farthing; and others, who
are so cunning as to resemble their vast estates under
the garb of poverty.

Ver. 8. The ransom of a man's life are his riches;
but the poor heareth not rebuke.] Rich men are not al-
ways so happy as they are imagined, for their wealth
sometimes only serves to make them accused of high
crimes, and then to bring them off with a huge sum of
money, which they pay to save their lives; but no-
boby is apt to find fault with the poor, or to bring
any charge against them. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 9. The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the
lamp of the wicked shall be put out.] The happiness
of the just is great and illustrious, like the light of
the sun, and increases still to their endless joy; but
the happiness of the wicked is weak and dim, like
the light of a candle, and will at last be utterly ex-
tinguished.

Ver. 10. Only by pride cometh contention; but with
the well-advised is wisdom.] They that have an high
conceit of themselves, and will yield to none, de-
clare their folly, in that they can do nothing without
strife and contention; but they that are so humble as
to be advised by others, do all things prudently, in
quietness and peace. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 11. Wealth gotten by vanity, shall be diminu-
ed: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.
Wealth ill gotten, (by lying, gaming, cheating, &c.)
soon wastes away; but what is gotten by honest la-
bour, swells to a greater heap, which moulders not, but still increases.

Ver. 12. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.] The delay of that which a man eagerly expects is such an affliction, that it differs little from a lingering disease; but when he enjoys what he hath long looked for, it restores him presently to his former vigour and liveliness.

Ver. 13. Whose despiesth the word, shall be destroyed; but he that fearereth the commandment, shall be rewarded.] He that despises the good admonitions or counsels that are given him, is his own enemy, and destroys himself; but he that reverently submits to the divine commandment, makes God his friend, who will reward him for it.

Ver. 14. The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.] The instructions of a good man ought to be as a law to him that receives them, for, like the water of a perpetual spring, they are most beneficial; especially to preserve him from those pernicious and destructive principles whereby too many are ensnared.

Ver. 15. Good understanding giveth favour; but the way of transgressors is hard.] A prudent, pious, and regular behaviour, is most amiable and acceptable to all men; but the conversation of such as live by no law but their own lusts, like a rough way, is grievously uneasy. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 16. Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge; but a fool loveth open his folly.] All prudent persons are so cautious not to detract from discretion, that they undertake nothing but with due deliberation, and what they understand; but a fool discovers his weakness to be greater than was thought, by rash meddling with matters out of his reach.

Ver. 17. A wicked messenger falleth into mischief; but a faithful ambassador is health.] A messenger, or a minister, that wickedly betrays his trust, is so injurious to his prince, or him that employs him, that he shall not escape a just punishment; but he that faithfully discharges this office, (healing, suppose, or preventing differences and breaches), procures safety to himself, as well as to the person that used his service.

Ver. 18. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction; but he that regardeth reproof, shall be honoured.] He that proudly rejects instruction, and disdaineth to be checked in his lewd courses, is likely to be a beggar, and exposed to the public scorn; but he that is so humble as to give a due regard to reproof, and to correct his errors, not only gains a just esteem, but is likely to rise unto dignity and honour.

Ver. 19. The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul; but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.] It is an high satisfaction to enjoy what we earnestly desire; but fools herein defeat themselves, being so wedded to their wickedness, that they will not quit it, if that must be the condition of their being so happy.

Ver. 20. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.] He that keeps company with wise and good men, is likely to be so himself, that is, to be happy; but he who associates himself with the wicked, shall be as certainly ruined, as he will be unavoidably infected with their wickedness.

Ver. 21. Evil pursueth sinners; but to the righteous good shall be repaid.] The wickedness of sinners pursues them to their unavoidable destruction; and the good which righteous men do, will infallibly return into their own bosom, and reward them with many blessings.

Ver. 22. A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children; and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.] A man that doth good with his estate, takes the surest course to settle it upon his posterity for many generations; but the wealth of him, who regards nothing but his own sinful lusts and pleasures, shall be transferred from his family unto one that is truly virtuous.

Ver. 23. Much food is in the tillage of the poor; but there is that is destroyed for want of judgement.] A poor man many times makes a plentiful provision for himself and his family, out of a few acres of land, which he manages judiciously and honestly; but there is a sort of men, whose larger estates are wasted, either for want of skill to improve their ground, or because they do not pay the hireling his wages.

Ver. 24. He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.] Fond affection, which maketh a parent forbear to chastise his child for the faults that cannot otherwise be amended, is no better than hatred, for it helps to undo him; therefore he that truly loves his child must not be so indulgent, but as soon as ill inclinations begin to appear, while he is tender and flexible, give him early correction, as well as admonition, before he hath accustomed himself to the doing evil. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 25. The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul; but the belly of the wicked shall want.] A righteous man never wants satisfaction, because his desires are moderate, and he lives in a temperate use of God's blessings; but wicked men, some of them, bring themselves to extreme poverty by their luxury and riot, and others of them are indigent even in the midst of the greatest abundance, because their desires are insatiable, and they never think they have enough.

CHAP. XIV.

The Argument.—[a] As the foregoing chapter began with a description of a toadyish child, so this with the character of a good mother of a family, who by her prudent care makes it flourish; when a lewd woman throws the house (as we say) out of the windows; for so the wise man observes: “She pulls down the house with her own hands, that is, ruins the family without any other help. There needs no more than a bad wife to undo a family.

[b] A little after this, (ver. 4.), there follows an admonition for the man without doors, as here for the woman within; that he do not neglect his husbandry. Of which oxen, every one knows, were the principal instruments; being not only employ-
ed in that country, (as they are here), in plowing the ground, and carrying home the crop, but also in treading out the corn. The strength also of the ox, (which is here mentioned), is celebrated in all authors; and thence bulls are called 

abharim, i.e. robust, among the Hebrews, who were very careful about the breeding of those most profitable creatures. It is not my business to inquire after the difference between 

Alaphim and Sar, (which we reader here, in this verse, by the same English word), but certain it is, they are used promiscuously for either sex; and the latter without any respect to age; though most commonly it signifies one grown to maturity, which we call an ox.

[c] Upon the next verse but one, (ver. 6.), the Lord Bacon (in his 7th book of the Adv. of Learning, chap. 2.) hath made this useful gloss: “He that comes to seek after knowledge, with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter enough for his humour, but none for his instruction.” One reason of which is, that this humour of deriding all things, springs from a great pride and conceit of their own wit, which disposes them to seek for wisdom, not from others, but wholly from themselves; and so (as the wise man observes) they are not likely to find it where it is not to be had: When he that attributes less to himself, and hath the humility to listen to instruction, in a short time attains great wisdom. I cannot wholly omit the opinion of Jansenius, who thinks the wise man means, that he who hath accustomed himself to laugh at all wholesome counsel, and in some sort or other begins to think what is best to do, commonly finds himself at such a loss, that he cannot see his way out of it. And it may be applied to those also, “who having mocked at religion all their days, at last desire to understand it; but cannot, through their own ingratitude, dispose to it.”

[d] In the next verse I have joined these two senses together, which it may have according to the different acceptation of the word 

minagod, signifying either before, or from before.

[e] The next, (ver. 8.) I take to be that, which the Lord Bacon, minding the sense rather than the words, thus translates, (Advancement of Learning, b. viii. c. 2. parab. 30.) “Prudens avertit ad grossis suos; stultus diversit ad dolos.” Which his English translator (who refers this to Prov. xxvii. 12. which is quite to another purpose) reads thus: “A wise man is wary of his way; a cunning fool seeks evasions.” Upon which that Lord thus descants: “There be two sorts of wisdom, the one true and sound, the other counterfeit and false; which last Solomon doubts not to call folly. He that applies himself to the former, takes heed to his own ways and footsteps, foreseeing dangers, studying remedies, using the assistance of good men, and fortifying himself against the wicked; wary how he enters upon a business, and not unprepared for a retreat, and how he may come off handsomely; intent upon advantages, courageous against impediments, with innumerable other things that relate to the government of his own ways and actions. But the other kind of wisdom is made up altogether of fallacies and cunning devices, and relies wholly upon the hopes of circumventing others, and framing them as he lists himself. This wisdom the parable rejects, not only as wicked, but as foolish. For, first, it is not in the number of things which are in our own power, nor is it directed by any constant rule; but new stratagems must be every day devised, the old failing and growing meaningless. And, secondly, as soon as ever a man hath got the same and the opinion of a cunning crafty companion, he hath deprived himself utterly of the principal instrument for the management of his affairs, which is trust; and so he will find by experience all things to go cross to his desires. For, lastly, these arts and shifts, however they promise fair, and much please such as practise them, yet they are commonly frustrated, and, which is worse, end sadly.” Which Tacitus hath well observed in these remarkable words, Consilia calida et audacia, expectatione lata, tractus dure, eventus tristia. “Crafty and audacious counsels are joyful in the expectation, difficult in the management, and sad in the event.”

[f] There is the same difficulty in the 9th verse that was in the 7th; for the word 

jakos is translated by some mock, by others excuse; and so, (besides what I have comprehended in my paraphrase), there may be this sense of the words; “fools endeavour to make handsome apologies for their fault, and to find out colourable excuses; but upright men freely confess them, and easily grant a pardon for them, and make up the difference which they raise in a friendly manner.” Or if we retain the acceptation of mocking, this may be the sense of the verse; “fools laugh and jeer at those who have committed a sin, but good men pity them, and by kind reproofs seek their amendment.” I know not how otherwise to make out the opposition which is usual between one part of the verse and the other, unless we choose to take it thus; that “when fools offended God in the highest manner, they make nothing of it; but if good men in the least offend, they presently beg his pardon, and seek his grace and favour.” The former part of the sentence also may be inverted, and make this plain obvious sense, which is as natural as any; “sin will expose those to scorn, who are so foolish as to commit it;” and then the latter part is as plain; “but the upright will have favour both with God and man.” A good admonition to them that make a mock of sin; which will in time make a mock of them, and expose them as ridiculous fools.

[g] Some take the next (ver. 10.) to be an admonition to a prudent man, that he should conceal both his grief and his joy, and keep them to himself. But it is rather an advice to everyone, not to cause too heavily the passions of grief or of joy in others, because the causes of them may be unknown to us. Or we may look upon the former part of the verse as an admonition to those that are at ease,
not to censure too severely the complaints of those that are in pain or trouble; and the latter part as an
admonition to such as are delivered from trouble, to
be more thankful than any one can exhort them to
be, because they best know what reason they have for
it.

The next verse but one, (ver. 12.) is the only
sentence which Melancthon points out to his schol-
sars as the most remarkable in this chapter. Which
he takes to be an admonition of the weakness of
men's judgement, and all human counsels; which
mistake lamentably, and lead men frequently into
ruin. According to that saying of Simonides, "Si
severa "Anna et falsa, "Shadows of seeming ap-
pearances do violence to truth," or "truth is forced
to give way to the mere show of it:" and that other,
"necus in me fuis faeiscum Man," "Shadows too oft cheat us of the reality." Against which there is no remedy but the word of God, and in-
voking his direction; according to such sayings as these, "Thy word is a light to my feet" &c. "Com-
mit thy way unto the Lord, and trust in him, and
he will bring it to pass." "This shall be your wis-
dom, to walk in my precepts." Deut. iv.

And as some are deceived by their own counsels,
so others by the counsel of strangers, if they be so
simple as to believe every one that pretends to kind-
ness, ver. 15. Where Bochartus notes very op-
positely, that as prudence without simplicity de-
generates into craft, so simplicity without prudence
is no better than mere vanity.

In like manner, the wise man observes, ver. 19.
that talking without doing is vain, and to no pur-
pose; but only to be a cover perhaps for idleness.
As the Lord knows (Advane. of Learning, 8, Ali-
t. c. 3. parab. 28.) gloses upon that verse, in two
words: "Salomon here separates the fruit of the
labour of the tongue, and of the labour of the hands,
as if want was the revenue of the one, and wealth
the revenue of the other. For it commonly comes
to pass, that they who talk liberally, boast much,
and promise mightly matters are beggars, and
receive no benefit by their bags or by anything they
disburse of; nay, rather for the most part such
men are not industrious and diligent in their em-
ployment, but only feed and fill themselves with
words, as with wind. Certainly, as the poet says,
Quis silet, est firmus. He that is conscious to him-
self of proficicency in his endeavours, contents him-
self with inward applause in his own breast, and
holds his peace; but he who knows within himself,
that he only hunts after vain-glory, and hath noth-
ing else to live upon, talks abundantly, and re-
ports wonders unto others."

There are several other remarkable things in the rest
of the chapter; but this preface is already so long,
that I shall only touch upon one, ver. 34.

Where they seem to me to have translated the
Hebrew most exactly, who take the word placed in
the ordinary sense of it, for mercy or clemency;
not for reproach, which it never signifies, unless
perhaps once, Lev. xx. 17. of which there may be
a just doubt made. As for the Chattaiah, nobody
doubts but it signifies a sin-offering, as well as sin;
yet with respect to our translation, I have endeav-
roured to express both senses of those two words in
my paraphrase.

Ver. 1. EVERY wise woman buildest her house; but
the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.
He hath a great treasure, whomever he be, that hath
a wise and virtuous wife; for she alone, by her dili-
gence and prudent administration, is able to raise her
family, and increase its riches and reputation; but she
that is foolish, and void of goodness, by her negligence,
il management, and luxury, without any other assis-
tance, will lay it low, and waste all that hath been gotten
by her predecessors' care. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. He that walketh in his uprightness, feareth
the LORD; but he that is perverse in his ways, despiseth
him. He that sincerely discharges his duty in all
the actions of his life, hath a due regard and reve-
rence to the Lord, from whom all virtue flows; but
he that cares not what he doth, so he doth but satisfy
his own lusts and passions, lives in a profound contempt
of his majesty; which is the very fountain of all
wickedness.

Ver. 3. In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride;
but the lips of the wise shall preserve them. A fool is
so insolent, that he boldly calumniates and wounds
the reputation of others, though it come home at last,
with a terrible back-blows, upon himself; but wise
men are careful of their words, not to offend, much
less abuse the meanest person; and thereby they re-
main in safety.

Ver. 4. Where no wise men are, the spirit is clean;
but much increase is by the strength of the ox. If the fields
be fallow and be neglected, a famine must follow;
but good husbandry bestowed upon them, makes
great plenty. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 5. A faithful witness will not lie; but a false
witness will utter a lie. A person of integrity will not
be prevailed withal, either for fear or favour, to jus-
tify the least untruth; but a mind of no conscience,
which hath accustomed himself to lying, cares not how
many falsehoods he testifies; which he uttereth with-
out any difficulty.

Ver. 6. A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not;
but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. He
that scoffs and jests at everything he reads or hears
would be thought wise, but loses all his pains, which
perhaps he takes to be so; when a serious person,
who doth not think himself too wise to learn, easily
and quickly attains the knowledge of things necessary
and useful for him. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 7. Go from the presence of a foolish man, when
they perceive not in him the lips of knowledge. Ob-
serve a fool (and a wicked man is no better) as dili-
gently as thou pleasest, and thou shalt never learn
any good from him; and therefore it is best to flee
the company of such persons, whose discourse then
persuades tends to nothing but vice and mischief.
See Arg. [d]

Ver. 8. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand
his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.] The greatest cunning and subtlety that a truly wise and good man studies, is to understand what he ought to do, and what to avoid, upon all occasions; but all the skill of wicked men, such is their folly, lies in cheating tricks, and in devising arts of circumvention and deceit. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 9. Fools make a mock at sin, but among the righteous there is favour.] Lewd men, as if it were but a sport, care not what injury they do their neighbours, and when they have done, laugh at those that talk of making satisfaction; but among men exactly virtuous, there is nothing but good will, which makes them live without offense, or presently reconcile themselves to those they have offended. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 10. The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doeth not intermeddle with his joy.] Nobody can know what another suffers, so well as himself; and he alone is privy to the greatness of that joy, which springs from the happy conclusion of his sufferings. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 11. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown; but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.] Men of sincere integrity are happier in a mean cottage, than the wicked are in their palaces; for, when the great and potent families of those wicked men are overturned, the despised family of the sincerely pious shall flourish and grow illustrious.

Ver. 12. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.] Examine every thing strictly and impartially, and be not led merely by the appetite, for that makes many actions seem innocent, which in the issue prove deadly destructive. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 13. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.] Do not think that every one that laugheth is merry, or that profuse and immediate joy is true pleasure, for it leaves the heart more heavy and sad afterwards, especially when the mind reflects upon it; nay, such is the vanity of this present life, there is no joy without a mixture of sorrow, which oftentimes treads so close upon its heels, that it immediately follows.

Ver. 14. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.] He that, to avoid a danger, revolt from those virtuous courses, unto which he knows he ought to have adhered, shall bring upon himself misery enough, by his own devices: but a truly good man is, even in this, far superior to him, that though he should suffer, his own integrity, and the clearness and quietness of his conscience, gives him abundant satisfaction.

Ver. 15. The simple believeth every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his going.] It is a mark of great silliness to be credulous, that is, to take all those for friends who make profession of it, and easily to follow every one’s advice; for a prudent man is suspicious, and proceeds cautiously, examining before he trusts, and considering well before he do as he is advised. See Arg. [i]

Ver. 16. A wise man seeth, and departeth from evil; but the fool rages, and is confident.] A wise man, being admonished of his error, and of his danger, is afraid of incurring the divine displeasure, and instantly starts back from that evil way into which he was entering, or wherein he was engaged; but a fool stubborn at those that would stop him in his course, and proceeds boldly and securely to his own ruin.

Ver. 17. He that is soon angry, angry dealing foolishly; and a man of wicked devices is hated.] He whose anger is presently kindled, and breaks out when he is offended, may do such things, when the fit is upon him, as none but a fool would be guilty of; but he is nothing so bad as him, who, suppressing his wrath, lets it boil in his breast, and deliberately contrives how to take a cruel revenge; for most men are inclined to pity the weakness of him that is hasty, but this man’s wickedness is odious and execrable unto all.

Ver. 18. The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.] Inconsiderate men will never leave their folly, till they feel the woeful effects of it; but they who are cautious and advised, will heartily embrace all the means of instruction, and endeavour to arrive at the perfection of knowledge, which will prove a singular ornament and glory to them.

Ver. 19. The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.] Evil-doers had best not be insolent in their prosperity, for they may not only be brought low, but have been seen to humble themselves before the face of those good men whom they had oppressed; the most impious of them, that stuck at nothing which would support them in their wickedness, have been forced to wait as humble suppliants at the gate of that just man, (whom they despised and abused), and implore his favour and relief.

Ver. 20. The poor is hated even of his own neighbour; but the rich bath many friends.] There is little sincere kindness left in the world; for if a man fall into poverty, his near neighbour, nay, even he that professed friendship to him before, not only forsakes him, but hates his company; but if a man grow very rich, (let it be by what means it will), there are many that before took no notice of him, who will pretend to love him; nay, the greatest persons offer him their favour.

Ver. 21. He that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth; but he that blesseth mercy on the poor, happy is he.] But let such men know that it is a greater sin than they imagine, and shall be severely punished, to overlook their poor neighbour, and deny them their charitable relief; which whosoever compassionately affords him, not only doth a good deed, but shall be amply rewarded for it.

Ver. 22. Do they not say that desire is cruel? But mercy and truth shall be to them that desire goodly. [Open] I tell you (when it is so known a truth) that they miss their end, and do but counterfeit their own joy, who carry on mischievous designs against the innocent, but they that take the same pains to study
men good, shall never fail of that bountiful reward which is secured to them by the faithful promise of God.

Ver. 23. *In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.* [k] If a man takes pains in any honest employment, though never so mean, it will bring him in some profit; but to spend one’s time in talking only, and perhaps boasting what he can do, tends to nothing but to make a man a beggar. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 24. *The crown of the wise is their riches; but the foolishness of fools is folly.* [l] Riches are a singular advantage and ornament to a wise and virtuous man, who knows how to use them; but such is the folly of wicked men, that their wealth makes them the more vile, and only gives them the greater means to shew what senseless fools they are.

Ver. 25. *A true witness delivereth souls; but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.* [m] An upright man will not fear to endanger himself in justifying the truth, to save the lives of those that are falsely accused; but false and deceitful men boldly pour out lies and calumnies, though thereby they destroy the innocent.

Ver. 26. *In the fear of the Lord is strength; and his children shall have a place of refuge.* [n] A religious care to please the Lord in all things, gives a man the firmest resolution, and the strongest confidence of security and protection in all dangers; and his children after him shall flee to God for safety, and hope to fare the better for their pious father’s sake.

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, so depart from the snare of death.* [o] There is nothing makes a man live so comfortably and happily, as this religious care to avoid every thing offensive to his majesty, which, like a perpetual spring, gives endless satisfaction, and diverts a man from those dangerous ways, wherein others are entangled to their utter destruction.

Ver. 28. *In the multitude of people is the king’s honour; but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.* [p] The honour and splendour of a king depends upon the multitude, wealth, and strength of his subjects, whom therefore he ought to cherish; for if they be wasted by unnecessary wars, or forced into other countries by oppression and unjust exactions, it proves the ruin of his kingdom.

Ver. 29. *He that is slow to wrath, is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth folly.* [q] He declares himself to be a great man, and to abound with prudence, who is not soon provoked to anger by reproaches or ill usage; by which if a man be hastily inflamed, he exposes his folly, and makes it apparent to everybody.

Ver. 30. *A sound heart is the life of the flesh; but envy, the rottenness of the bones.* [r] There is nothing conduces more to health and happiness, than a quiet, gentle, and contented mind; but envy, and such like fretful passions, is as miserable a torment and consuming disease, as rottenness in the bones.

Ver. 31. *He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker; be that honoureth him, bath mercy on the poor.* [s] He that defrauds or oppresses the poor, forgets God, who can reduce him to the same condition; nay, affronts his majesty, who hath promised to be the defender of such helpless people: therefore, whosoever hath any respect to God, will be so far from injuring, that he will shew mercy and do good to him that is needy.

Ver. 32. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death.] When a wicked man falls into calamity, his heart fails him, and he is driven away from all his confidants, like the chaff before the wind, by the consciousness of his own wickedness; but a righteous man is not dismayed in the greatest dangers, but remains steady and confident, even in death itself.

Ver. 33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding; but that which is in the midst of fools, is made known.* [t] A prudent person makes no unseasonable demonstration of his wisdom, but lets it be quiet in his own mind, till there be a fitting opportunity to do good with it; whereas fools cannot contain themselves, but presently vent whatsoever they have, though never so small, in every company whereinto they come.

Ver. 34. Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.* [u] Justice and piety raise a nation to the highest degree of prosperity and glory, especially when mercy, humanity, and kindness, even unto strangers and enemies, is joined with them; which pacifies the divine anger, and turns away many calamities, which the contrary sins bring down upon a people, till they make them vile and miserable. See Arg. [t]

Ver. 35. The king’s favour is toward a wise servant; but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.* [v] A prudent and dextrous minister of state, who understands his business, and is faithful in it, must needs be very acceptable to his prince; whose anger nothing more provokes, than one who regards not his master’s honour, but by his ill management disgraces his government; and brings all things into confusion.

### CHAP. XV.

**The Argument.**—This chapter begins with that aphorism, which [a] the Lord Bacon (Advancement of Learning, B. viii. ch. 2.) hath set in the front of all those which he hath culled out of this book, for an example of that sort of wisdom which is to be exercised in business, upon various occasions. And he applies it particularly to a man’s behaviour towards a prince, or other great person, when he is angry with him. “Two things,” saith he, “Solomon advises in this case; the one is, That an answer be made, the other, that it be soft. the first of which contains three precepts. First, That you beware of a sad and sullen silence, which either charges the fault wholly upon yourselves, or impeaches your master of injustice, as if his ears were not open to a just defence. Secondly, That
you beware of delaying the answer, and of craving longer time for your defence, because that plainly betrays you are devising some cunning and counterfeit apology, having no present answer. Thirdly, That by all means an answer be made; an answer, I say, not a mere confession, or submission, but with some sprinklings of an excuse let fall here and there. For it is not safe to bear yourself otherwise, unless you have to deal with very generous and noble dispositions, which are rare. But then, this answer (which is the second and principal thing here advised) must be very soft and temperate, not harsh and peremptory; for that will make the business worse than if it had never been meddled with at all, and increase that wrath which you should study to appease.

Melanchthon also, I find, in his short lectures upon this book, commends this lesson very much to his scholars; but looks upon it as a general precept for the preservation of peace, and avoiding unnecessary contentions, which arise out of pride, ambition, morosity of nature, emulation, wrath, superstition; which move men either to give ill words, or to return worse to those that are given them, endeavouring to overcome by sharpness and bitterness, not by lenity and moderation. And the truth is, the Hebrew word we translate answer, signifies as well what is first said, as the reply to it. So that Solomon here gives this caution, That we should not think it enough, not to begin strife and contention; but if others begin it, we should not continue it by rough answers, but endeavour to make an end presently, by mollifying the matter, and yield much for the common tranquillity's sake. And he thinks it is a precept of the same nature with that of Pythagoras, "Stir not up fire with a sword;" and commends those excellent verses of Euripides:

Δυνάμεώς λέγειν, δυνάμει διδάσκειν,
Ο μεν ανάλογως εἰς λέοντα κατακόμματος.

And next to this precept he commends to his scholars [b] that in ver. 8. which is all that he glances upon in this chapter; and thinks it is "a caution against resting in ceremonious worship without moral virtue." Concerning which he says so many things useful for these present times, that I cannot but here give the sum of them.

There are three sorts of works, saith he, mentioned by the prophets; concerning ceremonies, and concerning moral virtue, and concerning faith. For the first of these ceremonies or external signs, God instituted some for two causes. First, That they should be signs of the promises. Secondly, That they should be the nerves of the public congregation; because God would not have his church be hid in obscurity, but be conspicuous, and discerned from other actions voces et ceremonias. But here we must prudently consider how ceremonies are to be used, because men are prone to false worship, and especially to the abuse of ceremonies, which they take for righteousness, and think thereby to merit remission of sin; which persuasion spread itself largely among mankind in the heathen world, among the pharisical Jews, and in the Roman church. Yet the wiser, heathen themselves corrected this error, of trusting to ceremonies without moral good works. Plato, for instance, saith, that "God loves worships, but not necessarily, not that he artificially compliment him with gestures and outward shows, but that in truth, honour, and virtue." But the scripture goes a great deal farther, and teaches us also to add "faith in God, and in our Lord Jesus Christ." Moral good works will please God when done for this end, not that we may merit thereby remission of sin, but that we may be obedient to God, and teach others to know him, and to celebrate him. And then also ceremonies instituted by God are pleasing to him, when they are done for this end, not to merit remission, but because they are signs admonishing us of the promises to sit up our faith; and likewise because they are signa confessionis, signs of what religion we profess; and, lastly, quos sunt nosse congregations us, because they are the nerves whereby the congregation of Christian people are joined together, and preserved in unity. These true ends, saith he, ought to be understood by the church, and impious opinions to be removed. And for such good ends, one would think none should question, much less quarrel with those few ceremonies which our church hath appointed in God's service.

That this was his opinion also, appears in his commentaries upon the 50th psalm, where he saith, that "even human ceremonies are, in some sorts, the nerves of discipline;" and condemns only those that make them effectual for the remission of sin. But his mind is delivered most fully in a discourse which I find in the second volume of his works, concerning "the method of preaching," where he directs preachers to tell the people in general, that "all ceremonies are not to be abolished;" as appears by this, that then we must take away baptism and the eucharist. And if any one ask, What must be done with ceremonies instituted by man? he answers, "Some of them are necessary, and therefore must be retained, as certain days in which the word of God is taught, and certain rites in the church, such as that of singing psalms, and certain forms of communicating." &c. But there are others not so necessary; what must be done with them? Must they be tolerated? He answers, yes; if they be not impious, and if they be useful; either because they commend religion to the vulgar, or they are instructive to children, for whose sake they were chiefly instituted. N. B. For we see in some churches, where there are no ceremonies left but only the sacraments, that religion was never so contemptible as it is now. For there is need of external show, which may commend religion to the vulgar, and make it appear more venerable, because they cannot of themselves see its magnitude and dignity.

"It is impious also," he resolves, "to think that all
cereomies were instigated by wicked popes." No, there were some prudent and holy men, who perceived how supine and dull the minds of the vulgar were, that they would never be sensible of the dignity and amplitude of religion, unless their minds were both awakened and detained by some reverend solemn ceremonies, which might help to lift them up, and teach them to admit it.

These are his reasons why all ceremonies ought not to be abolished; because some are commanded, others necessary; and others that are not, have no impiety in them, and are very profitable for weaker minds. Which I thought good here to insert, because the opinion of so great and wise a reformer may weigh much with some persons who have little regard to us.

I have been so long on this, that I must but briefly mention two verses more, upon which the before-named Lord Bacon hath given some touches.

[5] The first is ver. 15. where by a merry heart he understands a good conscience, (Adv. of Learn. b. vii. ch. 1.) and thus glosses: "A mind conscious of good intentions, though success be wanting, affords truer and purer joy, and to nature more agreeable than all that this world can furnish a man withal, either for the enjoyment of his desires, or the repose of his mind," The words, indeed, of Solomon seem to be larger, and to extend unto all that are void of care, anxiety, and sorrow; but this is a pious sense, and may well be comprehended in them.

[6] The other is ver. 9, the beginning of it, where he hath enlarged the sense farther than I have done in my Paraphrase, (and the words will bear it), to this purpose, that "sloth in the conclusion proves laborious," "For diligence and sedulous preparation levels the way we are to go in any business, and removes impediments in our passage. But he that is slothful, and puts off all to the last point of execution, must needs perpetually at every step pass as it were through briars and thorns, which ever and anon entangle, detain, and hinder him in his proceedings. The same observation may be made concerning the government of a family, wherein, if there be due care and providence used, all goes on cheerfully, and as it were of its own accord, without noise or tumult; but if those be wanting when some greater occasion falls out, all matters throng in to be dispatched at once; the servants are in an uproar, the whole house rings, and there is nothing well done in that confusion."[5]

[6] The two verses before this some have connected, but there is no necessity of it; though it be a great truth, that "passionate men are apt to make disturbance even at festive, which men of temperate spirits endeavor to appease, though affronts are offered them." According to that excellent advice of Seneca, "Let discussion begin from others, but reconciliation from thee." It is there observed by Bochartus, l. ii. de Animalibus Sacris, cap. 32. part. 7. that herbs, or as some translate it, green pottage, was the poorest, and an ox put up into a stall, and there fattened, (or as the Talmudists understand the phrase, a crammed ox), the noblest entertainment in those countries. For it is reckoned among the provisions made for the tables of Solomon and Nehemiah; and in the New Testament, the marriage-provision which the king made at his son's wedding, were "oxen and fatlings," Matt. xxi. 4. and the fattened calf was brought forth to entertain the returning prodigal. And thus it was in other countries, as he observes out of Dioscorides, who notes that Homer never sets any other cheer before his heroes but this, no, not at marriages or any other meeting, though he introduces Agamemnon often treating the princes of Greece.

Ver. 1. A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. A mild, submissive, and yielding answer to him who severely obdices, pacifies wrath, and prevents the further progress of it; but sharp, contemptuous, and saucy-language, incenses it more, or raises a passion where there was none before. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge as right; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. A wise man gives profitable instructions, and understands also how to speak so seasonably and prudently, that it shall make the knowledge he imparts both acceptable and useful; whereas fools have nothing but silly stuff to utter, or pour out their thoughts so indiscreetly and confusedly, that they only serve abundantly to declare their folly.

Ver. 3. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. There is nothing either in heaven or earth that can escape the knowledge of God, who is everywhere, and observes the most secret motions and actions of men, both good and bad.

Ver. 4. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but persecution is therein a breach in the spirit. That skillfully employs his tongue to give wholesome instructions, especially to heal differences and make peace, is an incomparable blessing to the place where he lives, and makes it a paradise; but he that abuses his tongue to poison men with ill principles, to lie, to calumniate, to make hatred, doth most miserably disturb mankind, and (like a blighting wind) blasts all the comforts of their life.

Ver. 5. A fool despiseth his father's instruction; but he that regardeth reproach, is prudent. He that regards not or rejects the instruction of his father, or tutor, or other superior, whose love is equal to his authority, will always be a fool; but he that is willing to receive even rebukes, from whomsoever they come, and carefully observe them, hath already attained a great degree of wisdom, and prudently consults his own welfare and happiness.

Ver. 6. In the house of the righteous is much treaure; but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble. A truly just and merciful man is very rich, whether he hath little or much, because he is well contented, and what he hath is likely to continue in his family;
but there is much disquiet and trouble in the greatest revenues of the wicked, which can neither stay long with him, nor give him satisfaction while he enjoys them.

Ver. 7. The lips of the wise dispense knowledge; but the heart of the foolish doth not so.] Wise and good men are neither envious, not sparing of their pains to dispense their knowledge, which they freely communicate and diligently propagate unto others; but evil men are such fools, that either they have nothing to impart, or no heart to do any good with what they have.

Ver. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.] It is impious to think to please God with mere gifts and sacrifices, which when they are presented from wicked men, who have no thought of amending their lives, are abominable to the divine majesty; but the very prayers of upright men, though they are not able to bring him any costly offerings, are exceeding acceptable, and prevail for great blessings from him. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 9. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.] For the whole way of a wicked man, his designs, contrivances, and course of life, are all odious and abominable to the Lord, which make even his sacrifices no better; but he loves him, whose thoughts, affections, and endeavours, are earnestly bent to an unwearied pursuit of piety and virtue.

Ver. 10. Correction is grievous to him that sinneth the way: and be that rebuke reproof shall die.] Sharp and grievous punishments shall be inflicted on him that forsakes the virtuous path in which he began to tread; for he is not easily reclaimed, because it is unpleasing to him to hear of his faults; and in time he hates reproof, and then must certainly perish.

Ver. 11. Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more, then, the hearts of the children of men?] The Lord is perfectly acquainted with things most hidden and secret to us, with the grave, the infernal place, and things perished and quite consumed; how much more, therefore, with the souls of all men living upon earth, if they have but so much as an intention or inclination to depart from him?

Ver. 12. A scorner loveth not that reproves him: neither will he be unto the wise.] A profane man, who makes a mock of God and of religion, loves not to argue with himself about such matters, and hates those that reprove him; which makes him avoid the acquaintance and society of wise and virtuous men, for fear he should meet with their reprehension.

Ver. 13. A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.] When the mind of a man is inwardly satisfied and full of joy, it doth good to his body too, as appears in his cheerful countenance: but when grief and sorrow seizes on the heart, it dejects, enfeebles, and breaks the most courageous spirit.

Ver. 14. The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge; but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.] An intelligent man, who is heartily in love with wisdom, greedily seeks for solid knowledge; but men void of understanding gape after and relish nothing but frivolous, vain, and unprofitable things, which are like meat and drink unto them.

Ver. 15. All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.] All the days of a poor man are full of anxiety and trouble, especially if, when any affliction befalls him, he be discontented with his condition, and cannot bear with disappointments; but a good heart and cheerful spirit is a cure for this, especially a mind conscious to itself of designing well, whatsoever the success prove, is a perpetual comfort, and a higher satisfaction than the most delicious banquet of the rich and prosperous. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 16. Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.] A small estate, with the fear of offending the divine majesty by discontent, or any other sin, is much better than vast treasures, with disquiet and confusion of thoughts, which (without a religious sense of God) are wont to attend upon abundance of wealth.

Ver. 17. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.] The meanest fare, with the love of him that invites, and with agreement among the guests, is much better than the most sumptuous entertainment of him that hates us, or among those that quarrel and contend, even then when all differences should be forgotten. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 18. A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.] A man prone to wrath will easily disturb the most peaceable company, being apt to quarrel for very trifles; but a meek and patient person is so far from raising strife, that he will endavour to compose it, when he finds it is begun by others.

Ver. 19. The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.] A slothful man, when he hath any thing to do, feigns to himself most grievous difficulties, which he fancies, or pretends are impossible to be overcome; but those very things seem easy to the industry of honest-hearted men, who go on smoothly in their business, and conquer all impediments. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 20. A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son despiseth his mother.] A pious son (as hath been said before, x. 1. and cannot be repeated too often) is a great joy to his parents, especially to his father, who hopes he will support his name and family; but a wicked man is as great a grief unto them, especially to his mother, whose indulgence perhaps makes him more irreverent towards her), when he hears no regard to her, despises her commands and admonitions, and makes her contemptible unto others.

Ver. 21. Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.] It is a pleasure (as was also said before, x. 23.) to a man void of considera
wicked things; but he that understands himself, not only directs his thoughts, and takes the greatest care to live orderly and regularly, but feels it to be his highest satisfaction.

Ver. 22. Without counsel, purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.] The necessity likewise of prudent counsellors is fit again to be repeated, (xi. 14.), for if they be wanting, the best designs are likely to miscarry; but where there are a multitude of wise and virtuous men consulting for the public good, they will easily compass any thing, by foreseeing all difficulties, and providing against them.

Ver. 23. A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth; and a word spoken in due season, how good is it?] And it is a great pleasure to a man to give wholesome counsel; and a greater to see the good success of it: but the greatest of all, (an inexpressible pleasure), both to himself and others, to have given it so seasonably, that a business was easily effected by it, which had not been done without it.

Ver. 24. The way of life is above to the wise; that he may depart from hell beneath.] The way to be perfectly happy, a truly wise man sees, is to raise his thoughts, desires, and hopes, above this earth, and to have respect to God in all his actions; which will make him truly noble and great; and preserve him both from all mean and base practices, and from the most horrid dangers here, and utter destruction hereafter.

Ver. 25. The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.] Trust not in riches and power, but in the great Lord of the world, who possesses and disposes all things, for he will overturn the family of haughty men, (who, forgetting him, trample upon their inferiors), though never so strongly supported; but will preserve the poor widow, who hath no helper, in her right, when such insolent persons invade it.

Ver. 26. The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.] For the Lord abhors all wicked designs, and mischievous contrivances; but the kind consultations and discourses of such as seek the welfare and comfort of others, are no less pleasing to him than they are pure.

Ver. 27. He that is greedy of gain, troublieth his own house: but he that hateth gifts shall live.] He that is so greedy of money, that he cares not how he gets it, instead of raising his family, confounds it; but he that hateth bribes, and all unlawful ways of gain, shall prosper, and continue it.

Ver. 28. The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.] A good man thinks it is soon enough to speak, when he is asked about a business, and deliberates within himself to speak nothing that is not to the purpose; but bad men are rash, and forward to utter their mind, and generally do more hurt than good.

Ver. 29. The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.] The Lord is far from giving any regard to the wicked, whose busi-

ness it is to do evil, though they implore his favour; but sends good men help, when they pray unto him, as readily as they were wont to send relief to others.

Ver. 30. The light of the eyes欢喜eth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat.] It is a wonderful pleasure to behold all the beautiful works of God, which present themselves to our eyes; but nothing gives such intimate satisfaction, and makes a man so cheerful in well-doing, as to hear a fair report of his own honest actions, or to receive the good news of the well-doing of other virtuous men.

Ver. 31. The ear that heareth the reproof of life, abideth among the wise.] He that lends an attentive ear to wholesome reproof, and is obedient to it, is to be numbered among the wise, and shall at last be able to give good instructions unto others.

Ver. 32. He that refuseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; but he that heareth reproof, getteth understanding.] And whosoever he be that refuseth, much more that contemneth, such instructions and reproofs, he sets his own soul at nought, and desipeth the means of safety; but he that diligently hearkens to it, knows what is good for himself; and keepeth his soul from being lost for want of understanding.

Ver. 33. The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.] A brief institution of wisdom and virtue is this, to have an awful sense of God, with a devout affection to him, and fear to offend him; and as this is the best disposition for wisdom, so humility and patient submission in a low condition, is the best preparation for honour and preferment.

CHAP. XVI.

THE ARGUMENT.—[a] This chapter begins with a most necessary observation, which a good man ought always to have in his mind, (for which cause it is repeated, with little difference, twice more in this chapter, ver. 9. 33. and again, chap. xix. 21.), the sense of which our translation seems to have missed. For it ascribes both the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue unto the Lord, (which is true in this regard, that without him we can do nothing), whereas the Hebrew words run plainly thus, "Man hath the disposing of the heart;" he may, with God's leave and common assistance, intend, propound, resolve within himself, what he will say and do; but that he shall be able to utter things in that order he hath premeditated, or, if he be able, shall attain the end of his deliberation, and eloquent speech, is more than he can undertake; for that is as the Lord pleaseth. This seems to me to be better opened by Melanchthon than any one I have read. Who truly observes, that such sayings as these do not take away the liberty of man's will or choice; but only shew, that even the best men sometimes err in their choice, and that the success doth not always answer. For we must diligently distinguish, saith he, between our election and the success; and remember that we need a double help of God, for the making a happy choice, one of
judging right; and the other afterward of govern-
ing events. For unless our judgement be ruled right, many errors happen; as we see in Josiah, Zedekiah, Demosthenes, Pompey, Cicero; who all erred in eligendo belli, in their resolves about war; and direful events followed. And sometimes, also, when the mind doth not err in its judgement, yet God is not pleased to assist the action, for other causes; as in the war against the Benjamites, which miscarried a great while, because the Israe-
lites trusted in their own strength. We must al-
days, therefore, be sensible, that happy events do not depend merely on human forecast, diligence, and power; as Jeremiah speaks, "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself;" i. e. he cannot have what success he will, but must be helden to God for his happiness. This our weakness God would have us to acknowledge, and to fear and depend on him; as it follows here, ver. 3. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." To this use we ought to accommodate such sayings as these, not to a stoical opinion of necessity. Thus he.

And he no less worthily glosses upon the com-
mmon interpretation of ver. 4. the latter part of which hath exercised many pens to little purpose, when the sense is clear, though no expositor, that I have seen, hath hit upon it, viz. that God makes some use of wicked men, as well as of all things else; which they shall serve whether they will or no. For he disposes (so the word we translate hath made is to be understood, not of his creating things) all things correspondent to his own will and pleasure, which they all obey. So Lammanthius seems to be best translated, not for himself, but according to his will. However, I have included the other interpretation also in my paraphrase; but applied the day of evil; not to the punishment which he inflicts upon the wicked for their sins, but which he orders them to inflict upon others, when their iniquities are ripe for his vengeance. For it is the method of his providence, to direct the ambition, wrath, hatred, revenge, &c., which he sees in some wicked men's hearts, to vent themselves there, where it will do service to him. Who wisely and justly makes some wicked men do execution upon others like themselves. This seems to me the most easy and natural sense of the words; which were remarkably fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman soldiers, whom our Saviour used to punish his crucifiers. Not that they undertook that war, out of any design or desire to do our blessed Saviour right, but out of an ambition to enslave the world, and to make us strait that the nations should be subject to them; yet God made use of them for other designs, as public executions, by whom he punished the ungodly, as Theodoret speaks, upon Psal. lxxiv. 3.

I must omit Melancthon's glosses upon this verse, and the two next; that I may have room for his pertinent observation upon ver. 10. "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king," &c. "These words" says he, "affirm the whole political order, magistrates, laws, distinction of dominion, contracts, judgements, punishments, to be things ordained by the wisdom of God among men. And since we know political order to be the work of God, we ought to love it, and study to defend it, and modestly for God's sake obey it; and give thanks to God who preserves it; and look upon those horrible furies of the devil and men, who disturb this order, to be displeasing to God; as this whole doctrine is explained, Rom. xiii. But what is this divine sentence which is in the king's lips? It is the laws, says he, and judg-
ments, according to the laws; and, besides, God hath armed kings with a power to make laws of their own, not repugnant to his laws, but built upon-
on them, either by demonstrations or probable rea-
sons. God sometimes moves the minds of kings also, and gives them singular motions, (as other excellent artificers have), because he will by that save mankind, &c. Thus it was a singular motion in Solomon's reasoning about the mother of the child. And in the judgement of Gonzaga, in the last age, upon the Spanish governor of Milan under him; who having held a noble person captive a long time, would not deliver him to his wife, (when she petitioned and offered a large sum of money for his redemption), unless he might be with her; and after he had obtained his desire, then caused her husband to be killed, and delivered him dead to her. Which when Gonzaga heard, and had exam-
ined, he compelled him to marry this woman; and as soon as he had done that, he condemned him to be immediately beheaded, and gave her all his estate."

But we are not from such places as this to infer, that kings cannot give a wrong judgement; though this be as good a conclusion as from those words, "the priest's lips shall preserve knowledge," to conclude the pope cannot err. Kings, from this place of Solomon, may as well pretend to infallibility, as priests from that place of Malachi; nay, if we re-
spect either the form of this precept, or the plenti-
tude of God's promise for ability to perform it, we must confess this place is more plain and permis-
tory for kings, than any can be brought for the High Priest's infallibility in giving definitive sen-
tence. And yet all the places, (as a famous divine of our own speaks, Dr Jackson, b. iii. upon the Creed, ch. xii.), that can be brought, either for the king's or the priest's authority, rather shew what manner of men they should be, both in life and judgement, than assure them of any infallibili-
ity of judgement, if they be dissolute in life, and regard not the laws of God. This was a thing never dreamt of by any, till the notoriously infamous lives of popes discredited the titles of sanctity and infallibility, (which from the conceit of their predecessors' integrity they had usurped), and enforced their flatterers to frame a distinction of sanctity in doctrine, separated from sanctity of life.

I thought it not amiss to say thus much upon the sub-
ject, because I find even Maldonate himself, in his notes upon this place, hath the confidence to conclude the pope must have this privilege, which is promised to kings; when it is apparent, kings are not infallible, and consequently, by his own reasoning, popes cannot be so.

There are other notable sentences which would deserve a larger gloss than I have given in this paraphrase, which I must pass by; because this preface is already prolonged to a great length.

[c] I shall only therefore mention two. One, ver. 21, where wisdom and eloquence are compared together. The former of which, no doubt, is of greatest value, as we see in those words of God to Moses, when he disabled himself for the service imposed upon him, for want of the other faculty: “There is Aaron,” saith the text; “he shall be thy speaker, and thou shalt be to him as God.” Yet in profit, and popular esteem, wisdom gives place to eloquence; according to the vulgar translation of this verse, Sapienti corde appellantur prudens, sed dulci Eloquia majora spectat. Signifying, says the Lord Bacon, (Adv. of Learning, book vi. ch. 3.), not obscurely, that “profundity of wisdom may help men to fame and admiration; but it is eloquence which prevails in business and active life.”

[c] The other is ver. 26, where I have put two senses together, according to the different acceptations of the Hebrew word amat; which signifies either to take pains one’s self, or to molest others. But I can see no reason why Maldonate should favour the LXX translation; who, against the stream of all other interpreters, apply these words to an ungodly man’s digging up evil to himself, as if the meaning were, “he digs a pit for himself, and the words he speaks are the cause of his punishment, as if he were burnt;” unless it proceed from his fondness for the Spanish inquisition, which he was desirous to introduce every where. The very best of them, it appears by him, (who was one of the most learned and judicious interpreters in the Roman church), are most devoutly bent to our destruction; for he cannot forbear here to allege that inquisition as a proof of Solomon’s words: Id exempli inquisitionis Hispanica perspicuum est, &c. “This is apparent by the example of the Spanish inquisition, whereby he that speaks any thing rashly against the faith, is deservedly delivered to the fire; which I wish were done every where.” Thus, in the most literal sense, this Jesuit’s lips are as a burning fire; in which he would have us not only singed, but devoured; in pursuance of this maxim of Solomon. Which others honestly interpret of those calumnies, discord, seditions, which evil men raise by their tongues, to the destruction of their neighbours. For so it follows, ver. 28. “A froward man soweth strife,” &c.

Ver. 1. The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.
Ver. 8. Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.] A small estate honestly gotten, and charitably enjoyed, is much to be preferred before vast incomes heaped up by oppression, and kept without hospitality.

Ver. 9. A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.] The mind of man designs an end, and contrives what means to use, and reckons perhaps what success they will have; but the Lord determines what the event shall be, and orders his motions, perhaps, to such an issue as never came into his thoughts.

Ver. 10. A divine sentence is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgement.] God is present in a singular manner unto a pious king, inspiring his mind to divine sagaciously in dubious and obscure things, that his resolutions and decrees may be received like oracles, and all causes be decided by him so justly and exactly, that no man be wronged in the judgement which he passes. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 11. A just weight and balance are the Lord's; all the weights of the bag are his work.] And it is worthy of his care, that there be no corruption in private, no more than in public justice, for it also is of divine institution; the great Lord of all requiring just and equal dealing in all our commerce one with another, which he hath ordained should be managed with scrupulous integrity, in the smallest, as well as in the greatest matters.

Ver. 12. It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness; for the throne is established by righteousness.] It is not enough to good kings that they do no injury, but they abominate, with the highest detestation, all oppression, cruelty, extortion, &c. not only in themselves, but in others, for they know that justice, mercy, and true religion, support their authority, and make their kingdoms durable.

Ver. 13. Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.] And calumniators or flatterers find no acceptance with such princes, but they delight in those that will not deceive them by false, unjust, and malicious informations; and make him their favourite, who deals sincerely and tells them the truth, though it may seem ungrateful to them.

Ver. 14. The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it.] The wrath of a king strikes such terror into him with whom he is offended, as if the sentence of death were pronounced against him; but, as ill men and fools exasperate it more, so a virtuous and prudent woulter appeases his anger, and makes a reconciliation.

Ver. 15. In the light of the king's countenance is life, and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.] And when a king will be pleased to look graciously upon a man, especially after he hath been incensed against him, it not only revives, but gives him the greatest joy; for from his favour he promises himself all manner of happiness, as a plentiful harvest follows the showers of rain, which in the spring refresh the corn.

Ver. 16. How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding, rather to be chosen than silver? But after all is done, to get so much wisdom as to know the difference between good and evil, and to understand how to behave a man's self upon all occasions, is beyond all expression better, and more to be chosen, than the greatest treasure of gold and silver, which either the favour of princes can give, or his own industry acquire.

Ver. 17. The high-way of the upright is to depart from evil; he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.] This is the constant aim and endeavour of upright men, the beaten path, as we may call it, in which they travel, to decline every thing that is evil; and he who makes this his care, looking well to all his actions, that he do nothing amiss, looks well to himself, and preserves his soul and body from destruction.

Ver. 18. Pride goeth before destruction; and an haughty spirit before a fall.] Insolent behaviour is the forerunner of utter destruction; and when men lift up themselves in their own thoughts, and overlook all others with contempt, they are in the greatest danger to stumble, and not to see that which will give them such a dreadful downfall, as will break them all to shivers.

Ver. 19. Better is it to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.] Therefore it is much better to submit to the meanest condition, nay, patiently to bear injuries with afflicted, but meek and lowly persons, than to lift one's self to the prejudice of others, and by trampling upon them, to partake with the proud in their rapine and spoil.

Ver. 20. He that handeth a matter wisely, shall find good; and who so trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.] He that understands his business thoroughly, and manages it prudently and discreetly, is likely to have good success; but none so happy, none so sure of prospering in his design, as he that confides more in the Lord, than in his own skill and industry.

Ver. 21. The wise in heart shall be called prudent, and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.] He whose mind is well furnished with wisdom, cannot but win a great reputation, and be highly esteemed for his prudent counsels and resolutions; but if he have the powerful charms of eloquence also, to convey his mind delightfully unto others, it will add a greater value to his wisdom, and make it more diffusive and instructive unto the world. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 22. Understanding is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it; but the instruction of fools is folly.] A clear understanding and right judgement of things, like an unexhaustible spring, gives perpetual comfort to him in whom it is, and makes him very useful unto others; but the learning of fools is frivolous and vain, and therefore, if they undertake to instruct others, they only make them like themselves.

Ver. 23. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.] The mind of a wise man instructs him to speak judiciously and pertinently; and makes him not only communicate his thoughts
to others, but with such weight of reason as increases their learning.

Ver. 24. Pleasant words are as honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. [Especially when he can deliver his mind in pleasing and delightful words, flowing from him with a natural eloquence, as honey-drops from the comb; which ravish the affections, and teach a man's heart to the very quick; when he needs either comfort or cure for any inward disease wherewith he labours.

Ver. 25. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.] But there is never more need of caution, than when we hear a moving orator; therefore this instruction may be necessary to be repeated, (xiv. 12.) examine every thing strictly and impartially, and be not led away merely by thy fancy, and thy appetite; for they make many things seem innocent, which in themselves, and in the issue, are deadly and destructive.

Ver. 26. He that laboureth, laboureth for himself; for his mouth crieth it of him.] It is a powerful motive to a man to take pains in an honest employment, that all his labour is for his own preservation, his mouth begging this favour of him, that he may not starve; and, on the contrary, he that spends his time in giving trouble and vexation unto others, will find it fall upon himself, for he cannot speak so much an evil word, but it will return upon him, and fly back in his own face. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 27. An ungodly man diggeth up evil; and in his lips there is a burning fire.] And it is not a little pains that an ungodly lawless man takes, to plot and devise mischief, wherein he labours, as if he was digging for a treasure; and one way is, to brand his neighbour with false reports and slanders, and thereby utterly destroy his reputation.

Ver. 28. A froward man soweth strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends.] Others of them have such a perverseness in their spirit, that it is their business to disturb the world, and raise dissensions and differences among those that would live in peace, by0 backbiling, detracling, and whispering false stories; making a breach even between princes and people, husband and wife, nay, the dearest friends and familiars, if they hearken to their tales.

Ver. 29. A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.] Another sort live by rapine and open violence, who are not content to do wrong themselves, but persuade others to enter into their society, and then lead them into the most pernicious courses.

Ver. 30. HeＭｂｂｉｔｂｂｅｓ his eyes to devise froward things; moving his lips, he bringeth evil to pass.] Which they do not fall into by chance, but with profound study contrive the ruin of others, and the sign being given, they furiously execute the mischief they have designed.

Ver. 31. The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.] Old age is very venerable, when a man's past life hath been truly virtuous and useful; which is the best way also to prolong one's days, and bring one to that great honour which is due to those who have long done much good to mankind.

Ver. 32. He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.] He that can suppress the vehement motions of anger, deserves more praise than those mighty men who quell the enemies that oppose them; and he that hath power to govern all his own inclinations, affections, and passions by reason, hath a nobler empire than he that subdues cities and countries by force of arms.

Ver. 33. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the L ORD.] Acknowledge the divine providence in all things, even in those which seem most casual; for though men cast the lots into the lap of a garment, or into a hollow vessel, and thence draw them out again, yet it is the Lord who directs entirely in what order they shall come forth, and so determines the matter in doubt according to his pleasure.

CHAP. XVII.

The argument.—In the first verse of this chapter, the wise man observes how happy that family is, which lives in peace and perfect agreement one with another, though they have but a mean estate. And next to this, how happy a thing it is, if there he but one wise and virtuous man in a family, (suppose he be not a servant,) when any disensions and differences arise in it. For so the Lord Bacon (Advanc. of Learning, book viii. chap. 2. Parab. 2.) expands the [a] second verse; whose words I will set down, because if they hit not the sense completely, yet they very pithily express a part of it, and carry in them a very important truth. “In all troubled and disagreeing families,” saith he, “there is commonly some servant or gentle friend, who being powerful with both sides, may moderate and compose the differences that are among them. To whom, in that respect, the whole house, and the master himself, are much engaged and beholden. This servant, if he aim only at his own ends, cherishes and aggravates the divisions of the family; but if he be sincerely faithful and upright, certainly he deserves much, so as to be reckoned as one of the brethren, or at least to receive a fiduciary administration of the inheritance.”

[b] And after some other documents, there follows a notable rule for the making peace, and ending all differences, whether between particular persons in families, or between kingdoms, ver. 9.; upon which the same great person thus glosses, (ib. parab. 27.) “There are two ways of proceeding to arbitrate differences, and reconcile affections. The one begins with an act of oblivion of what is past; the other begins with a repetition of wrongs, subjoining apologies and excuses. Now, some think this last to be the only way; insomuch that I
have heard a prudent person and great statesman lay down this maxim:—he that terms of peace, without a recapitulation of the terms of difference, rather conceives men's minds with the sweet name of agreement, than composes them by equity and moderation of right.—But Solomon, a wise man then he, is of a contrary opinion, approving an act of oblivion, and forbidding repetition. For in repetition, or renewing the memory of the causes of difference, there are these inconveniences; not only that it is, as we say, Anguis in ulcers, taking in the ulcers, which very much exasperates, but also endangers the breeding of new quarrels, while they are debating the old, (for the parties at difference will never agree about the terms of their falling out); and lastly, in the issue it brings the matter to apologies; whereas both the one and the other party would seem rather to have repented the offence, then to have admitted excuses for it.

Melancthon thinks this and the three next verses, to 11, 19, to be sentences near of kin, all belonging to the right method in judging, which is comprehended in that saying of Christ's: "If thy brother sin against thee, tell him of it between thyself and him:" and interprets this 9th verse thus, (taking ulph for a prince, which we translate chief friends); "he that orderly admonishes him that errth, cures him, and makes no public disturbance, saves the man, and preserves public concord; but this order being neglected, thence arises out of brawlings, discords of princes, wars and devastations."

Now an evil man only seeks scolding or contumelies, (as it follows, ver. 11.), i.e. saith he, he doth not seek truth nor the good of the church, but troubles without end. Thus Cleon and Aleciblades in the state, scattered seeds of woe as Athens; the Cyclopes and Academicks contradicted every body among the philosophers; and lately Vulla, Cornelius Agrippa, Carolostadius, &c. had like scolding natures. Those seek not truth, but contradict things rightly spoken, or wantonly move unnecessary disputes, and will not yield when they are admonished, but with greater rage defend their errors. Of which Solomon here saith in the next verse, "It is better to meet a bear robbed of her whelp, than a fool in his folly." An example of which we meet withal, when we meet with a bewitched papist, who defends the most manifest errors. Thus he.

But that which the Vulgar translates semper farga querrit malum, and we translate, "an evil man seeks only rebellion," the most and the best interpreters take the other way, as the words lie more naturally in the Hebrew, "a man very rebellious seeks nothing but mischief," which sense I have expressed in the paraphrase, together with the other.

The truth of the next verse (ver. 12.) is admirably opened by Bochartus, (l. iii. de Animal. Sacer, cap. 9, part 1.); who observes four things concerning the bear, out of good authors. The first every one knows, that a bear is an exceeding fierce creature; the second, that the female is more fierce than the male; the third, that she is more fierce than ordinary, when she hath whelps; and lastly, that when she is robbed of them, she is fiercest of all, immunis is malum, even unto rage and madness. Which the scripture takes notice of in two other places besides this, a Sam. xxi. 8. Hos. xi. 8.; where Saint Jerome observes that the writer of natural history says, among all wild beasts, none more fierce and cruel than the bear, in two cases especially, when she wants food, and when she is robbed of her whelps. The reason of this last is there given by Kischel; which well enough agrees with the comparison which the wise man here makes; for a bear cannot be more in love with her whelps than a fool is with his absurd opinions and resolutions; and as a bear falls upon the next person she meets withal, taking him for the robber, so doth a fool upon every one that stands in his way, though he be never so much obliged to them. He spares none in the heat of his passions; but furiously abuses them, &c.

unto what is expressed in the paraphrase upon ver. 17., concerning a brother being born for adversity, (which I have referred, as the best interpreter, unto a friend), this may be added, as the plainest translation of the Hebrew words. A true friend (spoken of before) is born (that is, becomes) a brother in adversity. He was a friend before, this makes him a brother, and so he is to be esteemed.

There is a phrase in the 19th verse, "extolth his gate," which is variously taken by interpreters. I have expounded it literally, not for the mouth, but for the gate of an house or other place, and have put two senses together.

Various glosses also have been made upon the beginning of ver. 13., "A merry heart doth good like a medicine," where, because the particle like is wanting in the Hebrew, other constructions have been made of the words; some, for instance, having taken them thus; "a merry heart makes a work well, as do good." But he that can consult Bochartus, (in his 2nd book of Sacred Animals, chap. 16, part 2.), may find so many examples of the effect of that which they call mons semper simulacrum, that he will not think it unreasonable to supply it (as our translators have done) in this place of the proverb.

In the 34th verse I have put two senses, in which the words may be taken into one; and that some may wonder at the capacity of the [th] same thing in the 34th verse, which was said just before in the 33d, I shall here observe, that there is no doubt but Solomon having frequent occasions to speak of the same matter, varied the words sometimes, but not the sense; and so the collectors of his sayings put down both. And he might speak the offender of this matter, having an example before his eyes of the great weakness of his own son, who, it is not unlikely, was a perpetual grief to him. There is
also something observable in this verse, which was not in the other; viz. that the untowardness of children have many times different effects upon the parents; provoking the fathers to anger and exasperation, and the mothers to grief and sorrow, to which their tenderness more inclines them than to the other passion.

There are several ways also of expounding the latter end of the next verse, ver. 16. I have expressed the sense of our translation, and had respect, in the next verse to that, (ver. 27.), to both readings of the word which we render excellent.

Ver. 1. Better is a dry morsel, and quietness thereof, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.] There is more satisfaction in a bit of dry bread (without butter or oil, &c.) in the open field, and love and concord therewith, than in a house full of the best cheer in the world, attended with brawling, contention, and strife.

Ver. 2. A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.] Probity and prudence are so much better than mere riches and noble birth, that a wise and faithful servant sometimes arrives at the honour of being appointed the governor of a son, whose folly and wickedness make him a discredit to his family; nay, he is left not only executor of the father's will, or trustee for the children, but his merits perhaps are rewarded with a portion of the estate which is to be distributed among them. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 3. The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; but the Lord trieth the hearts.] The art of man hath found out means to prove whether gold and silver be pure or no; but none can search into the secret thoughts, designs, and inclinations of men's souls, but the Lord; who (as those metals are tried by fire) many times proves and discovers what they are by sharp afflictions and troubles.

Ver. 4. A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.] A man that designs evil unto others, hearkens greedily to him that will tell false and mischievous stories, and there never wants such a man of the very same mind with himself; for he who gives his mind to lying and falsehood, listens to him that speaks the most pestilent things.

Ver. 5. Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamities, shall not be unpunished.] He that derides a man because he is poor, forgets God, who can bring him down to as low a condition; nay, affronts his majesty, who hath promised to take a peculiar care of such friendly persons; nor is he much better, who rejoiceth at the calamity of others, which will bring unavoidable punishments upon himself.

Ver. 6. Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.] The honour and comfort of parents lies in a numerous progeny, which doth not degenerate from their ancestors' virtue; and that which makes children illustrious, is their being descended from worthy parents, whose wisdom and virtue reflect an honour upon their posterity.

Ver. 7. Excellent speech becometh not a fool; much less do lying lips a prince.] It doth not become a fool to discourse of grave and weighty matters, which as they are above him, so are not regarded out of his mouth, though he should speak excellent things; but it is much less seemly for a prince to lie and deceive, which as it is below him, who represents the God of truth, so it makes him despisalbe, and destroys his authority, when his subjects cannot rely upon his word.

Ver. 8. A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whosoever is turneth it, it prospereth.] A gift is so tempting, that it can no more be refused than a lovely jewel by him to whom it is presented; and such is its power, it commonly prevails over all men, dispatches all business, carries all causes; and in a word, effects whatsoever a man desires.

Ver. 9. He that covereth a transgression, seeketh love; but he that separateth a matter, separateth very friends.] He that passes by and buries in oblivion a transgression that hath been committed against him, takes the best course to preserve friendship, and to make himself universally beloved; but he who rakes up that fault again, and objects it afresh when it was forgotten, breaks the strictest bonds of amity, and makes an irreconcilable separation. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 10. A reproach entereth more into a wise man, than an hundred stripes into a fool.] One reproach penetrates deeper into the mind of an ingenuous man, and works a greater alteration there, than an hundred stripes will do for the amendment of an obstinate fool;

Ver. 11. An evil man seeketh only rebellion; therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.] Who seeking nothing but to have his own will, and being so refractory that he hath shaken off all reverence to God, or to his governors, is wholly bent upon mischief, and cannot be reconciled; it remains therefore only, that a severe execution be done upon him, to cut him off in his folly, without mercy. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 12. Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.] There is less danger in meeting a bear in the height of her rage, than a furious fool in the pursuit of his unruly passions and desires; for it is possible to defend a man's self against the one, but there is no way to hinder the brutish motions of the other. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 13. Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.] It is so unnatural for a man to return evil to him from whom he hath received nothing but good, that the punishment of his ingratitude shall not rest in his own person, but descend upon his posterity to all generations.

Ver. 14. The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be muddled with.] When men begin a quarrel or a difference, they know not where it will end; for the very first breach is like cutting the banks of a river,
which presently overflows the neighbouring grounds, but cannot easily be reduced into its bounds again. It is best therefore to make peace immediately, before both parties be involved in such troubles, as, like a deluge of water, lay all desolate.

Ver. 15. He that justifieth the wicked, and be that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.] It is hard to say which is most detestable to the Lord, he that pleads for a wicked man, and, more than that, acquires him, or he that pleads against the righteous, nay, plainly condemns him. Certain it is, they are both most highly obnoxious to his displeasure, who is the fountain of justice; and as he would have it exactly administered, so he hates those who endeavour to confound the nature of good and evil among men.

Ver. 16. Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? What good doth a great estate in the possession of a fool? can he therewith purchase wisdom how to use it? Alas! he wants understanding to desire it, and to procure good instructors, in which his riches (if his mind were good) might be serviceable to him.

Ver. 17. A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.] Time makes proof of a friend, who, if he be sincere, loves not merely for a fit, nor alters with the change of one's condition, but continues steadfast in adversity, as well as in prosperity; nay, in straits and distresses, shews himself more like a brother than a friend. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 18. A man void of understanding striketh bonds, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.] He is very inconsiderate, whose kindness makes him forward to pass his word for the payment of another man's debts, (vi. xi. 15.) and especially to enter into bonds in the presence of his neighbour, for whom he engages, which may make him more careless about the payment than he would have been, if, unknown to him, he had been security for him.

Ver. 19. He loveth transgression that loveth strife; and he that exalteth his gate, seeketh destruction.] He usually pretends to the love of piety, who accustoms himself to brawling and contention; which as necessarily draws along with it abundance of sins, as lifting up a man's self above his estate, in raising sumptuous buildings, brings him to ruin; or as breach of the public peace opens wide the flood-gates to all iniquity. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 20. He that hath a froward heart, faileth no good; and he that hath a perverse tongue, falles into mischief.] A man of wicked designs, which he resolves to accomplish by any sort of means, shall find himself deceived in his expectation; and he who employs his tongue to deceit and fraud, pretending fair to men, before their face, but slandering them behind their back, shall, by that very means, bring mischief upon himself.

Ver. 21. He that beggetteth a fool doth it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool hath no joy.] Great in the care which ought to be taken in the contract of marriage, and in the education of children; for if a son prove vicious and lewd, it will be such an ex- pressible grief to his father, that he will take no comfort at all in any thing he enjoys, ver. 25.

Ver. 22. A merry heart doth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones.] And consequently, it will shorten his days; for as nothing conduces more to health than a cheerful spirit, which serves instead of physic; so nothing destroys it more than sadness and grief, which consumes the vital juices, and dries up the body to skin and bone. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 23. A wicked man taketh the gift out of the bosom, to pervert the ways of judgement.] No man would willingly be known to be so wicked as to be bribed to do injustice; but there are too many that will suffer themselves to be secretly corrupted by presents, to give counsel, or judgement contrary to the course of law and equity.

Ver. 24. Wisdom is before him that hath understanding, but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.] As a wise man's understanding appears in his very countenance, and a fool is known by his garish and wondering eyes; so the one hath his wisdom always present and ready at hand to guide and govern him, when the other knows not what to follow, but his thoughts are roving up and down to no purpose, though he ramble to the very ends of the earth.

Ver. 25. A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.] A foolish dissolute son, who regards not the counsel of his parents, wasting their estate, and disgracing their family, is such a vexation to his father, that he provokes his indignation; and such a grief to his mother, that it makes her life bitter and irksome to her. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 26. Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.] There may be specious pretences for it, but it is against all honesty and piety, to punish innocent persons together with delinquents; especially to scourge judges and governors, for doing equal justice upon all offenders.

Ver. 27. He that hath knowledge, spareth his words; and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.] The more any man knows, the less he is apt to talk; for his wisdom gives him such an excellent composition of spirit, that it represses his heat, his forwardness and haste, and makes him coolly deliberate what and when it is fit to speak.

Ver. 28. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.] Such a virtue is to be silent, that he who understands nothing is deemed wise, as long as he holds his peace; and be that man hath such power over his mouth, as to keep it shut, that nothing may suddenly and impetuously go out, is wise indeed.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Argument.—[a]. There is so much difficulty in the two first verses, which hath produced so many various interpretations, that scarce know which is
follow: Some take that word which we translate \textit{separateth himself} in a good sense, others in a bad; I have chosen the latter, because it seems most agreeable to the rest of the words. But the Chaldee interpreter gives a quite different sense, both of that word, and of some other in these verses; and de Dieu hath shewn there is such reason for it, that I think I am obliged here to take notice of it, and to paraphrase upon it.

By \textit{mipbrad}, which we render \textit{separateth himself}, he understands a man divided, uncertain in his own mind, who can stick to nothing, but wanders about in his own thoughts. And the last word in the first verse, \textit{jim gallit}, which we translate intermeddleth, he translates, is left desolate. And then, in the next verse, taking \textit{bebib galloct} for wandering up and down, not for discovering or revealing, as we do, the paraphrase will run thus.

Ver. 1. "An uncountson man desires many things, and seeks satisfaction; but whatsoever he seeks, he never meets with it, but is defeated, and disappointed in all his designs.

2. "And this is a certain character of a fool, that he never fixes in any thing; but chooses rather to gad up and down, and rove from one inquiry to another, than give his mind to true wisdom and prudence, in which he hath no pleasure."

The Lord Bacon aims at this, I suppose, when he briefly expresses the sense of Solomon, thus: \textit{Pro desiderio quaerit cerebrosum, ambitus immisit se; } "A hair-brained man seeks to satisfy his fancy, and intermischeth himself with all things." According to that of Seneca, \textit{Vitie sine proposito, languida est et vaga;} "A life that proposeth no end to pursue, is faint, sickly, and vagrant."

If we take the word \textit{mipbrad} in a good sense, then the paraphrase must run thus:

1. "He that lives retired, and sequesters himself from all company and business, out of a true affection to wisdom, endeavours to have a sound knowledge and understanding of things."

2. "But a vain man addicts himself to his studies, for no other end, but only to vapour with a shew of wisdom, which he doth not love."

[b] As for the vulgar translation, it is so remote from the Hebrew, that I shall only observe an handsome application which the Lord Bacon hath made of the second verse, to a quite different purpose from all interpreters that I am acquainted with. The words there run thus: \textit{Novum recipit studium verba prudenium, nisi ea disseris quae versatuntur in corde ejus.}

Which is commonly understood of "accommodating oneself to the humour of a fool," who otherwise will not regard what is said to him; but that great man applies "to the way of dealing with men of corrupt minds and depraved judgements."

"Who pre-suppose that honesty grows out of weakness of wit, and want of experience; or only out of a silly belief given to preachers and schoolmasters, to books and popular opinions. And therefore, unless you can make them plainly perceive that you know what is in their very heart,

when you exhort and admonish them, and are a well acquainted with their depraved principles and crooked rules, and have as fully discovered and deeply sounded them as themselves, they will despise all manner of virtue, and the most excellent counsels; according to that admirable oracle of Solomon: "A fool will not receive the words of the wise, unless thou speakest the very things that are in his heart;" i.e. an honest man can do no good upon the wicked, unless he know all the coverts and depths of wickedness. In which \textit{Matchianel himself hath done some service, by discovering plainly what men used to do, not what they ought to do."—Advanc. of Learning, b. vii. ch. 2.}

[c] The next verse may have a connection with these two, and intend to describe the worst of wicked men; who seek for glory, by being so bold as to scorner religion, and all the teachers of it. Such men are the greatest of Solomon's fools; by whom an excellent person (whom the Hebrews call \textit{Lb}, in opposition to Adam) should not be discouraged from pouring out good instructions; as he strews in the following words, ver. 4.

[d] Then, after a caution to judges (ver. 5) to search into the merits of a cause, and not merely to look to the quality of the person that appears before them, he observes, in several verses, the mischief done by the tongue, ver. 6. 7. 8. In the last of which the word \textit{Mishlabanin} being of uncertain signification, (because it is but once more used, and in this book, to the same purpose), I have taken in two or three of the senses of which it is capable; as he that pleases to examine will be satisfied.

[e] Rabbi Levi observes, that in the 10th verse there begins another sort of precept, of a different kind from those that have been hitherto delivered from the beginning of the 10th chapter to this place. All which have been in a manner concerning the danger of such vices, as sloth, hatred, anger, deceit, brawling, strife, impiety, and other parts of that folly; against which he hath given many general cautions. But now he proceeds, as that Jewish doctor thinks, to an argument of another nature, directing men in the management of affairs of state, or in domestic business, &c. Which is true in part, but not an exact observation; for there are precepts of the former kind, interspersed in the following chapters, as any one may see that will read them; and so there are several political maxims, and others belonging to different matters, in the chapters foregoing; even that observation which here immediately follows, (ver. 11.), concerning a rich man's confidence in his wealth, rather than in the divine providence and protection, was delivered in part before, x. 13. And the very next, concerning pride and humility, (ver. 12.), in chap. xv. 33. and xvi. 18. And that also (ver. 16.) about gifts, was touched in xvii. 8.

[f] The 13th verse is referred by some to judges who were anciently called \textit{cognitores}; and in good authors, \textit{cogniscere} is as much as to do the office of a judge; who ought to take the greatest care to know
the truth, before he give a sentence. For if it be a shame to a private person, in ordinary discourse, "to answer a matter before he heareth it;" much more will it be to a magistrate, if in matters of justice and judgement, he come to a resolution, before he hath taken full cognizance of them.

Some would connect the 17th verse with the foregoing; but I have taken it separately. And there being several ways of interpreting it, either politically, with relation to causes brought before a judge; or spiritually, with relation to what is transacted in a man's own soul; I have followed our translation, which seems to me nearest to the Hebrew. In which a just man is not the person of whom Solomon speaks; but the mark of the nominative case (as grammarians call it) is set before the word first. So that it hath the same meaning with our vulgar saying; "one tale is good, till another be told," though I think there is more in it; and the Lord Bacon hath made this excellent discourse upon it, which I have not neglected in my paraphrase.

"The first information," says he, (Adv. of Learning, book viii. ch. 2. par. 17.), "in any case, if it a little fix itself in the mind of the judge, takes deep root, and wholly seizes and prepossesses it; so as it can hardly be taken out, unless some manifest falsehood be found in the matter of the information, or some cunning dealing in exhibiting and laying open the same. For a bare and simple defence, though it be just and more weighty, can hardly compensate the prejudice of the first information, nor is of force itself to reduce the scales of justice, once swayed, down to an equal balance. Wherefore it is the safest course for a judge, that nothing touching the proofs and merit of the cause be intimated before-hand, until both parties be heard together; and it is best for the defendant, if he perceive the judge to be pre-occupied, to labour principally in this, (so far as the quality of the cause will admit), to discover some cunning shifts and fraudulent dealing practised by the adverse party, to the abuse of the judge."

They that expound this verse, (as the ancients generally do), concerning private judgement, within a man's own soul, follow the LXX, and the vulgar Latin; and commonly make this the meaning: "A good man, before he mind another man's faults, will first narrowly look to his own;" and call himself to an account, before he inquire after the miscarriages. This is an excellent sense, (if the words would bear it), which some of the Lutherans follow; even Melancthon himself, who thus translates it, justus initio est accuser sui, postea inquirit in alium; and runs into a long discourse concerning self-love, and men's blindness to their own faults, and quick-sightedness in spying other men's; citing the known sayings of Catullus, Horace, and Persius, to this purpose. But though he take the just man here to be opposed to the hypocrite our Saviour speaks of, who minds the mote in his brother's eye, and neglects the beam in his own, yet he acknowledges that the Greek word in the LXX belongs to the law, and the civil courts, viz. ἀποκατάστασις, which is the allegations of the accuser, before the other party be heard; and hath this remark out of Demosthenes: "It is hard to pull out of men's minds the opinion they have first conceived."

Which Verres among the Romans understood so well, that it was his common trick to accuse those whom he had injured; for men are to favour the plaintiff, supposing he cannot have the impudence to complain without a cause.

Nay, there are those in the Roman church that apply the vulgar translation this way, to this sense: "A just man is so prudent (as well as honest) as to relate all that concerns his cause sincerely, without concealing anything, even accusing himself if he be guilty; whereby he procures greater favour, and prevents what his adversary would have said, who, be sure, would have laid it open to his disgrace, if he had craftily omitted any thing," &c.

But I will not trouble the reader with any other of their interpretations, which are devised merely to make good that translation. The truth of ours may be further justified from the next, ver. 18. which belongs to the matter of civil controversies; which, if the judges could not determine, were referred to God's decision by lots.

But I have said enough, if not too much of this, and therefore shall only observe a few reflections which Melancthon makes upon the third verse. Where he notes first, how acceptable the state of marriage is to Almighty God, as well as unto us. And, next, what care he takes of pious persons in that state, for so he understands those words, as they ran in the vulgar Latin, Hastire voluptatem à Deo. As if he would say, There are great dangers in human life, and many common miseries; but God will be the keeper of such married persons as, in happy concord and agreement, invoke his protection. Such were Zacharias and Elizabeth, and other pious persons, whom God wonderfully preserved, when the armies of wicked men ravaged all Judea. When Lamyrs slew 30,000 Jews, and caused the captives to eat the carcases of their brethren, then he protected Zacharias and Elizabeth, and the blessed Virgin and her parents, as he saved the three children in the fiery furnace. By which examples we may conceive what it is to "draw pleasure from the Lord."

Those words also shew, what comfort and delight there is in an agreeable marriage; and therefore we ought to flee fornication, and keep in mind those severe threatenings: "where strangers and adulterers God will judge," &c. and the punishment God inflicted upon the inhabitants of Canaan for their confounded lusts. Nec est lubinus, magnum partem colmi sunt, &c. Not is there any doubt that a great part of the calamities among all mankind, are the punishments of filthy lusts. Let us, therefore, be more ardent in begging chastity of God; for the more he is displeased with impurity, the more rare-
fully we ought to preserve chastity; and let us observe that rule To shun sins, is to shun the occasions of sins.

Ver. 1. Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddeth with all wisdom.] He that affects singularity, inquires into all manner of things, according as his vain-glory and humour leads him; which makes him also bend himself, with all the wit he hath, to overthrow the solid reasons of wiser men. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.] For a fool will never take any pleasure in true understanding; but all the design of his studies is, to make a vain ostentation of wisdom unto others; this is his chiefest pleasure, to hear himself discourse, that is, discover the folly that is in his heart. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 3. When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.] Into whatsoever company or society (suppose into the schools of wisdom) a profane person comes, he brings along with him contempt of God and religion, and good men; and (as one wickedness grows out of another) that contempt improves into affronts, and reproachful language of them. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 4. The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.] A man of great understanding is never exhausted, nor wants matter of useful instruction; his mind being like a fountain, out of which wise thoughts spring perpetually, and flow in abundance, with a torrent of eloquence, for the common good and benefit.

Ver. 5. It is not good to accept the person of the wicked to overthrow the righteous in judgement.] Apologies may be made for it; but it can never be made consistent with honesty and goodness, to have respect to the person, nor to the cause, which is brought before one in judgement; for by that means the wicked is favoured, because he is rich, or because he is a friend, &c. and the just man loses his right, and is oppressed, because he is poor, or none of the judge's acquaintance.

Ver. 6. A fool's lips utter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strivers.] If a fool find others scolding or contending, he will thrust himself into the quarrel; but is so unskilful, that instead of making them friends, he increases the difference, till from wards they come to blows, in which he escapes not without some share of them to himself.

Ver. 7. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.] For in all other cases, a fool uses his tongue so imprudently, that he ruins himself by his own discourse; and if he go about to defend what he saith, he is the more entangled, to the certain hazard of his life.

Ver. 8. The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.] A whisperer of false stories makes a great show of harmlessness, if not of love and kindness, when he backbites others, nay, seems perhaps to do it very unwillingly, with great grief of heart, and not without excuses for the persons from whom he detracts; but his words give them the most deadly wound, and sink deep into the mind of those that hear them. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 9. He also that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster.] There is so little difference between a slothful man and a prodigal, that they may be called brethren; for he that looks not after his business, must needs come to poverty, as well as he that is a spendthrift.

Ver. 10. The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.] The almighty power and goodness of the great Lord of the world, is the securest defence in all manner of dangers; unto which a virtuous man may have the confidence cheerfully to resort, and hope to find protection, nay, to be there as safe as if he was in an impregnable fortress. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 11. The rich man's wealth is his strong city; and as high wall in his own conceit.] The worldly-minded man indeed thinks otherwise, and places his security in heaps of wealth, which his fancies hath a power to do anything, and is able to defend him (like a high bulwark, which none can scale) from all assaults; but, alas! this is only his own vain opinion, he is safe merely in imagination.

Ver. 12. Before destruction the heart of man is baulked; and before honour is humility.] When a man's spirit grows lofty by prosperity, forgetting God, and despising his brethren, it is a certain fore-runner of his utter destruction, as, on the other side, humility, meekness, and patience, in a low condition, is the best preparation for honour and preferment.

Ver. 13. He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.] He that is so forward as to answer to a business before he hath heard the state of it, (that is, before he understand it), thinks perhaps to shew the quickness of his apprehension; but, by his impertinent discourse, declares his egregious folly, and makes himself ridiculous. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 14. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?] There is a vast difference between outward and inward evils, for a manly spirit will support us under bodily sicknesses and outward afflictions; but if the mind itself have lost its courage, and become abject, cast down and oppressed with grief and sadness, it is not in the power of man to raise and lift it up.

Ver. 15. The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.] He (therefore) that hath so much understanding, as to consider what is good for himself, will take the greatest care to possess his mind with the true knowledge of God, and of his duty to him, and be so wise as to listen to those that can give him right information, for it is this alone that can preserve the mind from being dejected and broken.

Ver. 16. A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.] There is no man so
mean but he may make his way whithersoever he desires, by gifts and presents; which will produce his condensation, if he be in prison, and more than that, bring him into favor with great men, nay, purchase him the honor to wait upon princes.

Ver. 17. He that is first in his own cause, regardeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him.] A man may seem to have a good cause, who hath got the start of his neighbor; till he come also to examine his information, and open the whole matter before the judge; nay, more than this, he hath a great advantage who first possesses the judge's mind with the justice of his cause; for it will not be easy for his adversary to find out his tricks, and to contest him, without a diligent search and curious inquiry into what he hath alleged. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 18. The cause of contention to cease, and parts between the mighty.] But in some cases it is very hard to make an end of suits, where the reasons are strong on both sides, or the parties contending both very powerful to maintain their pretensions; and then the casting of lots is an equal way to determine the controversy, and put each of them in quiescence of that which fails to his share.

Ver. 19. A brother offended is harder to be upon than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.] But there are no contentions so sharp and obstinate as those among brethren; who grow so refractory when they have trespassed against each other, that it is easier to take a strong city, or to break the bars of a castle, than it is to compose their differences, and remove all the obstructions that lie in the way to their hearty reconciliation.

Ver. 20. A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall be filled. The tongue is so hard to govern, and so much depends upon it, that it cannot be too oft repeated; xii. 44, xii. 2.] we ought to take as great care about the words we speak, as we do about the fruit of our trees, or the increase of the earth, which we are to eat; for according as they are wholesome and good, or unsavoury and bad, so will the pleasure or the pain be wherewith we shall be filled.

Ver. 21. Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they who love shall eat the fruit thereof. The good or the harm that the tongue can do, both to a man's self, and unto others, is more than can be expressed; for many have cut their own throats by incautious words, when others have remained safe by silence, or brought themselves off from danger by prudent answers; in like manner, by false accusations it destroys other men, or saves them by testifying the truth; and this may be laid down for a general rule, that they who love to talk much shall suffer by it.

Ver. 22. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord.] He who hath married a wife that is truly a help meet for him, hath met with a most excellent blessing, and ought thankfully to acknowledge the singular favour of God in guiding his mind to make so happy a choice. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 23. The poor useth intertreaties, but the rich answereth roughly.] Boldness doth not become a beggar, but modest intertreaties and doleful supplications, which is the proper language of the poor and miserable; and if they meet with a stern or harsh answer from the rich, it is no wonder; and they must will humbly depreciate their displeasure.

Ver. 24. A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.] A friendly person is prone to do all neighbourly offices, which is the very end of friendship, and the way to preserve it; and such a friend is sometimes found, who loves so heartily, that he sticks closer to his friend in any strait, and assists him more faithfully than a brother.

CHAP. XIX.

The Argument—[a] This chapter begins with a comparison between the rich and the poor, whoso, in another regard, he had compared together in the last verse but one of the foregoing chapter. The sense is plain enough, and it is, that it enjoins upon us to "one of those proverbs which contains much wisdom in it," as Greg. Nazianzen speaks, (Orat. xxvii. p. 456, 459), who applies it unto "Christians of mean understanding and simple speech, that understand not chymia logia, neither the instances of Pyrrho, nor the syllogisms of Chrysippus, nor the depraved cunning of Aristotle's arts, nor the witchery of Plato's eloquence, which, like the Egyptian plagues, had infected the church. There is no need, says he, of any of these; but a poor man that walks in his simplicity, is mirem cohom tiev, as he paraphrases it, (poor in discourse, and reasoning, and knowledge, and relies upon plain simple words, is much better and will in this way be saved, as in a small cog-boat) than a fool, (for he is no better), that knows how to wind and turn every way in his discourse, and most unlearnedly trusts to his demonstrations," &c. But this must be acknowledged not to be the literal sense of the words, but only an accommodation of them to his purpose, which was to represent "how commendable simplicity is in religion and inquiries of faith," as well as in all things else. Not that a man should content himself to be ignorant, but only that he should not be too curious and subtle in his dispositions.

[b] For Solomon, in the next verse, observes two great springs of all our miscarriages, want of understanding, and want of deliberation. To make too much haste in a business, is the way not to speed, (according to the known proverbs); and to act blindly upon any thing, is no less prejudicial to us in our undertakings. That is the meaning of the first word, which we translate actio, both he that effects things without knowledge, and he that pursues what he understands without deliberation, run into many mistakes, and commit many sins, so some render the word nephos (soul) the desire of the
soul, the appetite, which must be always governed
by prudence, or else it will run a man upon rocks,
and precipitate him into ruin. For which miscar-
riage, he shews in the next verse, (ver. 5.) he
must blame none but himself, and never in the
least reflect upon God, as if he were negligent of
us, or hard to us; which men are prone to think
when they have foolishly undone themselves.

[c] Then follows an observation, which he had made
before, xiv. 20. but here repeats in different words
over and over again, ver. 4. 6. 7. For it is a lament-
able thing to see how little true friendship is
in the world, most men altering and changing to-
gether with the fortune (as we call it) of those
whom they pretend to love. If they be rich, they
are courted by every body, but poverty shews
how insincerely. The books of all ancient authors
are full of such sentences, which I shall not so
much as mention. [d] But note, that in the midst
of these he inserts (ver. 5.) an observation (which
he had formerly made) of a greater wickedness in
human nature, which moves them either publicly
to accuse others falsely, or secretly to backbite
them; neither of which shall escape unpunish-
ed. For “there is no word so secret that shall go
forth to hear;” and the mouth that believeth slayeth
the soul,” as the wisdom of Solomon excellently
speaks, i. 11. This is repeated also again in this
very chapter, ver. 9. with the alteration only of one
word. The reason of which is, that Solomon (as
I have noted before) using often the same axioms,
sometimes varied the phrase, though not the sense;
and the collectors of his sayings thought good to
set down his different forms of speech for the same
thing. In both verses the LXX. plainly under-
stand him to speak of such lies as are pernicious and
hurtful to others; and in the latter of them they
take the destruction which the wise man threatens
unto such liars, to arise from their own wicked
words. And so I have expressed it in my para-
phrase. There are those who think that this sen-
tence is repeated in the ninth verse, as an adjuration
to the rich men spoken of in the verses fore-
goings, who break their promises with those that
depend upon them, and give good words, when
there is no need of them, but will do no good when
men call for their assistance. These shall suffer
for their falseness. But this seems to be strained,
and not agreeable to the meaning of the Hebrew
next.

[e] That which follows (ver. 10.) is a notable ad-
monition of the confused and disorderly state of
things here in this present world, wherein we too
often see men void of wit or goodness, wallowing
in pleasure, that is, abundant in all things that can
gratify their senses, which they please most abun-
dantly, and mean men getting into power, and lording
it over their betters, &c. These things are very
unseemly, saith Solomon, and the latter of these
more unseemly than the former; but so it will be,
unless men become wise and good, for most are
made worse by prosperity, which they know not
how to use. Therefore it is a true rule of the son of
Sirach, Ecclus. xxxiii. 24. “Fodder, a wand, and
burdens for an ass, and bread, correction, and work
for a slave.” Every one is best in the condition
that is proper for him, and therefore a slave should
be kept under, and a brutish soul be restrained from
taking all his pleasure. For no man is fit to gov-
ern another that cannot govern himself, as the
next verse intimates: And the more power any
man hath, the harder it is for him to command his
passions, which may be suggested in the 12th [f]
verse; for the young lion, to whom a king is com-
pared, as he is the strongest, so is the fiercest of all
other.

From hence the wise man passes to some domestic
observations, ver. 13. 14. 15. 18. 19. Upon which
if I should make any remarks, it would extend this
preface beyond its just bounds. The skilful reader
will see where I have put two senses together, which
I could not do in the 23d verse, and therefore shall
here give a short account of it.

[g] All interpreters, except one, understand it as
our translation hath rendered it, by supplying a
word before abideth satisfied. Only Lud. de Dieu
thinks the parts of this verse are opposite, as the
rest use to be; and by that word which we translate
satisfied, (which signifies full in the Hebrew lan-
guage), understands proud and haughty people, (as
they who are rich are too prone to be), who are
here opposed to him that fears God; as they are in
Luke, i. 50. 51. 52. And the paraphrase will run
thus: “He that is possessed with such a religious
sense of God, that he fears to offend him, is a most
happy man; but he that is swollen with pride, and
forgets God, when worldly goods flow in upon him,
shall lie down at last in sorrow, and never want
something or other to afflict him.” And something
of this sense the LXX. seem to have had in their
mind; who make the members of this verse op-
posite, as he doth, understanding by paw full, he
that hath no fear of God. For so their translation
runs; “the fear of the Lord is to a man’s life, &c.
awake, &c. but he that is without fear, (viz. of God),
shall abide in places where there is no knowledge
to govern him;” i. e. run blindly into all manner of
mischief.

[b] The next verse is a most elegant, but hyperbolical
description of a man that hath given up himself to
sloth, who refuses to do things as easy as to pull
his hand out of his bosom, and as necessary as to
eat and drink. This being the plain sense, I have
not varied from the common translation of the word
sallachab; which every where signifies a pot, or
dish, or something like it; and can only by a me-
aphor be applied to the bosom, or arm-holes. But
we must either so understand it, or else take the
first word tamaan, hide, in a very improper sense;
for there can be no cause for hiding the hand in a
pot. Therefore, we must either translate it as we
do, or else understand by hides, putting or thrusting
the hand into the pot or dish; and thus translate the
whole verse: “A sluggard puts his hand into the
dish, but will not so much as move it from thence unto his mouth.”

[1] The next verse, as Melancthon well notes, is an observation concerning the way of amending the world. Some are so bad, they must be handled with great sharpness; especially such profane men, as with an epicurean contempt deride admonitions, and grow thereby more furious. But there are those who grow better, even by the example of severity against notorious offenders; as the Gibeonites came and sought peace, when they saw their neighbours destroyed; and the punishment of Sisamnes made Otanes more cautious, when he was placed in the seat covered with his predecessor’s skin; as Herodotus relates in his Terpsichore. But then there are a third sort, who need not so much; but being admonished, are obedient to those that tell them of their faults. To such a reproof, at the most, is sufficient.

[k] In the two next verses, I have had respect to both constructions, of which they are capable. But in ver. 28. I have omitted the sense, which some great Hebrews give of the words; as if an ungodly witness sought only by false colours to deceive the judge, and thereby pervert judgement. For a witness of Belial seems to me rather to signify such an impudent varlet, as stinks not boldly to testify to the grossest lies.

Ver. 1. Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.] A poor man who acts sincerely, and hath no guile in his mouth, is far happier, and more to be commended, than him that gathers great riches by fraud and circumstance; which he takes to be cunning, but will prove folly in the end. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. Also that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and be that beareth with his feet stumble.] Ignorance, and inconsideration are equally mischievous; for a mind that knows not what it ought to choose and what to avoid, can never do well; and if a man hastily and unadvisedly pursues an end, (which he reasonably propounds to himself,) and will not take time to deliberate, he must needs commit many errors. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his ways, and his heart freteth against the Lord.] Yet he is unwilling to take the blame upon himself, but commits this grand error after all the rest, that when his own folly, and perhaps wickedness, hath led him to many misfortunes, he imagines God is unkind to him, and is vexed, not at himself, but at the divine providence, against which he perpetually murmurs.

Ver. 4. Wealth maketh many friends, but the poor is separated from his neighbour.] Together with riches, a man gets many (and perhaps great and powerful) friends, though he be none before; but he that hath most need of them is so far from getting any, that, if he had one, he loses even him, when he grows poor. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 5. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and in that speaketh lies shall not escape.] A false witness, who fears not in open court to accuse the innocent, shall meet at last with a just punishment; nor shall he escape who privately calumniates and vents his malice in lies, to the prejudice of his neighbour. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 6. Many will intreat the favour of the prince, and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.] A prince never wants suitors for his favour, which the greatest persons seek with the humblest submissions; and every one loves, or pretends to love him, whose liberality is so well known every where, that it hath procured him the name of a bountiful giver.

Ver. 7. All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him? He pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.] All the kindred of a poor man not only forsake him, (as was observed before, ver. 4. and xiv. 26.), but hate his company, as a disgrace or a trouble to them; and therefore no wonder if his companions and familiares grow strange to him; he urges them with their former protestations and promises of kindness, but finds they signified nothing; and if he earnestly implore their pity, it is to no purpose.

Ver. 8. He that getteth wisdom, loveth his own soul; he that keepeth understanding, shall find good.] He that is so considerate, as to value wisdom above riches, and accordingly to store his mind with virtuous principles, is the truest lover of himself; and if he strictly observes them, and conduct his life by those rules, he shall find the profit of it.

Ver. 9. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and in that speaketh lies, shall perish.] He that testifies a lie, to the perverting of justice, if the judge do not find him out, shall be punished by God; and he who privately whispers slanders against his neighbours, and kindles strife and contention among them, shall perish by those wicked practices.

Ver. 10. Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.] Pleasure doth not become a man void of understanding, who is never more ridiculous than when he can do what he list; and yet empire less becomes a vile slave, who is most intolerably insolent, when he can wantonly domineer over the greatest persons. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 11. The discretion of a man discovers his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.] The world thinks him stupid, who is patient, and without sense of honour, who passes by injuries; but the more understanding any man hath, the slower he is to anger, and the greater his spirit is, the greater his glory and praise, not to revenge a wrong, when he hath opportunity.

Ver. 12. The king’s wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.] But none find it more difficult than a king, especially in the heat of his youth, to bridle his wrath, the signification of which is as dreadful to his subjects, as the roaring of the young lion to the rest of the beasts; and on the other side, any token of his favour and kindness is so comfortable, that as the dew restores those herbs which were parched by the
but beams of the sun, so it revives those who were almost struck dead with the terror of his rage. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 20. A fool's son is the salutary of his father, and the contention of a wife is a continual dropping.

Two things make a man exceedingly unhappy, a dissolute son and a quarrelsome wife; for the former breaks the heart of his father, to see him the utter destruction of his family; and the other drives a man to undo his family himself, when he is no more able to live at home with her, than to dwell in a rotten and ruinous house, through the roof of which the rain drops perpetually.

Ver. 44. House and riches are the inheritance of fathers; and a prudent wife is from the Lord. The singular providence of God, therefore, is to be acknowledged in a virtuous wife, which is not so easy to get as an estate. For an house with all its furniture, and land belonging to it, may descend upon us, without our thought, from our progenitors; but great care and prudence is required in the choice of a wife, that knows how to manage a family affair; who is not found neither, without the peculiar direction and blessing of the Lord.

Ver. 25. Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer danger.

As labour makes men vigorous and rich, so sloth and idleness make these two miserable effects; that it insensibly sinks the mind into a dull stupidity and unconsideredness about the most necessary things, and thereby reduces them into extreme beggary and woe; to which may be added a third, that it tempts them to shirk, and use dishonest arts, for a livelihood.

Ver. 26. He that keepeth the commandment, keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways, shall die.

He that carefully observes the commandments of God, as the rule of his life, hath a due care of himself, and consults his soul's safety; but he that minds not what he doeth, despises all order and rules of life, asregardless of his own good, and will be very miserable.

Ver. 19. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and he that giveth to the poor, shall not lack.

He that takes compassion upon the poor, and relieves his necessities, doth not impoverish, but enrich himself. For the Lord looks upon what is given to the poor as lent unto him; and he will not fail to make him a full compensation, or rather return the benefit he hath done to others, with large interest and increase of blessings upon him and his posterity.

Ver. 18. Chasten thy son whilst there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Give due and timely correction to thy son for his faults, before he hath gotten a habit of them, and there be little hope of his amendment; but neither proceed to such cruel usage of him, as to make him weary of life, and not do care what becomes of him, nor yet be moved merely by his roasting to make him uneasy of thy necessary severity towards him.

Ver. 19. A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.

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ashamed to shew their heads, and will bring him to
greater confusion at the last.

Ver. 27. Cease, my son, to bear the instruction that
causeth to err from the words of knowledge.] My son,
beware of their discourse, who, under the shew
of greater learning, seduce thee from the plain doc-
trines of virtue; or if thou hast been unhappily en-
gaged in such company, quit it presently, and stick
to those that honestly instruct thee; for remember
this, to leave off hearing the instruction of good men,
is the first step towards a departure from all religion.

Ver. 28. An ungodly witness scorneth judgment, and
the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.] A wick-
ed witness, who hath perfectly discharged all sense
of good and evil, mocks if you tell him of law and
justice, or of the judgement of God upon perjured
persons; for there is no iniquity so great, but there are
men as lewdly impious, who will not so much as
boggle at it, but will swallow it down as glibly as
drunkards do their liquor. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 29. Judgements are prepared for scorners, and
stripes for the back of fools.] But they shall not mock
always, for terrible punishments shall certainly be
inflicted upon those that scoff at conscience and re-
ligion; nor shall other wicked men escape, who are
such fools as to slight these good instructions, but feel
at last to their smart the doleful effects of their sin,
in indelible marks of the divine pleasure.

CHAP. XX.

THE ARGUMENT.—[a] The first precept in this chap-
ter is against drunkenness, as an enemy to wisdom,
even in common things, much more in those of
everlasting consequence: for that it commonly ex-
pels out of men’s minds all reverence both to God
and to others, inclining them to take the licence to
say or do any thing without restraint or discretion;
and what unruly passions it excites when the
brain is disturbed with it, is known to all, and need
not be here recited. The word bomeb, which Solo-
mon here uses, and which we render raging or out-
rageous, includes them all; signifying that discom-
posed, unquiet, and restless state of mind, which
expresses itself in some wild motion or other,
according as men are naturally inclined. But
nothing worse can be said of it than this; that it
makes men either stupid sots, or profane scoffers
at religion and all sobriety.

[b] Next to this, he advises every man to take heed
how he suffers himself to be drunk with anger;
for nothing else but an intoxication therewith, can
make a man so distracted as to fly in the face of
majesty. For so that word bitgarher properly sig-
nifies, not to provoke the king; (though most in-
terpreters, even Bochartus himself, so render it),
but to be angry at him, which is a kind of mad-
ness; for thereby he is provoked to such fury as
is in young lions, who are the fiercest of all others.
I have therefore expressed both senses of the word.

[c] In the next verse I take tik to signify a more
than ordinary man, one of the highest rank, and
that in wisdom: for it is opposed to a fool, and
therefore so have expounded it.

[d] As I have also understood it in ver. 5, where So-
lon observes, that there are no men so cunning,
but there are others as subtle to find them out.
Concerning which art of finding out men, the great
Lord Bacon hath given many notable rules, (in his
second chapter of book viii. of the Advancement
of Learning;) for though the knowledge itself falls
not under precepts, because it is of individuals;
yet instructions for the deducing of it may be given.
And he observes six ways whereby the knowledge
of men may be drawn out and disclos’d—by their
faces and countenances, by words, by deeds, by
their nature, by their ends, and by the relations
of others. What he says upon these heads, the
reader may there find. I shall only mention this
single observation of his, “That the weakest and
simplest sort of men are best interpreted by their
natures,” (according to which they commonly act),
“but the wisest and most reserved are best ex-
pounded by their ends and aims.”

[e] The next verse is very variously expounded, but our
translation seems to come nearest to the sense of the
Hebrew words; which may admit also of this con-
struction, which approaches nearer than any other
besides that which we follow. “It is the com-
mon inclination of mankind, when they are in need
or danger, to call for relief or help from him
whom they have obliged; but there are very few,
that in such a condition will approve themselves
to be faithful friends.”

[f] The 11th verse also may be expounded quite con-
trary ways; because the word titgarher signifies
both to make one’s self known, and to make one’s
self a stranger unto others. All the ancient in-
terpreters follow, as our’s doth, the first sense, which
seems genuine, for nature commonly betrays its in-
clinations in children so plainly, and they are so
strong and violent, that they cannot dissemble them.
Yet that, (which is the other) is no absurd sense,
which some give of these words: “Even children
are so cunning as to hide their inclinations;
and therefore it is not easy to guess at their child-
hood, what they will prove when they come to
man’s estate.” But this is not so common as the
other.

[g] The next verse some good interpreters expound
wholly concerning the happiness a people is in,
when the subjects are so humble, that they are in-
clined meekly to obey their superiors; and their su-
periors so wise, that they solicitously provide for their
safety and good government. Thus Melanchthon ob-
serves, that in government these two things must con-
cur, good counsel in the governors, and obedience in
the people; both of which Solomon acknowledges
to be the gift of God. Nay, both these, saith he,
must concur in a king, who must not have only
good counsellors, but be inclined also to hearken
to them, or else he will not be happy. Jeremiah was
an excellent monitor, but Zedekiah would not be ruled by him, and so Jerusalem was destroyed; as on the other side, Hézekiah in former times hearkened to Isaiah, and then it was preserved. *Hac est principalis sententia bujus dulcissimi dicti.* But I rather look upon this to be that which they call a tropical sense, not the literal, and therefore I only note it here, together with this wholesome admonition of that author which follows; "That kingdoms cannot be well governed only by human wisdom; but the assistance of God must be implored both in giving of counsel, and in bowing the will of men to obedience, and in governing events."

The 14th verse is alluded by the Lord Bacon as an instance of the mere colours of good and evil; teaching us that all is not good which men praise, nor all bad which they disapprove. For as fraud, the wise man here observes, makes them dispraise that to which they have a mind, so in other cases, of ignorance, or out of partiality or faction, nay, sometimes from natural disposition, men both disparage that which is praise-worthy, and commend that which is good for little.

But there are other authors, who give a quite different sense of these words, particularly Luther and Melancthon, who by *kœnæ* do not understand a *buyer*, but an *owner* or *possessor*; and imagine the meaning of this proverb to be, that men are not wont to like that which they enjoy; but after God hath taken it away from them, then they commend the happiness they have lost. The last-named writer heaps up abundance of excellent sentences out of the ancients, like this of Thucydides, *et μαλακεία, The present is always grievous.* Which arises out of fickleness and inconstancy, or because they are cloyed with what they have long enjoyed, or are impatient of some inconveniences in their present state; but chiefly out of inconsideration that all conditions will have something troublesome in them; and out of great unthankfulness to God, and insensibleness of his providence, which disposes things better than we can do ourselves. But the word *fìballe, which we translate boast, scarce admits of this sense, and therefore I have not taken notice of it in the paraphrase.

Whether *pæstinum* in the next verse, signify *rubies* or *pearls*, or any other sort of precious stone, or none in particular, is not very material; but Boëchius, I think, hath demonstrated that it signifies *pearls,* (part II. I. v. c. 6. de Sacr. An.,) and therefore I have so translated it. And it is not an impertinent argument, which he adduces for this. (cap. 8.,) that wisdom in the scripture is frequently compared to pearls, or preferred before them, as it is here in this place.

In the 17th verse, under the name of "bread of deceit," may be comprehended all things that went wrongfully; which, though they may please man in the beginning, will bring sorrow and pain in the conclusion; and therefore I have expressed it in the paraphrase.

There is little difficulty in the verses that follow, till we come to the 15th verse. Where the vulgar Latin hath been so extremely corrupted, that various interpretations have thence arisen, of a very plain sentence, as the words run in the Hebrew. Which are directed against sacrilege, as Protestant writers universally acknowledge. "A corruption, (saith Mr Gartwright himself,) which never more infested the world than in this age; in which most men not only give nothing, but do all they can to take away from that which their ancestors have given to the service of God, and the support of his ministers, of schools, or of the poor. By which they are guilty, not only of their own destruction, but of the loss of the souls of others." The only difference between them herein is, that some take the words to be a censure of the hypocritical wickedness of such as, after they have committed sacrilege, and such like sins, think to make God amends by vows, and sacrifices, and prayers. Thus Luther and Melancthon, and among the reformed, (as they are called), de Diu, who adds this new conjecture, that the first word *mekesch may be interpreted, by a snare, i.e. fraudulently and craf- tily; and then the sense is this: A sacrilegious man finds devices to rob God of things that are consecrated to him; and then makes vows, in hopes by them to expiate his sacrilege." The whole sentence, he also observes, may be otherwise disposed; but it seems to be so forced and unusual, that I shall not mention it.

The like variety of interpretations the mistake of the vulgar Latin hath produced in the next verse. Which seems to intend no more than this, That a good king separates the bad from the good, by a due execution of his laws; which is like the winnowing of the corn, after the chaff is separated from it, by drawing the wheel over it. For as the flail is the instrument among us of beating the corn out of the husk, so in those hot countries, they made the separation by a wheel drawn by oxen over it; which both pressed out the corn, and brake the straw; as may be seen in Isa. xxviii. 27. 28. and many other places, which our learned countryman N. Fuller hath explained in his Miscellanies, (I. vi. ch. 12.,) and Dr Hammond hath applied to that place of the psalmist, Psal. lxviii. 13. though it seemed to me there to have another meaning.

Others by the wheel understand here such a sore punishment as that mentioned in Sam. viii. 2. xii. 32. and then the meaning is, He will use the utmost rigour to extirpate the wicked, and fright men from their wickedness.

The plainest sense also of ver. 27., seems to be that in our translation; the latter part of which the Lord Bacon (with some others) refer to the inquisitive search of man’s mind into all manner of things. "For though the wise man says, (in Ecclesiastes, iii.,) that it is impossible for man to find out all the works of God, yet this doth not derogate from the captivity of a man’s mind, but may be referred to the impediments of knowledge, (such as the shortness of life, janglings among
learned men, and refusing to join their studies and labours, unfaithful and depraved tradition of sciences, with many other inconveniences, wherein this present state is entangled; for that no parcel of the world is denied to man's inquiry or invention, he declares in another place, where he saith, The spirit of man is as the lamp of God, wherewith he searcheth into the inwards of all secrets." Thus he, in the beginning of his Advancement of Learning. Which if it be not the full import of the words, is nearer than that sense which others give of them, who, by the candle of the Lord, understand either the knowledge of God himself, which penetrates into the secrets of all men's thoughts, or else his divine favour and love, the sense of which marvellously recreates and refreshes the soul, and is as it were the life of man, penetrating through his whole body.

Ver. 4. The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. The smallest difficulty frights a lazy person from the most necessary undertaking; for instance, he will not rise to plow his ground in autumn, when the morning-air grows sharp, for fear of catching cold; by which means he exposes himself to far greater hardships, for in the harvest-time, when plenty crowns the labours of other men, he turns beggar, and no body pityes him, or will relieve him.

Ver. 5. Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water: but a man of understanding will draw it out. There is nothing but may be compassed by wisdom; for though the designs and intentions of another man, especially that hath a deep wit, are as hard to be sounded as waters that lie in the secret caverns of the earth, yet there are persons of such penetrating understandings; and of so great a reach, that they will find means to discover them, and draw them out. See Arg. [d].

Ver. 6. Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness; but a faithful man will hear them. It is such an honour to be kind and to do good to others, that a great part of mankind value themselves very much upon the mere pretence of it; every one of them boasting what he hath done, or will do upon occasion; though, alas! in a time of trial, it is very hard to find so much as one of them that will be as good as his word. See Arg. [e].

Ver. 7. The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him. But whosoever he be, that is induced with this rare virtue of being just to his word, and so sincerely charitable, that he persevereth in his virtue to the end of his days, he shall not only fare the better for it, and enjoy great satisfaction in himself while he lives, but his children after him shall reap the happy fruits of his unfeigned love to God and man.

Ver. 8. A king that sitteth in the throne of judgement, scattereth away all evil with his eyes. A prince attentive to his people's good, who doth not give up himself to pleasure, nor abandon all his care to his ministers, but sits constantly himself to do justice to his people, prevents a world of mischief by his very presence in the courts of judgements; and by his strict observance how things are carried, and careful search into men's causes, keeps both
judges and pleaders, and all men else, within the bounds of their duty, and applies fitting and seasonable remedies to all the public grievances.

Ver. 9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?] There is no man so perfect, that he hath nothing left to do; for who can say, and say truly, that he hath not the least evil affection remaining in him, no untruthy passion stirring in his soul, or that he is so free from every sin, that he needs no further purifying?

Ver. 10. Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.] It is not so small a sin as men imagine, to cheat and cozen their neighbours, for instance, to buy by a weight or a measure too heavy and big, and to sell by those that are too light and scanty; for these are alike displeasing to the Lord, nay, such injustice is detestable to him beyond expression.

Ver. 11. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether he be right.] It is not hard to give a shrewd conjecture, what a child is like to prove when he is a man; for not only youths, but little children, make early discoveries by their behaviour, by their contrivances, by their dealings one with another, nay, by their very sports and pastimes, and such things wherein they delight, whether their future life will probably be modest and honest, free, that is, from lasciviousness, impurity, and such like vices, and void also of fraud, and guile, and malignity of spirit. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 12. The hearing ear, and the seeing eye; the Lord hath made even both of them.] As the Lord is to be acknowledged the fountain of all good, particularly of those excellent and useful senses whereby the knowledge of all things is conveyed to us; so the ingenuity disposition which we observe to be in any child, to listen to instruction, and a clear understanding to discern, with a sound judgement to resolve a right, are likewise, above all things, to be peculiarly ascribed to the divine grace. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 13. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.] But our industry must be joined with God's blessing, in the faithful improvement of those faculties or good inclinations he hath given us. And, therefore, let not idleness make thee indulge thyself in too much sleep, which is the way to beggary; but get up by time, and apply thyself with attentive care to some honest labour; and then thy desire of all things necessary shall not want satisfaction.

Ver. 14. It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; see where he is gone his way, then be bountiful.] The buyer sometimes is as unjust and deceitful as the seller. (ver. 10.), for when he cheapens a commodity, he disappaises it to such a degree, as if he thought it nothing worth; but having purchased it upon his own terms, he goes away and brags how subtle he was, and heaps at the simplicity of him that sold it at so vile a rate. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 15. There is gold, and a multitude of rubies; but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. Some think themselves rich, and powerful, and happy; because they have treasures of gold, or perhaps heaps of pearls, or other precious stones; but among all the jewels, or ornaments, or furniture, that are most esteemed, there is none comparable unto true wisdom, especially joined with eloquence; which can do more than all. See Arg. [i]

Ver. 16. Take his garment that is surety for a stronger; and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.] It is rank folly to trust him, who is so rash as to be bound for one, whose ability and fidelity is utterly unknown to him; especially for a woman whose loose way of life makes her credit justly suspected; therefore have nothing to do with such an inconsiderate person, without the utmost security that he can give thee, for the payment of what he owes thee.

Ver. 17. Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.] Do not satisfy thy appetite of wealth by fraud, lying, or bribery, nor thy desires of pleasure by adultery or fornication; for though this may be sweet for the present, it is but like the pleasure of greeky bread, which may relish well to an hungry man, when it is first tasted; but being chewed, hurts the palate, eats the gums, or breaks the teeth, with the sharp and rough gravel that is in it. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 18. Every purpose is established by counsel; and with good advice make war.] Rashness spoils the best designs, which must be carried on prudently, and with good advice, if we would have them prove successful; and above all other, warlike expeditions are not to be undertaken without great deliberation; nor can be well managed without exact conduct, and subtle contrivance; unto which the victory is commonly more to be ascribed than unto force.

Ver. 19. He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth secrets; therefore meddle not with him that fashioneth with his lips.] Whose trade it is to ingratiate himself, by defaming others, will not stick most treacherously to discover the secrets wherewith they have intrusted him, (xi. 13.) therefore suspect a fawning fellow, and have no familiarity with him; for his drift is, to entice thee to talk, what he intends to carry about to others.

Ver. 20. Whose carrieth his father, or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.] He that not only swights and despises, but reproaches, and wishes mischief to his father or mother, shall bring the heaviest punishments on himself, and on his posterity; who, the happier they were before, shall be the more miserable, by falling from a flourishing, into the most dismal condition.

Ver. 21. An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.] Make not too much haste to be rich; for though, with a great deal of haste and stir, an estate may in a short time be heaped up, yet the foundation of it being laid in rapine, extortion, or fraud, it moulders away many times as suddenly as it was gotten; and it is certain will not prosper unto many generations.

Ver. 22. Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.] Be patient, and do not so much as resolve to take revenge for any
injury thou hast received, (of which thou art not the proper judge, nor like to do exact justice in it), but leave thy cause to the Lord, and expect his righteous sentence; believing steadfastly he will not only do thee right, but defend thee from farther injuries; which thou fanciest, perhaps, thou shalt invite by thy forgiving those that are past.

Ver. 23. Diverse weights are an abomination unto the Lord; and a false balance is not good.] To buy by one weight, and to sell by another, is extremely odious, not only to all honest men, but much more to the Lord; which was said before, (ver. 10.), but is a sin so heinous, and yet so commonly practised, that this is fit to be repeated again; that it is a most wicked thing to cheat another, though it be but in a little matter, (ver. 11.)

Ver. 24. Man's goings are of the Lord; bow can a man then understand his own way? There is no man, great or small, that can take one step towards any thing he designs, without the permission and direction also of the Lord; who over-rules their motions unto ends so far distant from men's thoughts, that it is impossible for them to know what shall be of any thing they undertake.

Ver. 25. It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy; and after vows to make inquiry.] There are two pieces of profaneness, which entangle him that is guilty of them, in great troubles; nay, bring ruin upon him. First, when he makes no distinction between things holy and common, but converts that which was consecrated to God, (the first-fruits, suppose, or such like sacred things,) to his own proper use; and, secondly, when he vows in his distress, to give something unto God; but having obtained his desires, studies how he may be loosed from his obligations. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 26. A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.] Such impious persons can no more stand before a religious prince, than the chaff before the wind; but he disperses them all, and thers them (as we speak) so severely, that the country is clean purged and freed from such wicked wretches. See Arg. [m]

Ver. 27. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.] That active spirit, which the Lord hath breathed into man, is like a torch lighted at the divine understanding, to guide and direct him in all his motions, and to make reflections upon them afterward; nay, to penetrate also into the most secret designs of other men, that he may not be deceived by them. See Arg. [n]

Ver. 28. Mercy and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upheld by mercy.] The best and strongest guards for the preservation of a prince's person, and for the security of his government, are bounty and clemency, joined with justice and faithfulness to his word; and if either of the two be of greater force than the other, for their support and maintenance, it is an high degree of bounty and benignity; which settles him fast in all men's affections, and entails the kingdom upon his posterity. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 29. The glory of young men is their strength; and the beauty of old men is the gray beard.] That which makes young men honoured is their strength, and vigour, and courage; whereby they are capable to serve for the defence of their country; but that which makes old men venerable, is their aged gravity and experience, which qualifies them to advise and consult for its safety.

Ver. 30. The blunness of a wound cleaneth away evil; so do stripes the inward parts of the belly. It is impossible to mend some persons without blows, and those not gentle neither, but severe; and therefore, though it be a very sharp and grievous remedy, which they by all means avoid, it must not be forborne; but they are rather to be beaten black and blue, and scourged till their very hearts ache, than not be cleansed from their impurity. See Arg. [p]

CHAP. XXI.

THE ARGUMENT.—This chapter begins with a sentence, which Themistius, a pagan philosopher and orator, seems to have notice of, and mentions as very memorable in the Assyrian (as he is supposed to call the Hebrew) writings; and commends to the thoughts of the Emperor Valens, in a speech he made to him, Orat. ix. But if he had respect to this proverb of Solomon's, he will not fully comprehend the sense of it; for he takes notice only of a prince's mind being in the custody, and under the guard of God. For thus he translates it, ἡν συν άρτορος και τοι ναυαρχος τον καθ' αυτον ναυαρχης. "The mind of the king is kept in safe custody in the hand of God." From whence he draws this inference, that a king ought to be very sensible what danger he is in, if he go about any thing contrary to the mind of God; because he then is in peril to fall out of the hand which preserves and keeps him. Nay, thou oughtest, O king, (saith he,) not only to design nothing thyself but what is holy, but they that are about thee ought to speak to thee nothing that is not so; for every word that comes to thy ears, is written in his uncorrupted hand. But though this be a most excellent admonition, worthy to be written in the hearts of all princes, that "it is very unbecoming to have any evil thing, any thing impure, or in the least blenished with cruelty or inhumanity, in that heart, which those most holy, and most gracious and benign hands of God carry in their keeping," yet there is a great deal more than these Assyrian letters or pictures, which he speaks of, express. For Solomon would have them, and us, sensible, that they cannot manage things by their power, as they think good; but depend upon an higher cause, who orders all their motions, good and bad, to such ends as he proposes to himself, quite contrary to their intentions and inclinations. Which is an instruction sufficient to correct the pride of the most absolute monarch, and the impatience of the most oppressed subject.

[b] Next to which follows (ver. 2.) a caution against thinking too well of ourselves; which had been delivered before, (xvi. 2.) but for the weightiness,}
suppose, of the matter, and the prudence of men to flatter themselves, and not to judge sincerely of their own actions, is here again repeated.

And then there is a caution added (ver. 3.) against hypocrisy, which thinks to please God with ceremonies, without moral honesty.

[c] In the 4th verse, the meaning is something uncertain, from the different acceptations of the word ner or mir; which the Greek, the Latin, and other interpreters translate, not “plowing, or plowed fields,” but the light, the splendour of the wicked. I have had respect to both senses; understanding by plowing, the study, contrivance, and business of wicked men. And the sentence may be inverted in this manner: “Sin is the pride, the ambition, the glory and joy, (or the business), of wicked men!” That upon which they value themselves, and for which they think themselves brave fellows, &c. is, that they dare do wickedly; or we may make two sentences of this verse, to this purpose: “Men that have proud and lofty thoughts, have very ambitious desires, and an unsatiable appetite; which put them upon much wickedness; nay, the very business and employment of all wicked men, (as well as their pleasure), is nothing but sin.” And this word ner signifying a yoke, among the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Arabians, Lud. de Dieu thinks this no improper sense: “Superfluousness, and swelling of the heart, (or mind), is a yoke intolerable, and proper to the wicked.” Castalio alone understands by sin, the effects of sin, to this sense: “Pride and haughtiness of mind, are deadly enemies to that happiness and pleasure which the wicked pursue;” for instead of making them greater, as they fancy, they lay them low in all men’s opinions, and expose them to their hatred, &c. I omit other interpretations.

[d] In the 7th verse, there are different opinions about the force of the word jegarem; most of which I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase. And there is no little obscurity in the next verse; but besides that sense which I have represented, the words are capable of another, which is as plain; viz. “As the man is, so are his works; a man of tricks will act strangely, (quite different from all the rules whereby we ought to govern ourselves), but an honest man you may know where to have; for he acts conformable to the laws of righteousness.”

[e] In the 11th verse, de Dieu thinks both parts of it ought to be referred to one and the same subject, viz. peti, the simple; who, saith Solomon, (according to this construction of words), may be instructed two ways. One is, by the punishments which are inflicted upon a simpler, which works upon his fear; the other is, when he attends to the wise, and observes God’s great goodness to him, which works upon his love. Wherein he seems to have respect also to another signification of the word bemarbul, besides that of attending to information and instruction; for it sometimes imports that happiness and prosperity, wherewith God blesses the wise and prudent. But that sense which I have followed in the paraphrase, seems nearest to the Hebrew; and agrees best with what was said before, (ver. 25), and it being usual in this book to repeat the same sentence in divers places, in different words, I have therefore kept to that sense. But if any like the other, (which is the vulgar Latin also follows, making both parts of the sentence to respect the simple), the plainest interpretation of the latter part of it seems to me to be this: “When instruction is given to the wise, the simple also learn something, by observing how diligently even the wise hearken to it.” And in this sense the word Marbul, with lamed after it, is used in the next verse: “The just considers the house of the wicked.”

[f] Which though it seem very plain, yet there are great varieties in the interpretation of it, because of the following part of the verse. In which many put in the word Jehovah, or God, to supply the sense, (as we do), but without any necessity; there being a clear and obvious sense, (which I have expressed in the paraphrase), without any such supplement, if we do but take the just man for a just magistrate, and not for a private person.

[g] There is little difficulty after this, till we come to the 24th verse; where he either gives this character of a scorner, that he is proud and arrogant, and does all things in the wrath of his pride, (as the words are in the Hebrew), or describes the proud and arrogant man to be a scorner also, and full of haughty wrath. It is not of much concern which way we take it, for the sense will in a manner be the same. I have expressed the Hebrew as near as I could in my paraphrase, taking the construction thus: “A proud and haughty person, who may well be called a scorner, proceeds furiously and unsufferably in all that he doth.”

[b] In the last verse, Solomon mentions the horse instead of all warlike preparations; because it was the chief, and all nations placed much of their confidence in the number and strength of their horses. But that the Israelites might not do so too, there was a special provision made in their law against it, Deut. xvii. 16. Notwithstanding which, they were so prone to this vain confidence, that Joshua, in his wars against the Canaanites, houghed all the horses he took after a great victory; that is, cut their hamstrings, and thereby made them unserviceable; which he did by an express command from God, Josh. xi. 6, 9; and the reason of it was, (as Kimchi well observes), to prevent a false conceit, which might have risen in the people’s mind, that they owed their good success to them, that they made use of those horses in future battles. Which Solomon also here endeavours to prevent; for, though he had a great number of horses to increase that splendour which was peculiar to him above all kings, yet he would have them know he did not trust in them; nor would he have the people imagine they were a whit the more secure, because they were so well appointed for war, if they did not carefully obey the laws of God, and from him look for deliverance.
Ver. 1. The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; be thou a tower to build it up.

Ver. 2. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

Ver. 3. To do justice and judgment, is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Ver. 4. A high look, and a proud heart, and the lifting up of the lid, is sin.

Ver. 5. The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty, only to want.

Ver. 6. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity unto them that seek death.

Ver. 7. The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them, because they refuse to do judgment.

Ver. 8. The way of the justo and strait; but as for the pure, his work is right.

Ver. 9. It is better to dwell in a corner of the house of the poor, than with a brawling woman in a rich house.

Ver. 10. The soul of the wicked desireth evil; his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.

Ver. 11. When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise; and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

Ver. 12. The righteous man is despised; but the wicked beareth rule.

Ver. 13. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall call upon him, and shall not forsake him.


Ver. 15. It is joy to the just to do judgment; but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.
execution of justice is a joy to him that hath observed the laws, but a terror to those that have violated them by their wicked deeds; who look upon themselves as in danger to be undone thereby.

Ver. 16. *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead.* He that will not live by those wise laws which God hath prescribed him, but follows the conduct of his own foolish lusts and passions, shall after all his extravagances be sent down to hell, and there confined to the company of the old giants, who giving themselves over to debauched courses, were swept away with a deluge. (See ii. 18, ix. 18.)

Ver. 17. *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man; he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.* Nay, before he goes thither, he may suffer very much; for it is too frequently seen that voluptuous men destroy their own pleasures, by wasting their estates, and bringing themselves to extreme beggary; at the best, he can never thrive, who loves to feast, and to live delicately.

Ver. 18. *The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous; and the transgressor for the upright.* Nay, such is the distinction which Divine Providence makes between the good and bad, that righteous men are not only strangely delivered from those dangers which others fall into, but preserved from mischief, by its staying on the wicked; and men sincerely virtuous escape in a common calamity, when they that prevaile with God and with religion, by that very means (which they thought was best for their safety) are overwhelmed in it.

Ver. 19. *It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.* It is more eligible (as was said before, ver. 9.) to dwell quietly in the most useful place upon earth, than to live in a palace with a contentious wife, whom nothing can please, but is uneasy and angry at every thing, and always gives provoking language.

Ver. 20. *There is a treasure to be desired, and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it.* Wisdom furnishes a man not only with the necessary, but with all the conveniences and pleasures of life that he can reasonably desire; which it teaches him also to enjoy with great satisfaction, though but in a small habitation; but such is the folly of a wicked man, that he lavishly spends all those treasures, which he knows not how to get, nor how to live without.

Ver. 21. *He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honour.* He that makes it his business to be good, not contenting himself merely with doing no harm, but greedily laying hold on all occasions to exercise justice and mercy, shall lead a most happy life; for, besides the satisfaction and pleasure he hath in doing good, he shall preserve himself from being injured, and oblige all so be kind to him, and be highly esteemed, honoured, and praised every where.

Ver. 22. *A wise man revilcheth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.* The virtue of the mind is of greater force, and more prevalent, than strength of body; for a whole city of mighty men are not able to resist a wise and pious commander that besieges them; but they are either taken by his cunning stratagem, or they yield themselves to his eminent goodness, unto which they trust more than to their fortifications.

Ver. 23. *Woe to the keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from trouble.* He that is wary and cautious in his talk, thinking seriously before he open his mouth, and taking care to offend neither God nor man by what he speaks, preserves his mind from a great deal of trouble, and himself from dangerous distresses.

Ver. 24. *Proud and haughty men are an abomination to the Lord, and he hateth them that are proud.* He that is puffed up with a great conceit of himself, whose ambition makes him insatiable in his desires, as he regards neither God nor man, so he cannot endure the least opposition, nor do any thing with moderation; but being easily enraged with insolent fierceness and cruelty, proceeds against those that cross his designs. See Arg. [8]

Ver. 25. *The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.* A sluggard hath desire as well as other men; which must needs be a perpetual torment to him, because he will not be at the pains to give them satisfaction; nay, they bring him sometimes to a miserable end; because his sloth moves him to make provision for them by robbery, or other unlawful ways, rather than by following some honest, but laborious calling.

Ver. 26. *He that goeth greatly all the day long; but the righteous groweth and sparrow not.* Nor is there any measure in his desires; but as they are endless, so they are exceeding eager and restless, to his own and other's great disturbance; but he that is diligent and honest is so far from desiring, much less stealing his neighbour's goods, that he freely gives away his own, and hath not the less thereby, but still enough to spare.

Ver. 27. *The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?* God is so far from being pleased merely with sacrifices, (xv. 8,) that when they are offered by impious men, who never think of amending their lives, he detests them, though presented with never so splendid a show of piety; especially, when at that very time they have some wicked designs in their heads, which they think to sanctify by their sacrifices.

Ver. 28. *A false witness shall perish; but the man that beareth, speaketh constantly.* He that for money, or love, or hatred, shall testify any thing of which he hath no knowledge, shall soon lose his credit, and at last come to a miserable end, (xix. 9;) but he that, in obedience to God, testifies nothing but what he hath attentively heard or seen, as he never varied from what he disposes, so he shall always be believed, and continue in good esteem, as long as he lives.

Ver. 29. *A wicked man hardeneth his face; but as for the upright, he directeth his way.* All the endeavours of a man resolvedly wicked, is to grow so impudent that he may not blush at what he doth, nor be moved
Where Melanchthon hath a large discourse to shew
that it is lawful, nay, necessary, to endeavour after
a good name; according to that saying, "I have
need of a good conscience with respect to God, and
of a good name for the sake of my neighbours."
And he alludes some ancient sentences to the same
purpose with this of Solomion, as that of Publius,
Honestus rumor alterum patrimonium est; and
that of Plautus, Honestam famam si servasio, sato
diverse.

[b] There are more observations about riches, in ver.
7. 8. 9. which seem to me to have a dependence
one upon the other, and so I have considered them
in the paraphrase. And in the next verse but one,
(Ver. 11.), I have followed the judgements of Lud.
de Dieu, who thinks Solomion observes two fruits
of pureness of heart; one, that the word of such a
man may be relied on; and the other, that the king
(who loves not to be deceived) will not be his
friend upon that account. This seems nearest to
the Hebrew, unless he will take it thus: two things
recommend a man to the affection of a prince, his
integrity and his eloquence, which make him very
capable to do his prince service. And then the
paraphrase must run thus: "He that loves sincerity
above all things, and is able to deliver his mind
in acceptable language, is fit to be a privy-counsellor
to a king."

[c] And to this, I conceive, he hath some respect in
the next verse, where by "dubit", knowledge, in
the first part of it, we are to understand (the other
part of the verse shews) "men truly knowing,
and who speak according to their knowledge."

[d] In the 12th verse, there is an admirable descrip-
tion of the disposition of slothful persons, who
raise difficulties in their own fancies, where there
are none, or pretending them greater than they are,
will not so much as attempt any thing, because it
is possible they may meet with insuperable hind-
rances. Which some have, not unly, applied to
eowardly magistrates, who dare not punish great
and powerful offenders, but excuse themselves, say-
"ing, "He is a mighty man, there is no dealing
with him," &c. Whereas a worthy magistrate (as an
excellent prelate of our own, Bishop Sanderson,
spoke) would meet with such a lion to chase that
he might make God's ordinance to be reverence,
and clear the way for others, by treading such a
beast in pieces, "and should no more fear to make
a worshipful thief, or a right worshipful murderer,
(if such a one would come in his circuit), an ex-
ample of justice, than to twitch upon a poor sheep-
stealer.

But the Lord Bacon applies it, no less wittily, to
the laziness of mankind, in the Advancement of
Learning, (i. e. c. ult.), the knowledge of some
things being so abstruse, that it is impossible to be
compassed by human industry. Whereas, "all
those things are to be held possible and perform-
able, which may be accomplished by some persons,
though not by every one, and which may be done
by the united labours of many, though not by any
one part, and which may be effected in a succes-
tion of ages, though not in the same age; and in brief, which may be finished by the public care and charge, though not by the abilities and industry of particular persons." But there is no excuse for those who will not set themselves to any inquiries, because some things cannot be known. Which is perfectly the temper of the sluggard Solomon here mentions, who, because a lion sometimes comes into the street, would not stir out of his doors. It was not ordinary, you must know, for lions to come into towns; no, nor to rove in the daytime; (the night being their season, 2 Kings, xviii. 25.) But sometimes by the divine vengeance they were stirred up to leave the deserts, and go into inhabited places, (Jer. v. 6, 2 Kings, xvii. 23, 26.) and likewise, if we may believe the great philosopher, in his History of Animals, when they grow old, they shun cities more than other places, because then they are not so able to prey upon beasts, and therefore lie in wait for men. The same is affirmed by Pliny, as Bochartus observes, 1. iii. c. 2. part 1.

[c] In the 16th verse I have followed our translation, and expressed the sense to as much advantage as I could. But I think the vulgar Latin, which Luther and some others follow, comes nearer to the Hebrew, which runs thus: "He that squeezes the poor to increase his own estate, gives to the rich (not to secure what he hath gotten, but) only to impoverish it," that is, He shall be squeezed by some mightier person than himself; and so the paraphrase, in more words, should be this:

"Such is the just providence of Almighty God, that he who, to enlarge his own estate or power, oppresseth the poor by violence or deceit, shall meet with the like extortion from others more powerful than himself, and thereby be reduced to as poor a condition as those whom he oppressed."

Ver. 1. A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.] Riches are not so great a good as men imagine; for a wise man will prefer the fame of using them well (or any other virtue) much before them; and chuse much rather to be esteemed and beloved of good men, than to be possessed of abundance of silver and gold. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.] The world doth not consist all of rich, or all of poor, but they are mixed together, and have need of one another; and will agree well enough, and not clash one against another, if they both consider, that there is one Lord, who is the Creator of both, and hath by his providence ordered this inequality for their mutual good. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 3. A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are surprised.] He whose long experience and observation of things hath made him cautious and circumspect, foresees a calamity before it come; and withdraws himself from the danger, into a place of safety; but an incautious and credulous person is easily abused by crafty men, to overlook the mischief which even they intend against him, and so he goes or securely in his accustomed tract, till it overtakes him:

Ver. 4. By humility, and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life.] A modest sense of a man's self, and humble submission to the meanest condition, arising from a religious regard to the divine majesty, is the way to be promoted, both to wealth and to honour, and to enjoy them both also a long time in joy and pleasure.

Ver. 5. Boast and scorns are in the way of the foolish; he that keepeth his soul shall be far from them.] The life of a man that minds and turns any way to bring about his ends, is very scandalous to others, and will entangle him as last in most grievous troubles; he therefore that hath a care of his soul, will have no society with such persons, and thereby avoid the danger of being undone by them.

Ver. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.] Instruct a child as soon as he is capable, and season his mind with the principles of virtue, before he receive other impressions; and it is most likely they will grow up with him; so that when he is older, he will not forsake them, but retain them as long as he lives.

Ver. 7. The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.] Riches draw dominion along with them over the meanest sort, nay, though a man be not absolutely poor, yet if he be forced to borrow, he loses his liberty, and depends upon the will and pleasure of the lender.

Ver. 8. He that soweth iniquity, shall reap vanity, and the rod of his anger shall fail.] But let not such abuse their power, for no man can reap better than he sows; but if he do injury to others, it shall produce his own trouble; and the authority which he employs vexatiostly and spitefully shall fail him, and not be able to bear him out in his inhumanity.

Ver. 9. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.] On the other side, he that, beholding the miserable condition of others, takes compassion upon them, and friendly relieves them, shall be blessed by God, and commend-ed by men; because he doth put them off to be supplied by others, but imparts of his own goods to him that cannot require it again.

Ver. 10. Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.] Throw the scoffer, who desires all things, out of a society, and contention, which he is wont to raise, will go out together with him; there will be no quarrels, no suits, nor reproachful words, wheresoever contending persons are apt to bespatter one another, when such insolent and turbulent men are excluded.

Ver. 11. He that sheweth kindness, for the grace of his lips, the king shall be his friend.] He whose heart is so free from guile, that he places his pleasure in the integrity of his mind, and the purity of his conscience, will never gloss, nor flatter, nor study to put false colours upon things, but speak ingenuously, according to the sincere sense of his soul,
upon both which accounts a wise prince will value him, and advise with him as a friend. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 12. The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, and be overthrow the words of the transgressor.

There is a special providence of God, which watches over honest men, (who speak as they think,) and which prospers the advice they give, and the affairs they manage; but he subverts such as are treacherous and perfidious, and blasts all their counsels and designs. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 13. The slothful man saith, There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets. A slothful man never wants pretences to excuse himself from labours, for he can feign to himself imaginary difficulties, and make a dreadful representation of them; affrighting himself with dangers where there are none, or which happen very rarely. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 14. The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, be that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein. When thou art enticed by the beauty and blandishments of those lewd women, from whom thou oughtest to estrange thyself as far as they are estranged from God, (see ii. 16.) remember that they allure thee into such a gulf of utter destruction, that to fall into their familiarity, is a mark of the highest displeasure of Almighty God against thee for some other crimes.

Ver. 15. Foulness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. False opinions and bad inclinations stick so close sometime to the mind and will of a child, and are so twisted with them, that no admonitions, no reproofs, nor the wisest discourses, but only reasonable chastisement, and that not without some severity, will remove such obstinate folly.

Ver. 16. He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want. There are some men have such a mixture of ill qualities, that at the same time they will take from the poor to enrich themselves, though it be by violence or fraud, and give to the rich and powerful to wink at their oppressions; but all in vain, for such practices shall surely bring them to beggary. See Arg. [e]

END OF THE FIRST PART OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

THE SECOND PART OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

CHAP. XXII.

The Argument.—Now, from this verse, there is scarce any interpreter but hath observed another form of speech, much different from the former, begins and continues unto the 25th chapter; and therefore it may not unfitly be called, The second part of the book of Proverbs.

From the beginning of the 10th chapter to this place, the instructions of wisdom are delivered in short sentences, and Proverbs, properly so called, which have seldom any connection one with another, or not easily discerned, shewing what is good or bad, true or false, &c. But now follow exhortations, and precepts, in the imperative mood of speech, and those comprehended in two or three, or more verses, before he finish what he intends. In which alteration, some think the weakness of the reader is consulted; who, being weary of the sententious way of instruction, may be refreshed and awakened unto new attention, by varying the form of writing. And thus the son of Syrach, after his homilies or sentences, adds an earnest exhortation to the study of wisdom and virtue, like this of Solomon, in the following section, which I call his second part. Which may have respect both to that which follows: As if he had said, Let not all that hath been said be lost, or superficially regarded; but take a serious review of the foregoing counsels, and give ear also to what I have farther to deliver, &c.

[f] And to move the greater attention, he commends them, (ver. 10.), under the name of Schalitschim, "words fit for a prince to speak, and the best men of the world to hear," which we truly therefore render excellent things. There is another notion of the word, I know, which I have not altogether neglected; but it always signifying in the Bible, either great captains and commanders, and nobles, or the best sort of musical instruments, (as it doth in one place), I look upon this as the most proper interpretation of it.

[g] And among those principal rules of life, he first commends this, ver. 21. not to be injurious to poor people, especially by oppressing them in a form of justice. Which all know was administered by the elders in the gate of their city, as may be seen in many other places besides that which I have noted in the paraphrase, Deut. xxii. 19. xiii. 9. xxv. 7. iv. Ruth. 1. 2. &c. Which being so common a notion, it is strange that the Greek interpreters should here understand this verse of poor people.
begging at their doors; whom the wise man admonishes them not to abuse. This seems to be their sense; but the word *tedial* signifies more than *shame, dishonour, or abuse,* (which is the word whereby the LXX express it,) for it denotes as much as to crush, and that into bits, i.e. to undo people utterly; which nobody is inclined to do unto poor wretches begging at their doors, who are undone already.

Then follows a most necessary advice about the choice of a friend, ver. 24. 25. upon which the Lord Bacon hath passed this judicious remark, (Advanc. of Learning, b. viii. ch. ii. par. 26.)

"By how much the more devoutly the laws of friendship among good men are to be observed, by so much the more it stands us upon to use the caution, even at the very first, in the prudent election of friends. And let the disposition and humour of our friends be what they will, so far as concerns ourselves only, they are by all means to be borne withal; but when they impose a necessity upon us, to behave ourselves just as they would have us towards other men, it is a very hard and unreasonable condition of friendship. Wherefore it highly concerns us, as Solomon here admonishes, for the preserving of the peace and safety of our life; that we intermingle not our manners with men of a choleric nature, and such as easily provoke or undertake quarrels and debates. For such kind of friends will perpetually engage us in contentions and factions; so that we shall be constrained either to break off friendship, or to be wanting to our own personal safety."

In the two next verses, (ver. 26. 27.) he seems to warn men against such friendships as will engage them to be bound for the debts of others. There are several admonitions before, against being surety for a stranger, vi. 1. xi. 15; and in one place (xvii. 18.) he seems to caution against rash engagements, though for a neighbour of friend; but especially, he here adds, when a man is conscious to himself that he hath no estate, and doth but deceive him to whom he stands bound for another man's debt; and so, by pretending to be more able than he is, deprives himself of the benefit of that law mentioned Exod. xxii. 26. 27. and repeated Dent. xxiv. 6.

What is said in the 28th verse against the removing of the boundaries whereby one man's possessions are distinguished from another's, and that by an ancient consent, is applied, by all sorts of writers, as a caution against innovations. And it is a great mistake to imagine that only Popish authors make that use of it; for the best of the Protestants have thought fit to accommodate it to the same purpose. And among the rest, Melanthon hath very judiciously explained it in this manner. "This precept is not obscure, if it be cited allegorically for not changing the laws which antiquity by grave authority hath delivered, unless there be an evident necessity. For this is often repeated among the precedents of political life, not rashly to change the ancient laws. And here he quotes a long passage out of Demosthenes against Timocrates, concerning the people of Locri, who ordained, That he who proposed a new law to them, should do it with an halter about his neck, &c. And if there were such severity now, saith Melanthon, we should not have so many new dogmatists and Lycurgus's, about wax candles, and bells, and such like things; of whose change, as there is no necessity at all, so it would bring no utility. And wise men require us to pardon and indulge some small inconveniences to custom, lest by motion, as it is in sick bodies, the commonwealth should suffer a greater evil. It is necessary, indeed, here to add this caution, when any doctrine is impious, and the law establishes impious opinions and idols; then we ought to prefer rules before them, and to obey God rather than man. But when such amendment is necessary, the boundaries and limits of our fathers are not taken away, but restored; because we only return to the doctrine delivered by God to our first father, according to that of Tertullian, Primum quodam verstitimum est. All our care, therefore, herein, is to inquire diligently what is the true antiquity; for that is a great confirmation of our faith, when we understand the true state of the church in all ages, to follow the testimony of those who retain the foundation."

In the last verse, Solomon doth not merely commend industry and diligence, as some understand it (taking this to be the same with the Greek proverb, Τῆς ἀνθρώπου λαβὼν, but something more, which the Hebrew word *mahar* plainly imports, viz. speed, swiftness, readiness, and cheerfulness, in the dispatch of business. To which is required a quickness of apprehension in discharging the fittest means, and a dexterity in the application of them, so that the business is not only done, but done speedily, and without much noise and bustle. On such a person, if he can be found, Solomon here wishes this remark, That he is likely to come to great preferment. "For there are no qualities," as is observed by the Lord Bacon, b. viii. ch. ii. parab. 9. "which princes' more respect and require in the choice of a minister, or servant, than celerity and alacrity in the dispatch of business; which is above all the rest, as he shews by this induction. Men of profound wisdom are many times suspected by kings as too prying, and able by the strength of their wit, as with an engine, to turn and wind about their masters insensibly, whether they will or no. Then popular persons are hated, as those that stand in the light of kings, and draw the eyes of the people too much unto themselves. Men of courage are commonly taken for turbulent spirits, and more daring than is meet. Honest men, who are valuable for their integrity, are thought too stiff, not so pliable as their masters desire, to their will and pleasure in every thing. To conclude, (saith he), there is not any other good quality, which presents not some shadow where- with the mind of kings may be offended; only
quickness of dispatch in the execution of commands hath nothing in it that doth not please. The motions also of the mind of kings are swift, and not very patient of delays. For they imagine they can do any thing; this only being wanting, that it be done out of hand. Upon which account, above all other qualities, celerity is to them most acceptable."

Ver. 17. **Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.** And now let me exhort thee again, (iv. 20. v. 1.), whatsoever thou art that readest these things, to attend diligently, and consider seriously, all the counsels and precepts which wise and good men have delivered; and in particular, let me prevail for an affectionate application of thy mind to the knowledge which I impart unto thee.

Ver. 18. **For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withhold thy life from thee.** For it will give thee most high satisfaction if thou dost so heartily entertain them, and thoroughly digest them, and faithfully preserve them in mind, that thou art able withal to produce any of them as there is occasion, and apply communicably them for other men’s instruction.

Ver. 19. **That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.** For what greater satisfaction can there be, than to have a good hope in God, and to be well assured of his gracious providence over thee? which is the very end for which, I now declare these things to thee; that if thou hast been negligent before, yet now at length thou, even thou, mayst know the way to happiness, and shew it unto others.

Ver. 20. **Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsel and knowledge?** Think of it seriously, and deny if thou canst, that I have taken more ways than one for thy information, and have set down most excellent rules, and those well considered with great exactness and care, for thy conduct both in public, and in a private state of life. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 21. **That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?** That thou mightest not only have a certain, firm, and solid knowledge, of all those truths that are necessary for thee, but be able also to give sound advice to those that send to consult thee; and be fit to manage the most difficult affairs, to the satisfaction of them that employ thee in an embassy.

Ver. 22. **Rob not the poor, because be is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate.** And besides these instructions already given, remember these that follow: Never abuse thy power to the spoiling of him that is in a mean condition, because he is unable to resist thee; but especially do not undo him there where he hopes for relief, by denying him justice, much less by false accusations, when he comes into the public courts of judgement, (2 Sam. xv. 2.). See Arg. [g]

Ver. 23. **For the Lord will plead their cause,** and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.] For all causes shall be heard over again, by a higher Judge, even the Lord himself, who will do them right, and force their spoilers to pay dearly for the wrong, they have done them, for which nothing less than their life shall make satisfaction.

Ver. 24. **Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go.** And as there is nothing more necessary than a friend, so a principal point of wisdom consists in the choice of him, concerning which, observe this rule among others, not to enter into any familiarity with a man prone to anger; and the more furious he is, be so much the more cautious of being drawn along with him into any company. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 25. **Let thine ears be wise, and incline thy ear to my words.** For it will be a very hard matter to preserve thyself in good temper, when he is out of humour; but thy very kindness to him will make thee feel the same commotion; nay, bring thy very life into great danger, by being engaged in all his quarrels.

Ver. 26. **Be not thou one of them that striketh hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.** And do not keep company with those who are forward to pass their word, and give security for the payment of other men’s debts, lest they draw thee into such dangerous engagements, (vi. 1. xi. 15.), especially when thou hast no estate to answer the debt for which thou art bound. See Arg. [i]

Ver. 27. **If thou hast nothing to pay, why should be take away thy bed from under thee?** For it will highly incense the creditor when he fails upon thee, to find thou art not able a man, as thou madest a show of to him, and so provoke him to pull away the very bed from under thee, when thou art in it, and leave thee shamefully and wretchedly upon the ground; for why should any man have so little care of his own good, as thus to expose himself to such miserable straits for the sake of another?

Ver. 28. **Remove not the ancient land-mark which thy fathers have set.** Be content with thy own estate, and do not seek to enlarge it by invading other men’s possessions; especially those to which they have an unquestionable right, having enjoyed them by long prescription, and by the consent of thy forefathers, whose constitutions ought to be had in great veneration. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 29. **Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.** Mark a man that is not rash, but yet quick and dextrous in the dispatch of any business he is charged withal; and thou mayest foretell that he shall not long continue obscure, in some private and mean family, but be taken notice of, and preferred to the service of his prince, in some public ministry.

G H A P. XXIII.

The Argument.—[a] As the foregoing chapter concludes with an observation concerning the qua-
ulty of a person, who is most likely to come to preferment, so this begins with a caution to him, when he is promoted to it. For the first verse is (as Melanthon calls it) *Aulcit admonitio*, an. admonition to a courtier; remembering him that there is danger even in the favour, especially in the familiarity, of princes and great men. Whose kindness must be used with much modesty and circumspection; especially if they be so extraordinary kind, as to admit an inferior to eat with them; when, if a man use not great moderation, he loses the guard he ought to have upon himself. For his head growing hot, his tongue may run, as we say, before his wit; his behaviour may be indecent, or too negligent, &c.; and therefore Solomon advises such persons to be very considerate at that time above all others, and with earnest attention to mind both who and what is before him, (for the Hebrew words may refer to both, as I have explained it in the paraphrase) there being great danger of his ruin, if he give any offence at such a time, when the passions of the prince or ruler are apt to be as disordered as his own. And therefore had need be watched, that he may know how to appease them presently, and so govern himself, as to receive no prejudice thereby.

But especially he must be sure to have a command over his tongue, (which Melanthon takes to be the meaning of putting a knife to his throat, ver. 2.) that it take not too much liberty, and that he speak nothing rashly; which may undo him, as it did Clitus, whom Alexander slew at a feast, for contradicting with that counsel with which Æsop gave Solon, when he was going to Crethus; speak to a king, *sit as quaeso, sit as throna*, either as little, or so sweet, as is possible. But this is too narrow a sense of that phrase, "put a knife to thy throat;" thought it be a part of it. For it expresses the exceeding great caution a man should use at a feast, lest he exceed his bounds in eating and drinking; wherein he should be as careful as he is of cutting his throat; which many have in effect done by intemperance; whereby some have utterly destroyed their healths at last; and others fallen into such a liberty of speech, as hath on a sudden cost them their lives. Be as afraid, therefore, saith the wise man, of running into excess, (of which thou art in great danger at a great table, if thou hast a great stomach,) as if thy knife wherein thou'rt cuttest thy meat, would certainly cut thy throat, if thou eatest too much. In short, he advises a man to affright himself from intemperance, where is a great temptation to it.

There are those indeed that take the first particle, *et*, in the beginning of the verse, to signify as much as otherwise; and the meaning to be, "if thou dost not curb thy appetite, but let loose its reins to eat and drink as much, as it desireth, it will expose thee to as certain danger, as if a knife were at thy throat;" which, though it be not so easy a construction, I have not altogether neglected.

[c] After this follows an admonition against covetousness, ver. 4; where he neither forbids all labour, nor a provident care, (which in other places he commends), but only represents how vain it is to be over solicitous, and to leave no thoughts, nor strength, for any thing else; for so the first word is, Do not weary thyself to be rich. And in the next part of the sentence, he only bids us desist from our own understanding; meaning thereby, either we should not wholly trust to that, though in the use of honest means; or that we should not follow our own inventions, contrary to the divine direction. Some would have the meaning of the whole to be this; do not prefer the getting of riches, before the getting of wisdom; taking the verse as if it ran thus: "Labour not for riches, so as to cease from the prosecution of wisdom!" Let not thy worldly cares hinder better things, and then there is no danger; which is an excellent sense, if the words would bear it.

[d] The reason which Solomon adds, ver. 5, hath little or no difficulty in it; which is from the uncertainty, either of getting or of keeping riches. Whose inconstancy he sets forth by the flight of an eagle; which of all other birds is observed to fly swiftest and highest into heaven, (as Solomon here speaks,) or into the clouds, (as other authors,) that is, quite out of sight. Whence it is that, God saying he carried the Israelites out of Egypt upon eagles' wings, Exod. xix. 4. R. Solomon (upon Exod. xii. 37.) took a conceit that they went an hundred and twenty miles in one hour; for so far it was from Ramases to Succoth. Which though it be but an idle fancy, yet there was this foundation for it; that the scripture expresses the swiftest motion by that of the eagles. So Saul and Jonathan, who were strong and excellent racers, pursuing the enemies with great speed, are said to have been swifter than eagles, 2 Sam. i. 23. And such were they who pursued Zedekiah, and the people of Judah, when they fled out of Jerusalem, in hope to make an escape, Lam. iv. 19. Hab. i. 8. compared with 2 Kings, xxv. 4. 5. And thus other nations represent it, as Bochartus observes out of Cicero, who tells us out of Chrysippus, that when a racer dreamed he was turned into an eagle, an interpreter told him, *Vincti, ista enim ave volat nulla velocitatis.*

[e] Next to covetousness he condemns envy, as Melanthon and others understand, ver. 6. &c. or rather such covetousness as makes men sordid; whence arises indeed that part of envy, which disposeth a man to grudge every thing to his neighbour, though he would be thought liberal; which I pass by only with this note of that good man; that a singular diligence ought to be used, in observing and finding out the dispositions and inclinations of others, that we may know whom to avoid, and whom to consort withal. And (according as he
understands the beginning of the next verse, ver. 7.) there is none worse than the man now mentioned, who hath a spectre or satyr in his soul; so he renders it, mistaking Schaar for Saar; which are widely different. And this word Schaar, being used only here in this place, hath raised a great deal of difficulty, whence to derive it; which I shall not trouble the reader withal, the sense being well enough expressed in our translation, and in short is this, "He is not what he seems;" his thoughts differ much from his words; and therefore do not believe what he saith, but mark the discovery he makes of his inward thoughts, which are so sordid, that he is detestable, as some render the phrase, or sloppingly base.

[f] Of envy at the prosperous estate of wicked men, which makes others wish themselves in their condition, though it be by imitating their wickedness, he speaks afterwards, ver. 17. From whence to the 25th chapter, most of the precepts are admonitions proper for parents to give their children; that they may know what to eschew; particularly drunkenness and whoredom, (of which he speaks in this chapter,) and such company as may entice them to be so lewdly wickeded. And in order hereunto, to implant in their minds a due esteem of wisdom, as infinitely to be preferred before all earthly treasures. This he inserts in the middle, between the cautions against drunkenness and whoredom, [g] ver. 23.; upon which the Lord所说 hath passed; and in this remark, that the wise man judged it reasonable, that "riches should be employed to get learning, and not learning be applied to gather up riches." 

[h] S. Chrysostom's observation concerning an harlot, (Hom. xiv. ad Pop. Antioch.) most excellently explains, ver. 27. 28. that ἀντ μικρὸν ἄλλα διακόσιον πίεσιν, "a whore understands nothing of love or friendship, but only of the art of envying. Her heart is never sensible of true affection, but is made up of wills to deceive and entrap men unto their undoing. And if the danger do not appear, she is the more to be avoided, ἕξετε γὰρ ἐκδει γενομαι, &c. because she governs the destruction, and hides the death; and takes care it shall not presently come into the sight of him, whom she ensnares into it.

[i] In the conclusion of the chapter, he resumes his discourse about drunkenness; and represents at large the dismal effects of it in so lively a manner, as may well deter any man, that reads it seriously from being too busy with wine. Which, he saith in conclusion, bites like a serpent, and stings like a basilisk; (so Bochartus hath proved we ought to translate the word Teipboni, which we render adder;) whence it was that Tatianus, the Encraticites and Manichees, called wine "the gall of the dragon, and the venom of the old serpent," and would not taste a drop of it, no, not in the holy communion. Not considering what lies open and obvious to every body's eyes, that there is no hurt in the thing itself, (which is a singular divine benefit,) but in our excess. Whereby innumerable diseases are bred in the body, the reason for the present suffocated, and the most absurd affections stirred up; which change men for the time into beasts. Some into lions, as Bochartus glosses, (I. iiii. c. 2. p. 2.) witness Alexander, who killed his dearest friend in his cups, and Herod, who after a feast condemned the great servant of God, John the Baptist, (whom he himself highly reverenced,) to be beheaded; others into dogs, as Nabal, who most rudely and churlishly barked at David, to whom he had great obligations, when he was in drink; others into hogs, wallowing in filthy pleasures; as Lot, who defiled himself with incest, when he was not himself; nay, it throws men down below the beasts, who drink no more than needs, and never excite their thirst by art, but only follow the directions of nature. All which, if any man consider, he will easily allow of what Solomon says, that it "bites like a serpent," &c. that is, doth more mischief than can be repaired. For the wound which the basilisk gives, is said by Avicenna to be incurable; and the writers of his nation say, it doth hurt even by its looks and hissing, as that author before named relates, cap. ix. And so Solomon immediately represents the effects of drunkenness to be such, that they make a man senseless, and perfectly stupid; and consequently incorrigible, though he suffer never so sadly by it, ver. 34. 35. "As if this poison made a mortification in the whole man, for which there is no remedy."

Ver. 1. WHEN thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee.

When a prince, or a very great person, doth thee the honour to admit thee to his table, be not transported with such vain joy, as to remit the seriousness of thy mind; but remember thou art in danger, if thou hast not thy wits about thee to direct thy behaviour; lest thou touch any thing, which perhaps was reserved only for the prince's own eating, or demean thyself indecently towards him, or towards any of the guests or waiters at the table. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Especially lest thou speak too freely, which may hazard thy undying; for the prevention of which, keep thy mind as sharp as thine appetite, and afflict thyself from intemperance in language, as well as in eating; of which there is the greater danger, if thou hast a greedy desire of meat and drink. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 3. Be not desirous of his dainties; for they are deceitful meat. Most especially when exquisite delicacies are set before thee; which are so tempting, that it is a piece of wisdom not to be too forward to accept of such invitations; or being there, to content thyself with the plainest dish; for it was not kind nor fair, but design perhaps, which called thee thither, as thou mayest be easily enticed by such dainties to over-eat thyself.

Ver. 4. Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom. Do not trouble thyself with restless and
tiresome labours to get a great estate; be not too thoughtful, nor let thy cares be endless about such matters; much less use any ill contrivances which they may suggest to thee; nor do depend so much upon thy own prudent management for the success of thy honest undertakings, as upon God's blessings. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 5. [Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings, they fly like an eagle towards heaven.] Consider, for the care of this, how ridiculous it is, that thou shouldst let thy mind be so intent upon riches, and pursue them, with such haste and earnestness, which perhaps thou, cannot never catch; or if thou dost, may be gone as fast as they came; and by all thy care and pains never be recovered. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 6. Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye; neither desire thou his dainty meats.] Receive no obligations from a sordid man; but though he invite thee to a feast, (which he may perhaps make some times for ostentation's sake,) let not thy good cheer tempt thee to accept his invitation. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 7. For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he; eat and drink, saith he (to thee, but his heart is not with thee.) For, even then, when he would be thought most free and generous, he is not able to dissemble the baseness of his mind, which expresses itself in his very looks; whereby he shows that when he prays thee to feed heartily, he would, rather thou wouldst lay it alone, and thinks thou eatest and drinkest a great deal too much.

Ver. 8. The wanton which thou hast eaten, sault thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.] Which will make thee so nauseous, as to be ready to bring up again every bit thou hast eaten; and to repent of the commendations thou hast bestowed on his entertainment; or the thanks thou hast returned to him for it; or the wholesome discourse thou hast interspersed at the table; for it is all perfectly lost upon him.

Ver. 9. Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.] And indeed it is good advice, not to speak of any serious thing to such stupid fools; for, by discourse never so ingenious, prudent, or instructive, they will not only reap no profit by it, but despise and perhaps laugh at it.

Ver. 10. Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless.] What was said before, (xxii. 28.), of not removing the ancient boundaries, understand with a peculiar respect to fatherless children, whose possessions be not tempted to invade, because they are in their infancy, and do not understand the wrong that is done them; or are utterly unable to defend or to right themselves.

Ver. 11. For their Redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with them.] For, if their guardians and friends be careless of their concerns, or afraid to oppose thy proceedings, they, have a protector, who neither wants power nor courage to recover their right; and will undoubtedly assert it, and condemn thee to make them ample satisfaction, xxxii. 23.

Ver. 12. Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.] And do not think these to be slight admonitions, which need not much to be regarded, but apply thy mind with sincere affection to such instructions, and listen diligently to those persons whose discourses tend to make thee understand thy duty.

Ver. 13. With bold not correction from thy child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.] Unto which children sometimes will not attend; and therefore remember what hath been often said, (xxii. 24. xix. 18. xxii. 15.), and do not forbear to give correction to a child that is so ill-disposed; let not foolish pity make thee spare him, for it will do him no hurt if he be soundly beaten, but rather be a means to give him from soror punishment, even from death itself.

Ver. 14. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.] Do not turn over this business to another, but do it thyself, which may save the public officers the labour; nay, by making his body smart for his faults, both body and soul may be delivered from utter destruction.

Ver. 15. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.] But mix the kindest exhortations and entreaties with this discipline, saying: My dear child, if thou hast any love for me, who was the instrument of bringing thee into the world, be serious, and heartily in love with wisdom and goodness, which will give me, me I say, (not to mention new thy own happiness), a joy incomparably greater than all other.

Ver. 16. Tre, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.] A joy that may be better felt than expressed; diffusing itself all over me, and making my mind triumph when I hear no ill words come out of thy mouth, but only discourses of the right way to be happy.

Ver. 17. Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.] In which that thou mayest always tread, be not offended at the prosperity of the wicked; much less vex and fret thyself into an imitation of them, but maintain perpetually an awful sense of God in thy mind; which is the best preservative against envy and all other sins, if thou perseverest constantly in it. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 18. For surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off.] Which there is great reason thou shouldst; for be assured, thou art affected for the present, the time will come, when thou shalt not only be delivered, but rewarded for thy patience; expect it confidently, if the fear of the Lord make thee persist in faithful obedience to him; for it shall not be in the power of men to disappoint thee of thy hope; but thou shalt certainly flourish when those wicked men shall hang down their heads and perish.

Ver. 19. Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.] And more particularly, my dear child, be advised by me to study this piece of wisdom, and to follow closely and heartily this direction which I commend to thee.

Ver. 20. Be not among wine-bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh.] I know how greedy youth is of pleasure, and in what danger to be, corrupted by it;
therefore avoid the society of drunkards and gluttons, and take heed of all excess in eating and drinking.

Ver. 21. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drawness shall clothe a man with rags. For, besides that it is an enemy to wisdom, it brings men to poverty, which is the common effect of reveling, feasting, and riotous living; for that is wont to be attended also with laziness, carelessness, and neglect of all business, which necessarily reduces men to extreme beggary.

Ver. 22. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Be obedient to this counsel, which is given thee by thy father, who loves thee, and hath had longer experience of the world than thou, and, by bringing thee into it, hath power to command thee; and do not slight (as the manner is) what thy mother saith, because she is a woman; much less because she is grown old, which ought to make her advice the more regarded by thee.

Ver. 23. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. Spare no cost nor pains to acquire the knowledge of what is true and false, good and bad, and do not think there is any thing of equal price unto it, though it were to get never so much money, or the highest honours; but prefer wisdom and virtue, and the means that instruct thee how to attain it, and to make thee able to do good to others, infinitely before them all. See Arg. [8]

Ver. 24. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice, and he that begetteth a wise child, shall have joy of him. For there is no greater joy a parent can have, than to see his son take virtuous courses; which as it is the wisdom, so gives both parents and children the highest pleasure and satisfaction.

Ver. 25. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. Let not thy father and mother, then, want this singular pleasure; but by thy well-doing fill the heart of her that bare thee with joy and triumph; who for all the pains and care she hath had in thy birth, and about thy education, desires no other requital but only this.

Ver. 26. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. And more especially, my dear child, let me prevail with thee also to apply thy mind affecionately to this following instruction; and let thy thoughts be very intent and fixed upon it; that thou mayest preserve thyself in the practice of those virtues to which I have directed thee.

Ver. 27. For an whore is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit. Estrange thyself from harlots, as much as they are estranged from God; for (as I have told thee before, xxii. 14.) thou art utterly undone, if thou fallest in league with a whore, who will never be satisfied with all the money thou canst give her; and yet, such are her arts, notwithstanding all the straits and hardships thou shalt suffer by her, it will be hard matter, when thou art once engaged, to get quit of her.

Ver. 28. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. She is not what she appears, but, whatsoever love she may pretend to thee, is no better than a highway robber, who will watch all opportunities to make a prey of thee; and is of no other use in the world, which already is too bad, but to make it worse, by increasing the number of lewd, disloyal, and faithless men. See Arg. [9]

Ver. 29. Who hath wars? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? And if thou intendest to avoid such women, then (as I said before, ver. 26.) avoid intemperance, the lamentable effects of which are so many, that it is a hard matter to enumerate them; for if thou considerest, who they are that run themselves into all manner of mischief, that are never out of danger, but are engaged, for instance, in quarrels, disturbing the neighbourhood by their noise and tumult, and fighting, and are wounded, not for the safety of their country, but for frivolous causes, look deformedly, and spoil their very countenances.

Ver. 30. They that tarry long in the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine. Thou wilt find they are such as are so in love with wine, that they neither willingly stir from it, nor content themselves with the ordinary sort; but make a diligent search for the richest and most generous liquors.

Ver. 31. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. Therefore do not believe thy senses merely, but consider the power and effects of wine; and when thou seest how bright it looks, and how it sparkles in the glass, when it tastes most gratefully, and goes down smoothly, let it not entice thee to excess.

Ver. 32. As the hart is eaten like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. But remember, that the pleasure will be attended at last with intolerable pains, when it works like so much poison in the veins, and casts thee into diseases, as hard to cure as the biting of a serpent, or the stinging of a basilisk. See Arg. [7]

Ver. 33. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Thy thoughts will not only grow confused, and all things appear to thee otherwise than they are, but lustful, naughtful desires will be stirred up, which thou canst not rule, and thy mouth, being without a bride, wilt break forth into unseemly, naughtish, scurrilous, or perhaps blasphemous language, without respect to God or man.

Ver. 34. Ten, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. And, which is worst of all, thou wilt grow so perfectly senseless, that thy most important business will not only lie neglected, but thou wilt sottishly run thyself into the extremest hazards, without any apprehension of danger; being no more able to direct thy course than a pilot who strouts when a ship is tossed in the midst of the sea; or to take notice of the peril thou art in, than he that falls asleep on the top of the mast, where he was set to keep the watch.

Ver. 35. They have strucken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again. And,
to complete thy misery; shouldst thou be not only mocked and abused, but beaten also, thou thyself wilt confess afterward, that it made no impression on thee; nay, shouldst thou be most lamentably battered and bruised, thou wilt neither know who did it, nor at all regard it, but as if no harm had befallen thee, no sooner open thy eyes, but stupidly seek an occasion to be drunk and beaten again.

Chap. XXIV.

The Argument.—[a] The proumness of good men, especially while they are weak, and only in the beginnings of goodness, to be dejected at the prosperity of the ungodly, and so to be tempted to imitate them, is the reason that the admonition we meet withal in the first verse is so often repeated. Which we find before, ill. xxxii. ix. and comes again, ver. 18. of this chapter.

[b] And, in like manner, for the encouragement of well-disposed persons, to depend upon God's blessing, in the exercise of a virtuous prudence, for the getting, increasing, and preserving an estate, (ver. 9. 10.), he repeats another observation, (ver. 6. 7.), of the advantage which wisdom hath over mere strength; which we had several times before, xi. 14-15. 22. 23. 18.

[c] And then, having shewn that it is not wisdom to invent new ways of doing hurt, (ver. 8. 9.), he advises diligence in the acquiring of true wisdom, while we are in a good condition; for else we shall not be able to support ourselves when adversity comes. So some understand ver. 10., which we translate otherwise, and so do most interpreters; and therefore I have expressed the sense of our translation first, and only annexed the other to it.

There is a third, which I have taken no notice of in my paraphrase, because it doth not seem to me to be genuine, which is this: 'If adversity be not the break thy spirit, thou wilt be so much the more unable to get out of it.' But it is an excellent observation, and therefore I thought good here to mention it; though the simplest sense seems to be that which we follow, and in brief is this:

Then art not a man of courage, if thou canst not bear adversity with an equal mind.

[d] And there is a courage to be exercised in our charitable succouring of others, as well as in our own distresses, which he commends in the following words, ver. 11. 21. Where he presses with a great deal of warmth (as will appear to those that understand the Hebrew language, and read the last words with an interrogation) the necessity of giving our assistance for the reserving of innocent persons, (when they are in danger), either by recommending them, or petitioning others in their behalf, or purchasing their release with money, or using our authority or power (if we have any, and can do it lawfully), for their deliverance. For this chiefly belongs to magistrates, and those that are in public offices, who ought not to be overawed by great men, from undertaking the protection and relief of those who are unjustly oppressed. This I think Melancthon hath expressed, as well or better than any I have met withal, in this manner: 'God commands both the magistrates and private men, not to murder the innocent, and likewise not to assist unjust cruelty. But quite contrary, the magistrate ought to be the guardian of innocent men's lives; and private persons in their places ought to oppose, without sedition, unjust severity, as much as they are able. There are many examples of this in the scripture. Jonathan opposed his father, and helped to preserve David, not only by the good testimony he gave of him, but by other good offices. Obadiah fed the prophets, whom Jezebel designed to have killed. The eunuch pulled up Jeremiah out of the dungeon, and the Egyptian midwives saved the Israelites' children, as Rahab afterwards did the spies. In the time of Dioclesian, a noble person, in the city of Nicomedia in Bithynia, publicly tore down the edict of the Emperor for putting Christians to death, that he might shew he detested that unjust cruelty.—Examples to the contrary are such as that of Doeg, who, in compliance with Saul's fury, slew the innocent priests; and many now, either openly or by the violence, confirm the unjust severity which is exercised against our churches. Let such think of these words of Solomon, 'If thou forbear to deliver them,' &c.

[e] Who shews with what pleasure such instructions should be received, and how profitable, nay, necessary, they are, by the example of honey, (ver. 13. 14.), which was not only reckoned the sweetest thing in those countries, (as appears by many places of scripture), but one of those which was most necessary for human life, as appears by the words of the son of Sirach, xxxix. 42. For it was useful for food, for drink, for medicine, for preserving of dead bodies, and was so natural to them, that it seems to have been the food of infants, Isa. vii. 15. Whence the ancient Christians were wont to give a little milk and honey to those who were baptized, as persons newly regenerate and born again, because honey, as well as milk, was the nutriment of little children in those days and countries. How refreshing it was, appears by the story of Joppathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 17, and in what common use, by the example of our Saviour after his resurrection, Luke, xxiv. 41. 42. Which may all be applied to wisdom, from whence the mind derives the greatest satisfaction, and therefore ought to be as it were, our daily diet, (without which we cannot subsist), from the beginning of our days unto the end of them.

[f] For many gracious promises are made to it, which must not be so understood, he shows, as if an evil thing should befall good men; but as wisdom teaches them to be content with a little, (which seems to be degotied by the word which we translate habitation, ver. 15.), so when they meet with any affliction, it instructs them not to despair of better
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days. So those words are to be understood, ver. 16. Which are commonly, not only in sermons, but in books also, applied to falling into sin; and that men may the more securely indulge themselves in their sins, and yet think themselves good men, they have very cunningly added something to them. For they are commonly cited thus, “A just man falleth seven times a day,” which last words (a day, or in a day) are not in any translation of the Bible, (much less in the original), but only in some corrupt editions of the vulgar Latin; which, against the plain scope of the context, and meaning of the words, seems to understand this place of falling into sin. When the word falls, never signifies so, but always trouble and calamity; as abundance of learned men have long ago observed, particularly Tarnovius, and since him, Ammian and Grotius. Nor needs there any other proof of it, than those places (which are many) wherein falling and rising again, being opposed, both of them have respect to calamities; and the former signifies, being plunged into them, and the other getting out of them. And so, in the Latin tongue, adversities are called, caput, falls, as every body knows.

And therefore we must make use of other places, for the confuting the fancy of perfection in this life, and for the comfort of those who are cast down by their lapses into sin; and take heed of reading the holy scripture so carelessly, as to turn our medicine into poison, which is the fault of those, who, from such mistakes, give way to their evil affections, and let them carry them into sin.

[8] Against this there follows a severe caution, in the wise man, who would not have us so much as indulge ourselves in that pleasure we are apt to take in seeing our enemies fall into such troubles, as they have given us, ver. 17. And to this he adds another, which cannot be too often repeated, (ver. 19.), against fretting at the prosperity of those who do ill; which he often prohibits, but doth it now in the words of his father David, Psal. xxxvii. 1. whose authority was justly held very great in that church; and who had made many observations, from his own experience, of the shortness of their felicity, and the sudden changes with which they were often surprized and astonished.

[9] An instance he gives of this in the next precept, (ver. 21, 22.), which, said Melanthon, (so careful were the reformers to prevent all sedition and rebellion), is to be reckoned among the principal sentences that are to be observed in this book, commanding obedience, and directing the order of it. “For first he commands us to obey God; and then the king; whose office it is to see the laws of God observed by his subjects, and to make such laws as are not repugnant to God’s laws, and to punish the contumacies, and to pronounce all sentences according to the laws, &c. And in dubious cases, their decrees ought to prevail, not only because there is a probable reason on their side, but because of the authority given from above unto magistrates; whom God would have us in civil affairs, though dubious before, to obey. And because God gives us sometimes more mild and gentle, sometimes less kind, he would have us also to bear one another, if they be tolerable, and obedience be not a sin. For he threatens here a severe vengeance to those that are seditious; so he translates the word scholim, which the Chaldee translates fools, (chaoselings, in our language), for they are no better, who invent and change this order, (as some understand the word), either by advancing the will of the prince above all law, without any regard to what God himself hath enacted, or by pretending religion and the fear of the Lord, for rebellion against the king, who ordains nothing against God’s law.”

[10] But there is no necessity of glossing upon that word, (which we render given to change), for though it be diversely translated, the sense is still the same. And some of the varieties that are of opinions about the sense of the latter part of the 2d. verse, I have expressed in the paraphrase, and made them agree well enough. Lud. de Dieu is alone by himself, (as far as I can find), who would have that word we render both of them, to signify their years: and the meaning to be, Who knows how soon their life may be a miserable end?

Among the following sentences, which are rules also of wisdom, there is no difficulty, but a little in ver. 26. and 28. where I have endeavoured to comprehend several expressions, and connect them together in my paraphrase; but think not fit to enlarge this place any further, by giving a particular account of them.

Ver. 1. Be thou not curious against evil men, neither desire to be with them. Let it not vex thee into impatience and indignation, to see men thrive, who are bent upon nothing but wickedness; much less move thee to think them happy, and to wish thyself among them; but avoid their company, and much more their course of life. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief. For he would grow rich and great by the misery of others, and such men’s thoughts are always contriving how to ruin those who stand in the way of their wicked designs, and their tongues are employed in lies, calumnies, false accusations, and all manner of forgeries, not only to give trouble and vexation unto their neighbours, but to undo them.

Ver. 3. Through wisdom is an house built, and by understanding is it established. An estate may be gotten, and a family raised, by such wise and pious means: as are recommended in this book: and there need no other arts but virtue and prudent management to edify and continue it.

Ver. 4. And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. For as true learning and knowledge is the best furniture of the mind, so it is the best able to furnish every room in
the house, not only with all things necessary, but with what may serve for ornament and for the pleasure of life.

Ver. 5. A wise man is strong, yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.] Wisdom is also able to supply the defect of bodily strength, for a man's defence against unjust invaders of his possessions; or if he have outward strength and power, his skill and dexterity will add such force unto it, as will make it more effectual.

Ver. 6. For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war; and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.] For experience tells us, that victory doth not depend so much upon mighty armies, as upon exact conduct, good discipline, subtle contrivance; and the safety of a nation doth not lie merely in the multitude of the people, but in the number of wise men, to direct and govern all affairs, (xi, 14.)

Ver. 7. Wisdom is too high for a fool: be openeth not his mouth in the gate.] Who are the more valuable, because it is no easy thing to be an accomplished person in all the parts of wisdom, which are above the reach of vain, rash, and heady men, who are not admitted either to judge or to advise in the common council of the city, where wise men are not afraid nor ashamed to speak, and that with great authority.

Ver. 8. He that deviseth to do evil, shall be called a mischievous person.] He that deviseth new ways and arts of cheating, or doing mischief unto others, is one of the worst of men, and shall be branded with the odious name of an inventor of evil things, (Rom. i. 30.)

Ver. 9. The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorners are an abomination to men.] To contrive any thing that is hurtful unto others, though out of rashness and folly, is a sin; but he that makes a jest of it when it is done, and laughs at those who tell him it is a sin, is such a pestilent wretch, that he is ought to be extremely abhorred of all mankind.

Ver. 10. If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is swine.] To despond and desist from any good design, much more to despair of deliverance when thou fallst into any distress, is an argument of great weakness and feebleness of mind; and yet, if thou art mindful of the study of wisdom in a prosperous condition, thy spirit will be apt to sink and be depressed in a worse.

Ver. 11. If thou forsake to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain.] Use thy best endeavours to deliver innocent persons, who by false accusations, or other ways, are dragged to execution, or are in present danger of losing their life; and do not think thou canst with a safe con science withdraw thyself from succouring them in that distress.

Ver. 12. If thou sayest, Behold, we know it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not be rendre to every man according to his works?] I know the common excuse which men are apt to make in this case, protesting that they did not understand their innocence, or how to save them; but dost thou think such things will pass with God, though they do with men? canst thou deceive him with false pretences? him, that searcheth into the secrets of all men's hearts? him, that observeth every the very least motion of thy soul? by whose wise providence, which serves all men in their kind, thou thyself shalt be deserted, as thou hast deserted others. See Arg.

Ver. 13. My son, eat thou honey, because it is good: and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste.] Do not slight, much less nauseate, such precepts as these, my dear child; but as honey is most acceptable to thy palate, both for its wholesomeness and for its pleasure, especially that pure part of it which drops of itself immediately from the honeycomb. See Arg.

Ver. 14. So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul; when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.] So let that knowledge be to thy mind, which tends to make thee wise and virtuous; for as nothing is more necessary for thee, nothing more delightful, so, if it be seriously studied and thoroughly digested, it will abundantly reward thy pains with prosperous success in all thy undertakings, and never put thee in hope of any thing which shall not answer thy expectation.

Ver. 15. Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous: spoil not his resting-place.] It is possible, indeed, that a good man's condition may be very mean, nay, afflicted some time in this world; but let not that tempt the wicked subtly to contrive to ruin, much less by open violence to disturb his innocent repose, nay, cast him out of his small habitation, with which he is contented.

Ver. 16. For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief.] For though a good man should meet with so many troubles, that thou imagines he cannot fail to perish in them, he shall overcome them all, and flourish again, when the wicked shall sink under the calamity that befalls them, and never be able to recover out of it. See Arg.

Ver. 17. Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.] It is a great piece of wisdom and virtue also, to pity others in their trouble, and not to shew any sign of joy and mirth, when thou seest any man, though he be thy enemy, in a calamitous condition; no, not so much as (upon thy own account) to take any inward pleasure in his downfall.

Ver. 18. Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and be turn away his wrath from him.] For though nobody sees it, God doth; and such inhumane affections are so displeasing to him, that they may provoke him to translate the calamity from thy enemy unto thee, and thereby damp thy sinful joy with a double sorrow; first, to see him delivered from his trouble, and then to find thyself involved in it.

Ver. 19. Prit not thyself because of evil men, neither
Let not thine anger kindle, or if it do, quench it presently, that it may not tempt thee to impatience, when thou seest men thrive and prosper; and do not imagine them to be happy men, and thereby be provoked to follow them in their impious courses. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 20. For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. For though a wicked man may live bravely for a time, yet it shall end quite otherwise than he expected; and his splendour, (such as it is,) if not in his own days, yet in his posterity, be utterly extinguished.

Ver. 21. My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change. Take care therefore, my dear child, that thy religion (which teaches thee in the first place to worship, reverence, and obey the great Lord and governor of all the world) make thee humbly obedient to the king, as God's vicegerent here on earth; and have nothing to do with those whose discontent with the present state of things, or their love of novelty, makes them effect a change of government, and depart from duty both to God and man. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 22. For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both? For an unexpected and dreadful calamity shall unavoidably and violently seize on them; but when and how either God or the king will punish them none can tell, or what terrible vengeance they will take, both upon those that move rebellion, and those that associate with them. See Arg. [i]

Ver. 23. These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect to persons in judgment. These things also that follow, belong to the wise and virtuous conduct of thy life. It is a very evil thing, if thou art a judge, to consider the quality of the person, (either his greatness, or his relation, or the friendship thou hast with him, &c,) and not the merits of the cause that is brought before thee.

Ver. 24. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him. And whoever he be, that, contrary to the plain evidence which is given in against the wicked, shall pronounce him innocent, and make a bad cause to be good, the whole country shall curse him, and wish the divine vengeance shall overtake him; nay, other nations, who hear of his unjust proceedings, shall have him in great detestation.

Ver. 25. But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. But they that give a check to vice and wickedness, by punishing evil-doers according to their deserts, shall not only have inward satisfaction in their own mind, but increase of joy, by hearing others speak well of them; nay, God himself, the fountain of all good, shall plentifully bestow his blessings upon them.

Ver. 26. Every man shall kiss his lips, that giveth a right answer. It is not only justice, but kindness, to pass a righteous sentence, without fear or favour; and upon all occasions to speak appositely and consonant to truth; and as such persons give others a singular pleasure, so they shall be beloved most dearly, and honoured by all.

Ver. 27. Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and after wards build thine house. Do every thing in order; and first mind those things which are most necessary; contenting thyself with a little hut in the field, till thou hast gotten an estate, by a careful improvement of thy pasturage, and of thy tillage; and then it will be timely enough to build thee an house, and to bring a wife into it.

Ver. 28. Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and desirous not with thy lips. Do not testify anything against thy neighbour rashly, much less when thou hast no ground at all for the accusation; nor seduce any body into a false opinion of him, by crafty insinuation; much less suborn them secretly by promises of rewards, to say that which is not true of him; when outwardly thou carrist thyself to him, and pretendest to be his friend.

Ver. 29. Say not, I will do so to him, as he hath done to me; I will render to him according to his work. Suppose he hath been injurious in that kind to thee heretofore, and thou hast now an opportunity to be revenged; let not that tempt thee to resolve with thyself to do to him as he hath done to thee; taking upon thee that which God hath declared belongs to himself alone, (Deut. xxxii. 35,) to recompense unto him according to his deservings.

Ver. 30. I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And, to that which I have just now said, (ver. 27,) concerning diligence, I will add this observation; which I myself made, as I took a view of the state of my subjects, among whom I found one so lazy and void of consideration, that though he had good land in the field, and a fruitful vineyard,

Ver. 31. And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof; and the stone-wall thereof was broken down. Yet, such was his wretched sloth, instead of corn, I was surprised with the sight of thorns and thistles, which had over-run the whole field; nor was there anything but nettles to be seen in his vineyard; or if there had been any fruit in either, it would have been lost for want of a fence, which was fallen down, and laid all open to the beasts of prey.

Ver. 32. Then I saw, and considered it well; I looked upon it, and received instruction. Which useful spectacle so deeply affected my heart, and brought so many thoughts into my mind, that I learnt, by beholding those miserable effects of idleness, to cure that vice in myself, and to correct it in others.

Ver. 33. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. And I cannot do it better, than in those words before used, (vi. 10. 11.) If thou wilt not rouze up thyself, O sluggard! but, calling thyself on thy bed, ridiculously desire thy pains may be spared, and that thou mayest still be suffered without any disturbance to enjoy a little more sleep, and to lay aside all care of thy business, when thou hast loitered too long already.
Ver. 34. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.] Then poverty shall come swiftly (though in silent and unobserved paces) upon thee; and before thou art aware, leave thee as naked as if thou wert stript by a highway-man; nay, the most extreme want and beggary shall unavoidably seize on thee, like an armed man, against whom thou canst make no resistance.

END OF THE SECOND PART OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

THE THIRD PART OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

CHAP. XXV.

The Argument.—[a] Here begins the Third Part of the Book of Proverbs; which are a collection made by some belonging to Hezekiah; and acknowledged here, (in the entrance of the book), as well as the former, to be Solomon's. Who spake a great many proverbs, (we read 1 Kings, iv. 32.), which no doubt were preserved by his successors in a book; if he did not set them down there himself. Out of which volume, some good men had selected such as they thought most useful for the people; and besides those in the foregoing chapters, which had been compiled, either in his own days, or soon after, these also which follow were thought good to be added in the days of Hezekiah. Who restoring the service of God in the temple to its purity and splendour, (2 Chron. xxix. 3. &c. xxxi. 2. 3. &c.), took care, in all likelihood, for the better instruction of the people in piety, to revive the schools of the prophets also; and to press them (as he had done the priests) to do their duty faithfully, in teaching the laws of God, and informing the people in all things that might be profitable for them. Out of which schools some were chosen, it is probable, to attend the king himself, who are called his men or servants; who out of their great zeal to promote useful learning, called out more proverbs from among that great heap of three thousand, (which would have been too great a bulk to have been all published, and perhaps all of them not concerning manners, or good government), and such especially as they saw would do good to the prince, as well as to the people; of which nature are those that are put into this collection, many of which belong to the right administration of the public affairs. I am not able to produce express authority for all this; but I think it may be fairly conjectured from those words, 2 Chron. xxxi. 1.; ult. where we read of the pains Hezekiah took about the law, and about the commandments, as well as about the service of the house of God.

But who the persons were that he employed in transcribing these proverbs out of the ancient records, is more obscure. Some of the Hebrews say, Shebna the scribe, and his officers or clerks, that were under the principal secretary. Others add Eliaikim and Josh, (who are joined together in 2 Kings, xviii. 26. 37.) Others fancy them to have been Esaiach, (a person of great quality, near of kin to the king, and very familiar with him), together with Hosea and Micah, who all lived in the days of Hezekiah, and might possibly undertake this excellent work. In which they assert some things which are to be found in the foregoing parts of this book, in words but little different, as ver. 24. of this chapter, and ch. xxvi. 13. 15. 22. and other places, of which I cannot stay here to give an account.

[b] They begin this book with a sentence, which the Lord Bacon applies to all the learning and wisdom of Solomon. “In which,” saith he, “Solomon challenges nothing to himself, but only the honour of the inquisition and invention of truth; which it is the glory of God to conceal, and the glory of a king to find out. As if the divine majesty took delight to hide his works, to the end to have them found out; and as if kings could not attain greater honour, (or pleasure or recreation either), than to employ themselves in that business; considering the great command they have of wits, and means, whereby the vestigation of all things may be effected.” Thus he, I. vi. of the Advanc. of Learn. ch. 6.

Which is a very ingenious gloss; if we refer both parts of the sentence to one and the same matter; tacitly admonishing Hezekiah, and in him all succeeding kings, not to spend their time in any thing so much as in searching after truth; and endeavouring to understand not only the secrets of government, but of the law of God, and of all his works; that they may not be imposed upon by false colours and deceitful glosses; which cunning wits are apt to put upon causes that are brought before them; nay, upon the book of God itself.

But if the words be well examined, they will be found to speak rather of different matters; which God conceals, and into which kings penetrate. By which some understand one thing, and some another; but taking the word Elohim to relate to
God's government of the world, that which I have said in the paraphrase seems to me the nearest to the business. And Jansenius his exposition is not forced, who discourses to this purpose: It is part of God's glory that he need search into nothing; besides, he perfectly knows all things; and yet need not declare that he takes notice of every thing, (because he can do it when he pleases), but rather seem to dispose his knowledge, in which he wonderfully declares his patience and long-suffering towards us. But kings on earth must not herein imitate him, for it is their honour to search diligently and inquire into the state of their kingdom, and to correct presently what they find amiss, lest be be out of their power, when it is strengthened by long custom and numerous offenders. But especially in difficult and intricate business, covered with darkness and obscurity, perplexed with many windings and turnings, and with crafty and subtle conveyances, there to spy light, and by wisdom and diligence to rip up a foul matter, and searching the cause to the bottom, to make a discovery of all, is a thing most worthy of a king, and tends highly to his honour. In short, as it makes for the glory of God, that he need inquire into nothing, but, when he knows all things, yet conceals that knowledge; so, on the contrary side, it makes for the glory of kings, that when they are forced to confess that they are ignorant, as well as other men, of many things, they make such diligent inquiry, that they discover and detect those things, which others have entangled, and would have buried in darkness.

To such some purpose all interpreters expound these words, save one; who refers both parts of the sentence to kings, (understanding by Elohim, Gods, judges and princes), in this sense; "wise kings preserve the reverence which is due to their persons and place, by concealing carefully their own intentions and counsels, and by finding out the designs of other men." Thus Maldonatus, which I mention, because it is a great truth, though not the sense of the words, but rather the meaning of the following verse, ver. 2.

[c] Which concerns kings also, as some of those that come after likewise do, (which would incline one to think this part of the book of Proverbs, was particularly collected for the use of Hezekiah), and hath received this gloss from the same great man I named before, the Lord Bacon; who gives this as one of the chief reasons why the hearts of kings are inscrutable, because "they, being at the very top of human desires, have not, for the most part, any particular ends proposed to themselves, (none at least to which they vehemently and constantly aspire), by the site and distance of which ends, we may be directed to take the measure and scale of the rest of their actions; whereas there is no private person, who is not altogether like a traveller, that goes intently aiming at some certain terms of his journey, where he may stay and rest; from whence one may probably conjecture what he will do, or not do. For if any thing conduces to the end at which he aims, it is likely he will do it; but if it cross his design, he will not. Therefore he passes this judicious observation upon the whole; that princes are best interpreted by their natures, and private persons by their ends." Advancement of Learning, b. viii. chap. 2.

But from hence also he observes, (in his first book), that it is best not to be too inquisitive to penetrate into the hearts of kings, since we are so ignorant of the things we see with our eyes every day; which the customs of the Levant aims at, that makes it an heinous offence to gaze on their eyes upon princes; which is barbarous in the outward ceremony, but good in the moral: for it becomes not subjects to pry too far into their prince's counsels. But it may as well check the ambition, as the curiosity of private persons, because they can hardly be sure of that favor which they may imagine their prince hath for them; there being such depths in their inclinations and affections as they cannot sound.

But in the next verses princes are admonished, that there is no true policy like true virtue, to support their thrones; and that in order to it they should not keep so much as one ill man about them, who oftentimes corrupts the whole court, and disturbs the whole kingdom.

[d] And in the next verse he admonishes subjects, not to be vainly ambitious, nor bold and forward to thrust themselves into offices, or into a rank that doth not belong to them; but to be modest, especially in the prince's presence, and (according to our Saviour's rule) to be invited to honour, rather than greedily seek it. And wit.hal he secretly commends to kings, the care of keeping up their state and dignity; not suffering every body to intrude into their presence, but giving a check to proud, bold, and saucy persons.

Then follow private instructions, not to be too forward to go to law; and when we do, to manage suits fairly, without aspersing those with whom we contend, and without breaking the laws of friendship; which require us not to discover the secrets where-with another hath entrusted us, ver. 9. 10.

[e] In the 11th verse I have followed Maimonides his interpretation of the word ma'aksijab, in his preface to his More Nevochim. And it being doubtful, whether by apples of gold he mean apples that look like gold, or apples made of gold, I have expressed both.

[f] But I must not give a particular account of every verse; and therefore I shall only add, that I have taken the meaning of the 16th and 17th verses to be, that moderation is good in all things, especially in those that please us; as honey doth, which was so plentiful in those countries, (as it is in many other), that it was ordinarily found in the woods, and holes of rocks, &c. as may be seen in Bochart. l. iv. c. 12, p. 11. de Sac. Animal.

[g] In the 20th verse, I have followed Melanchthon in
what he observes out of Pliny concerning nitre, (whose nature is not now well known), that it is exasperated by vinegar or lime. But in the latter end of the verse, I have kept to our translation, which by laebra understands an heart ill affected by grief or sorrow; which he takes literally for an evil or wicked heart. And makes this the meaning, (which some others have followed), that pernicious sinners are made more furious by admonitions.

In all ancient translations there follows after this verse this sentence: "As a moth in a garment, or a worm in wood, so is heaviness in the heart of man." But Saint Hierom, in the latter end of his commentaries upon Isaiah, tells us, that it was sub obelo in Origens Works. Where he noted all superfluous additions with that mark.

I must not omit neither, that the 23d verse will admit of a quite contrary sense to that in our translation, and is by some rendered thus: "as the north wind begetteth rain, (for so it doth in some climates), so a backbiting tongue raiseth up anger and indignation;" (which appear in the countenance both of him that believes the calumny, and of him that is calumniated, when he knows how he is abused).

There is no great difficulty in ver. 26. But interpreters are divided about this, whether he spake of a just mans falling into sin, or into some calamity. Melanchton understands the latter, and makes this the sense, that "even wise men's minds are extremely troubled, when they see the wicked prevail against the virtuous:" of which he gives a great many examples. But I have taken in both, and have referred it also to all manner of sufferings, and not restrained it to public injustice, as the Lord Bacon doth; who hath this excellent observation upon the place, (book viii. chap. 2. parab. 2).

"This parable teaches us, that states and republics must above all things beware of an unjust and infamous sentence, in any cause of great importance, especially where the innocent is not absolved, but he that is not guilty condemned. For injuries ravaging among private persons do indeed trouble and pollute the streams of justice, yet only as in the smaller rivulets; but such unjust judgements as I mentioned, from which examples are derived, infect and distain the very fountain of justice. For when the courts of justice side with injustice, the state of things is turned, as into a public robbery, et homo bonum fit lupus, and one man preys upon another."

With this verse, de Dieu connects the next; ver. 27. and gives the easiest account that I find any where, of the Hebrew text; only translating that particle but, which we translate so, as it is often taken in the scripture. And his sense is this: "though the just may be trampled under foot for a while by the wicked, yet their glory shall not perish; but remain so fresh and sweet, that it shall be a glorious thing to inquire into their glorious actions." So he would have the verse translated thus: "To eat much honey, indeed, is not good, but to search out their glory, (viz. of just men), is glory." And if we take the verse by itself, then the sense may be this, as the Belgic interpreters translate it, (of whom he, if I mistake not, was one): "To eat much honey is not good; but to search into excellent things is a great commendation, and we cannot therein easily offend by excess:" which is quite contrary to the Vulgar Latin, whose sense and meaning (though not the words) may be defended, even without repeating the word not, as we do in our translation, in this manner: "As honey, though pleasant to the taste, oppresses the stomach, if it be immoderately used; so, upon a curious search into things sublime and glorious; (though they be most sweet and desirable to our understanding), we shall find ourselves overwhelmed with a greater glory than we can bear."

And so the latter part of the verse should word for word be thus translated: "The search of their glory, (viz. of things as sweet as honey, but transcending our knowledge), is glory;" viz. too bright for our weak minds.

The last verse, which in the Hebrew belongs to all men whose passions are unruly, is by the Vulgar restrained to him that cannot command his tongue; which is part of the sense. For as men may go out of a city without walls when they will, so every thing is blurted out by him, even the greatest secrets; and by too much liberty he obliges others, and undone himself.

Ver. 1. These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.] Besides the foregoing lessons sententiousely delivered by Solomon, these also were collected out of his works, by some of the servants of that good king, Hezekiah; who setting himself with all his heart to reform the people of Judah, among other things wherein God blessed his endeavours, (a Chron. xxxi. 21.), caused these proverbs to be transcribed out of the ancient records, for their fuller instruction. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.] The almighty Creator and Sovereign of the world declares his supereminent majesty, authority, and wisdom, (which cannot be ignorant of any thing), and procures to himself the greatest veneration, by concealing the reasons of his decrees, and of his judgements; but earthly princes, whose knowledge is very imperfect, do themselves the greatest honour, when they decree and judge nothing but after the strictest search and examination, and give the clearest reason for their proceedings. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 3. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.] It is as impossible for vulgar minds to penetrate into the secrets of state, and understand the counsels and designs of wise princes, (and the various ways and means whereby they project to effect their ends), as it is to know how far it is from hence to the highest heavens, or
how far to the centre of the earth upon which we
tread. See Arg. [c]
Ver. 4. Take away the dress from the silver, and
there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.] As when
the finer hath separated the dress from the silver, it
will become so pliable, that he may cast or work it
into what form he pleaseth.
Ver. 5. Take away the wicked from before the king,
and his throne shall be established in righteousness. So
let the king not only remove the wicked (who are
the scum of the nation) from his counsels and com-
pany, but punish them severely, and his people will
be easily moulded to righteousness, piety, and all man-
er of virtue; which will settle his kingdom in peace,
and make his government durable.
Ver. 6. Put not forth thyself in the presence of the
king, and stand not in the place of great men.] And
among other virtues, learn humility and modesty, if
thou art a subject, though never so rich; and do not
make thyself taken notice of, by too splendid an ap-
pearance at court; much less by intruding thyself into
the place where none but the great officers or nobles
ought to come. See Arg. [d]
Ver. 7. For better it is that it be said unto thee,
Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower
in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.] 
For it will be much more for thine honour, and thy
satisfaction too, if, standing at a distance, thou art in-
vited to come up higher, (whither of thyself thou
durst not presume to go), than to have a check given
thee for thy forwardness, and to be disgracefully
thrust out of the presence of the prince, unto whom
thou hast adventured to approach too near.
Ver. 8. Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know
not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour
bath put thee to shame.] Take some time to consider
well, both the goodness of the cause, and its weight-
tiness, and how to manage it, before thou bring an
action of law against thy neighbour, lest in conclusion
thou wish it had not been begun, when he puts thee
to open shame, by shewing thou hast imposed him
wrongfully, or for a trifle.
Ver. 9. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself,
and discover not a secret to another.] Nay, let me ad-
vice thee, though thy cause be just and good, (yet the
event being doubtful), to debate things privately, and
if it be possible to make up the difference between
yourselves, especially if it be about a secret business,
which ought not easily to be divulged; or if it can-
cannot be composed, yet let not hatred nor anger pro-
voke thee to discover other secrets, merely to disgrace
thy adversary, when they appertain not to the cause;
Ver. 10. Lest be that beareth it put thee to shame,
and thine infamy turn not away.] Lest not only every
one that beareth reproach thee for thy perfidiousness,
but he be enraged to retort such infamous things upon
thee, as shall stick so close, that thou shalt never
be able to wipe off the dirt, nor recover thy credit, as
long as thou livest.
Ver. 11. A word fitsly spoken, is like apples of gold
in pictures of silver.] A word of counsel, reproof, or
comfort, handsomely delivered, in due time and place,
&c. is no less grateful and valuable, than golden balls,
or beautiful apples, presented in a silver net-work
basket. See Arg. [c]
Ver. 12. As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament
of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.] A
good man will not think himself reproached, but
rather obliged, by a prudent reproof; which meeting
with an attentive, considering, and patient mind, makes
a man receive it so kindly, that he esteems him who
bestows it, as much as if he had hung a jewel of
gold in his ear, or put the richest ornament about his
neck.
Ver. 13. As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
so is a faithful messenger to them that send him; for be
refresheth the soul of his masters.] A trusty messenger,
(or ambassador), that faithfully and dexterously exe-
cutes his commission to the satisfaction of the persons
that sent him, is as welcome, when he returns, as
the coldest drink or air is to the reapers in the time of
harvest; for he revives the spirits of his masters, who
were ready to faint with fear of ill success in their
business.
Ver. 14. Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is
like clouds and wind without rain.] He that raiseth high
expectations by promising much, and then deceives
them by performing little or nothing, leaves him
that depended on these promises, as sad as the country
people are, after the clouds have made a great shew,
and the wind a great sound, but are followed by no
showers of rain.
Ver. 15. By long for bearing is a prince persuaded;
and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.] It is not prudent
violently to oppose a prince in his resolutions, who
will more easily yield to reason, if one give way to
his heat, and patiently expect the fittest time to re-
represent things to him; but this must be done also with
soft and tender language, which is apt to bow the
stiffest minds, and work upon the hardest hearts.
Ver. 16. Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is
sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit
it.] All pleasures should be used like honey, which
when it offers itself, eat as much as suffices thee for
thy refreshment, not as much as thou desirest; for as,
moderately taken, it strengthens the body, and pro-
longs life, so too much of it disturbs the stomach,
and turns the pleasure into pain and torment. See
Arg. [f]
Ver. 17. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour’s
house; lest be be weary of thee, and so hate thee.] Which
is wholesome advice, even in the enjoyment of a good
neighbour, or friend, (the sweetest thing in the
world); do not upon every light occasion interrupt his
weightier affairs, lest, having too much of thy com-
pany, it grow not only troublesome, but loathsome
to him, and his love turn into hatred of thee.
Ver. 18. A man that beareth false witness against his
neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.] 
There is nothing more pernicious than him that makes
no conscience of bearing false witness against his
neighbour, whose tongue alone serves him instead of
a maul to beat down a man’s fame, or break in pieces
his estate; nay, instead of a sword, to take away his
life, and of a sharp arrow to destroy him, not only when he is near, but much more when he is afar off, not able to answer for himself.

Ver. 19. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. As a broken tooth or leg out of joint not only fails a man when he comes to use them, but likewise puts him into pain, so doth a faithless person serve them that depend upon him, when they have the greatest need of his help; and such also is the confidence that a faithless person himself places in riches, or craft, or great friends, &c. which some time or other will disappoint him to his great grief, when he expects the most from them.

Ver. 20. As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre; so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart. It is as improper to sing pleasant songs to a man full of grief, as to take away his garment from him in sharp weather, or to pour vinegar upon nitre; for as the one increaseth his sense of cold, and the other irritates the nitre, so such unseasonable mirth makes a sad man's heart far more heavy and sorrowful than it was before. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 21. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give water to drink. If he that hates thee be hungry or thirsty, or wants any other necessaries, take the opportunity to express thy kindness to him, by succouring him in his need, and thereby preserving him from perishing.

Ver. 22. For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee. For if he have the least spark of goodness in him, it will work a change in his mind, and make him throw off all his enmities; or if it have the contrary effect, he shall have so much the sorer punishment, and thou shalt not lose thy reward, which the Lord himself will give thee.

Ver. 23. The north-wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. As the sharpness of the north-wind scatters clouds, and drives away rain, so a severe countenance, full of indignation against him that traduces his neighbour secretly, not only gives a check, but puts a stop to his slanderous tongue, which would not tell such lies, if they were not greedily received. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 24. It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman, and in a wide house. It is more desirable (as was said before, xx. 9.) to dwell poorly, inconveniency, and alone in the open air, exposed to all the injuries of the weather, than to be cooped up in a little corner on the house-top, than to have a spacious habitation and numerous family, governed by a contentious brawling wife, whose perpetual scoldings within doors, upon all occasions, is far worse than the thunder, lightning, and blustering winds, which may molest him without.

Ver. 25. As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. Good and certain news, especially from a far country, (from whence it is hard to have any true intelligence), is as grateful to him that longed to hear of his friends there, as cool water is to a thirsty traveller, especially when he meets with it in remote and uninhabited places, where he did not expect it.

Ver. 26. A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring. A truly religious, just, and charitable man, is such a blessing unto all about him, that they suffer no less when he is oppressed (and thrown out of authority) by the violence and craft of wicked men, or when he disgraces himself by any foul sin, or loses his courage, and dare not oppose impiety, than they do when dirt and filth is cast into a public fountain, or a spring is stopped up, or corrupted and made useless. See Arg. [j]

Ver. 27. It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory, is not glory. Honey is very pleasant to the taste; and to eat much of it (as we said before, ver. 16.) is so far from being wholesome, that it is hurtful; and in like manner, to hunt greedily after honour and glory, of which men are very desirous, proves at last not honourable, but reproachful to them. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 28. He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. He that cannot govern his passions, especially his anger, but suffers them to break out upon all occasions, lies open to innumerable mischiefs, like a city unwalled, or whose fortifications are decayed, which is exposed to the rapine of every enemy. See Arg. [l]

CHAP. XXVI.

The Argument.—[a] This chapter begins with a tacit admonition to kings (for whose use principally this last part of the book of proverbs was collected, as I noted in the beginning of the foregoing chapter) to be very careful in disposing preferments only to worthy persons. For bad men are made worse by them, and they do as much hurt to others, by the abuse of their power to the discouraging of virtue, and promoting vice, as snow or hail doth to the fruits of the earth, when they are ripe and ready to be gathered. So that we may make this aphorism out of Solomon's words, that "the blending of summer and winter, would not cause a greater disorder in the natural world, than the disposal of honour to bad men (and consequently throwing contempt upon the good) doth in the world moral," where wicked men, when they are in power, if they can do no more, will at least pronounce anathemas against those that do not deserve it.

[b] So the Hebrews understand the next verse, which I have extended farther, and translated also those two words, sippor and deror, a sparrow and a wild pigeon. (see Psal. lxxiv. 3. For deror signifying here a particular bird, in all likelihood sippor doth so too; and then all agree it signifies a sparrow, as the other (Bochart) hath proved doth (not a swallow, but) a ring-dove, or turtle, or some of that kind, which are famous for swiftness and strength of flight. And the meaning of this verse is, that
curses which fly out of men's mouths causelessly, shall no more alight where they would have them, than a sparrow which wanders uncertainly, or a dove that flies away swiftly, will settle according to their direction;" or thus, "such curses fly as swiftly as those birds (whose propriety it is to wander, and to fly up and down) over the head of him against whom they are directed, and never touch him."

Melancthon by curses in this place understands calumnies, of which the world is too full; which shall not rest upon a good man long, before they be confuted. But he himself is forced to confess, that sometimes they do great mischief first; and instances in Joseph, Palamedes, Aristides, Thamænes, and Socrates, who lost his life by this means. After which, he observes, the tragedy of Palamedes being acted, (in which the poet bewailed the death of the best of the Greeks, who sung like as sweet nighttime, but hurt no man,) the citizens expelled the accusers of Socrates out of Athens. But this doth not so well agree with the Hebrew word, which signifies such evil speaking as amounts to a curse; which the wise man saith shall not rest upon a man when it is causeless, but fly away like a bird that settles no where till it comes to its proper place: "As the curse returns many times, and settles upon him that made it; when it lights not on him that was cursed;" which sense, one reading of the Hebrew expresses plainly enough, and therefore I have not omitted it.

[c] After which observations, there follows another, to shew that a lewd fool should rather be sent to a house of correction, than have any preferment, ver. 3. Nothing less will cure him, as it follows, ver. 4, 5. where he admonishes us, how vain it is to hold any discourse with him, any farther than merely to show that he is a fool, and, if it be possible, to confute (not what he says, but) the vain opinion he hath conceived of himself. St Cyprian hath given a good account of these two verses, in the beginning of his letter to Demetrius; who having babbled a long time against Christianity, like a madman, with loud clamours only, and no sense, the good Father thought fit to answer him with neglect, and overcome rage with patience, thinking it to no more purpose to go about to repress an irreligious man with religion, or restrain a madman with meekness, than to offer fight to the blind, or speak to the deaf, or reason with a brute. But when Demetrius at last offered something that looked like an argument, St Cyprian could not any longer keep silence, lest his modesty should be thought disturb'd of his cause; and whilst he disdained to refute false criminations, he should seem to acknowledge the crime.

Melancthon wholly refers both verses to reproaches and calumnies; which he shews it is fit, either utterly to neglect, or to confute in a few words.

[d] Then the wise man proceeds to shew, that such a fool is very unfit to be so much as sent on a message, which he will neither deliver right, nor return a good answer. The first seems to be expressed by cutting off the legs; as much as to say, a business committed to such a person will no more proceed, than a man can go without legs: the latter by drinking in injury; as much as to say, instead of having satisfaction in what he desires, he must be content to swallow abundance of affronts and ill-dealing.

[c] After this follow several other observations about fools, in some of which there are words of no small difficulty; which I cannot here particularly explain, as some may desire, because it would take up too much room. But I have expressed the sense of them as well as I could in the paraphrase.

As, for example, the word 

[dancing; than which nothing is more unsuitable to a lame man; as speeches full of reason in themselves, are most absurd when witlessly applied by a fool.

[c] And the word margema, in the 8th verse, which is variously translated by interpreters, I have expressed in two senses of it; but look upon it as superfluous to trouble the reader with what learned men (such as Scaliger and Selden, &c.) have written concerning the heaps of stones in the highway, into which superstitious people were wont to cast one as they passed by, in honour to Mercury, &c. For I do not think this custom was as old as Solomon's time. Nor is it necessary to understand such a heap of stones, as covered the dead bodies of those were stoned to death; but in general any heap of pebbles, or else a sling, as the Chaldee, and the LXX. whom we follow, expound it.

[e] And ver. 10. the first word, rah, great, may be applied either to God, or to a prince, and that either good or bad. All which I have taken notice of, and expressed the different senses wherein the word cheluth is used. But there is one signification more of the word rah, which Lutherans generally follow, (which I think fit to mention here, because I have not touched on it in the paraphrase, and it makes no improper sense of the place), who take it for a master in any sort of art or learning, and expound it thus: "A master in his art forms all things excellently well; but he that hires a fool, (or a bougre, as we speak), gives his money to have his work spoiled." Thus Melancthon, who takes it to be an admonition belonging to prudence in the choice of fit persons for every business, not believing those that crack and brag what they are able to do, &c. Ex. gr. "Plurimi sunt importuniores, qui vulent sideri medici; plurimi inducti concionatores, qui adulantur voce aut potentioribus. And he heaps up many excellent sayings to this purpose, that men should meddle only with that which they understand;" concluding with this admonition to the people, which they should always remember; "Ignorance makes men impudent." And thus Castalio took the word rah, but to this sense: "A wise man does his business himself, and not by fools, who mar it all."

[f] Among other examples of the wise man's obser-
vations, ver. 11. Methuselah mentions this, which is not uncommonly noted. The Sodomites being divinely delivered by the help of Abraham, who overthrew the army that had spoiled them, and recovered the spoil, forgetting their former punishment and marvellous deliverance, ran furiously into more foul sins, wherein they utterly perished, by a most terrible vengeance.

[1] Then follow, after one observation concerning a conceived fellow, several observations about sloth; some of which have been noted before in the foregoing parts of this book, but are here put together by the men of Hezekiah in some order, and with some additions. For here seems to be three degrees of sloth represented. The first, when a man is loth to stir out of doors, about his business in the field, ver. 13; the second, when he is loth so much as to leave his bed, ver. 14; and the third and highest, when he will scorns put his hand to his mouth, ver. 15; by which hyperbolic expression he most admirably sets forth the incredible laziness of some men, which increases upon them continually, if they will not shake it off. And yet so presumptuous (he observes, ver. 16) they are withal, that they laugh at those who take a great deal of pains to be wise; and fancy themselves much wiser, because, without any pains, they can find fault sometimes in other men's works. Nay, this very thing, perhaps, they think a piece of folly to study hard, imagining it to be the greatest wisdom to enjoy ease, and reap the benefit of other men's labours. After which follows an admonition against rash intermeddling in other men's affairs, against backbiters and dissemblers, especially such as are malicious, and cover the malignity of their minds under fair shows of love, or perhaps of friendship. In several of which verses the words are capable of more senses than one, which I have endeavoured to knit together in the paraphrase. An example of which I might give particularly, in ver. 24, where the word finger may be rendered either to pretend to be what he is not, or he is known to be what he is not.

[2] Again, Solomon says in the next verse, concerning him that flattereth another, some extend it to all wicked men, none of which are to be trusted; but as one of our writers adviseth, "Though a wicked man have done thee seven contumacies, and promise fair for the eighth, yet do not trust him; for there are seven abominations in his heart. And though thou mayest think thou hast some hand upon him, do not depend upon it, for he can uncover himself from them all, as Sampson from the green withs and cords wherewith the Philistines bound him, unless God mightily restrain him."

[3] But I only observe one thing more, that the last verse is capable of this sense, which I have in part touched: "A liar is not capable to be a friend; for if he be reprehended, truth makes him trust the person that detects his falsehood, if he be not reprehended, his false errors will accumulate from him the mind of his friend."

Ver. 2. As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool. As snow or rain are so unseasonable, that they do a great deal of hurt in summer-time, when the fruits of the earth are ready to be gathered; so is dignity and authority very ill placed in the hands of a fool or wicked man, who knows not how to use it, but will do mischief both to himself and others with it. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 3. As the bird by wandering, or the swallow by flying, so the cursed cursed shall not come. Though men are too prone in their passion to will evil to others, or by mistake to pronounce solemn curses against them, yet there is no reason to fear such rash imprestations or unjust censures; for they shall do no harm, (unless it be to him that makes them), but pass by the innocent, like a sparrow that wanders nobody knows whither, or a wild dove, than which few birds fly away more swiftly. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 4. A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back. A horse that will not stir without a whip, and an ass that will not go without a goad, or will go only his own way, without a bridle to turn about his stiff neck, are fit emblems of a senseless soul; who must be treated like a beast, and by smart punishments be excited unto his duty, to which he hath no list; and checked from running into that evil to which he is inclined.

Ver. 5. Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. For words will not reclaim a wicked fool, with whom, if thou hast occasion to contend, observe those two rules; answer him not at all, because it is to no purpose at least, not in his own way, with bawling, railing, and reproaches, which is to be as very a fool as himself. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 6. He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage. He that sends a witless man, or one that minds nothing but his pleasure, to treat about his business, shall be sure not only to miscarry in it, but to suffer exceeding great damage by his ill management. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 7. The legs of the lame are not equal; so is a parable in the mouth of fools. A wise saying as ill becomes a fool, as dancing doth a cripple; for as his lameness never so much appears, as when he would seem nimble, so the other's folly is never so ridiculous, as when he would seem wise. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 8. As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool. As a stone put into a sling stays not long there, so is that honour thrown away which is bestowed upon a fool; who not knowing how to use his authority, (unless it be to do mis-
chief, even to him that conferred it on him), it is as ill placed in his hands, as a diamond when it is cast into a heap of common stones. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 9. As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a porcupine in the mouth of fools. It is as dangerous for a fool to meddle with a proverb, as for a drunkard to handle a thorn, wherewith he hurts himself; but the sharpest saying, no more touches a fool with any compunction, though spoken by his own mouth, than the drunkard feels the thorn, when it runs into his hand, and gives a grievous wound.

Ver. 10. The great God, that formed all things, both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth the transgressor. The great God, who made all things, governs them also most wisely and equally; dispensing, for instance, his punishments suitable to men's sins, whether out of ignorance, or of wilful wickedness; whom a good prince imitates, but a bad proves an universal grievance, by employing either fools or profane persons in his service, who vex the rest of his subjects. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 11. As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. As a dog, when he hath vomited up the meat which made him sick, is no sooner well, but he returns to it and eats it up again, forgetting how ill it agreed with him; so an imprudent person commits the same error over again, for which he formerly smarted, and a sower shamelessly and greedily repeats the crimes of which he hath repented as grievous and hurtful to himself. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 12. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. Such a sottish person is hardly curbable; and yet if he be not altogether insensible of his folly, nor refuse admonition, there is more hope of his amendment than of his, who takes himself to be so wise and virtuous, that he despises his better, and thinks he is above instruction.

Ver. 13. The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets. He that hath no mind to labour, never wants pretences for his idleness; for his fancy represents such terrible and inimical dangers to him as seldom happen, and frights him with a vain conceit of them, when he might soon satisfy himself there are none at all. See Arg. [i] See xxii. 13.

Ver. 14. As the door turneth upon its hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. As a door turns to and fro upon its hinges, but never stirs from thence, so is a sluggard fixed to his bed; where he turns from one side to the other, and is uneasy even in his sloth, but still remains in his idle posture.

Ver. 15. The slothful bideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. All things seem so hard to such a lazy wretch, that it is not easy to persuade him to pull his hand from under his arm; but even this appears like a tiresome business, though it be only to put his meat into his mouth. See xix. 24.

Ver. 16. The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason. Yet one of these idle companions, whose wit serves him only to prate, and carp at men's honest labours, takes himself to be much wiser than a great many able persons, who can give a satisfactory account of any thing that is proposed to them.

Ver. 17. He that passeth by, and meddles with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. As he that takes an angry dog by the ears, is in danger to be bitten, whether he hold him or let him go; so he that furiously engages in other men's quarrels, whom he lights upon by chance, and in which he is not concerned, shall hardly escape the displeasure of one or both of them, which soever part he takes, or if he take neither.

Ver. 18. As a mad man wocasteth fire-brands, arrows, and death: so he that throws flames, darts, or other deadly or destructive things, and hides his malice by feigning himself mad, is far more dangerous than he that is mad indeed.

Ver. 19. So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and sweareth: Am not I a sport? So he is worse than an open enemy, who cunningly abuses his neighbour, and under a fair show puts foul cheats upon him; and then asks him, Why he resents it so heinsiously? for he was only in jest, and intended merely to try how he would take it.

Ver. 20. Where there is no wood, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth. Look upon him as an incendiary, that carries tales and whispers false stories; and expel him from the family which he hath disordered by back-biting; for as the fire will go out if you take away the wood that feeds it, so will quarrels and contentions cease when he is thrust out of doors that blows up the flame.

Ver. 21. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. Avoid also an angry man, who is hard to please, and apt to find fault with every thing; for provoking language as quickly passes into quarrels, as dead coals do into burning, or wood into fire, when they are laid upon them.

Ver. 22. The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. But there is never need of greater caution, than when a whisperer makes a shew of harmless intentions, and of love and kindness, when he traduces others; nay, seems perhaps to do it very unwillingly, and with great grief of heart; and not without excuses also, for the persons whom he backbites; for his words are stabs, which give them the most deadly wounds, and sink deep into the minds of those that hear them. See xviii. 8.

Ver. 23. Burning lips, and a wicked heart, are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. Ill and angry language suits as well with ill-will, as silver dross with a piece of a broken pot; and he that studies to hide his hatred under most affectionate words, will as certainly be detected and vilified, as a potsherd, that makes a fair shew at a distance, when it is covered merely with the scum of silver.

Ver. 24. He that hateth dissemblers with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him. And yet there is no-
thing more usual, than for him that hates thee to counterfeit the greatest kindness to thee, when he means thereby only the more easily and securely to deceive and undo thee; though, let him study never so much to disguise his inward rancour, he commonly lets fall some word or other, whereby it may be discovered; nay, it may be known sometimes by his extraordinary expressions of friendship, beyond all reason and measure.

Ver. 25. When he speaketh fair, believe him not; for there are seven abominations in his heart.] And thou wilt the more certainly discover it, if thou observest this rule, not to be too credulous; no, no; not when he gives thee the kindest words, and beseeches thee to believe him; but to remember, that if hatred still remain in his heart, it will suggest to him the most detestable designs against thee, and that without number. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 26. Whose hatred is covered by deceit; his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.] And it were well, if such a man would think that it is hard for him to carry on his malicious designs so craftily; but though a private person may not be able to find out his wickedness, yet when he comes to be examined by the public counsel, some or other will discover it; and then that dispersed hatred, which he thought to have hid in secrecy, will be openly exposed to the view of all the world.

Ver. 27. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein; and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.] For by the righteous judgement of God, (as hath been anciently observed, Psal. vii. 15. ix. 15,) the wicked are not only disappointed in their designs, but involve themselves in that mischief which they intended to do to others; just like a man that falls into a pit digged with his own hands, or that is crushed in pieces by a stone, which returns upon him, as he rolls it up a steep place for the oppression of another.

Ver. 28. A lying tongue hath those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.] A forger of falsehood is not content to undo others by his calumnies, but his guilt makes him hate those men above all others; unless it be him that confutes his falsehood, and proves him a liar; whom he cannot endure, because he disables him from doing any farther mischief unto others; which is the design of all his glossing and flattering words, which prove at last the ruin of himself. See Arg. [l]

C H A P. XXVII.

The Argument.—[a] This chapter begins with a most useful admonition of the inconstancy and uncertainty of all things here below; like to which there are a great many in other authors, which several writers have collected, (but I shall not trouble the readers with all); particularly Melancthon, who observes, that the wise man here teaches us modesty, and prohibits these two great vices; confidence in ourselves, or any thing we have; and rash undertaking necessary things, out of a foolish hope they will succeed according to our desires.

Wise and good men should only meddle within the bounds of their calling, and depend also on God for his blessing; but not attempt things without just cause, presuming they can carry them as they please. Thus Pericles, says he, made an unnecessary war, for a slight reason; which many then judged to have been neglected; and Alcibiades in like manner passed over into Sicily; and Hannibal made war upon the Romans; and Pompey would needs try his fortune, (as they called it,) in war, when he might have kept peace upon honest conditions. All these were destructive to their countries, and the proverb was verified in them, "Vain men advise vain things, according as their desires lead them."

[b] And there is nothing more foolish than the vanity of praising themselves, which follows in the next verse, (ver. 2,) and is noted by all the authors, who have many sharp sayings about it, which I also pass over; but shall take notice, (because it is still more useful), what the same good man, Melancthon, observes upon the third verse, that "fools and unskilful people are more apt to be angry than others;" because they consider not the infirmity of mankind, and that there are many errors of others, which ought to be borne withal, and cured after a gentle manner; whence that true saying, Imperito nuncquam quiquam injustius est. But as goodness is most eminent in God, who himself bears with many evils in us, and commands us to "forgive, and it shall be forgiven;" so wise men bend their minds to goodness and lenity; remembering the common infirmities of all men, their own as well as others. Nor can there be a more lively picture of the implacable spirit of a fool, than that which our Saviour himself hath drawn in the gospel, of a cruel servant who, when he had been forgiven sixty ten of gold by his master, would not forgive his fellow-servant an hundred pence, Math. xviii. This sentence of Solomon, therefore, saith he, admonishes us to avoid the company of fools, qui neque cognoscere neque ignoscere norunt; as well as to be so wise ourselves as to moderate our passions, and to be mindful of human weakness. For nihil magnum quod non est placidum, as Seneca speaks, like unto which he adds other sayings out of Homer and Pliny.

[c] In the next verse but one, some think the wise man speaks of such friends as are too tender and delicate, and for fear of offending others, have not the courage to tell them of their errors; whom the great Lord Bacon follows, and thinks "Solomon prefers an open enemy before such a friend;" which I do not take to be the meaning; but shall here set down his excellent observation upon these words, (Adv. of Learn. book viii. ch. 2. parab. 29.) "The parable; saith he, reprehends the soft nature of such friends as will not use the privilege which friendship gives them, in admonishing their friends with freedom and confidence, as well of their errors as of their dangers. For what shall I do? says such a tender-hearted friend; or which way shall I turn myself? I love him as dearly as any man can.
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do another; and if any misfortune should befall him, I could willingly pawn my own person for his redemption. But I know his disposition; if I deal freely with him, I shall offend him, at least make him sad, and yet do him no good. And I shall sooner estrange him from my friendship, than reclaim him from those courses, upon which his mind is resolved.—Such a friend as this, Solomon here apprehends as weak and worthless, and says, that a man may reap more profit from a manifest enemy, than from such an effeminate friend. For he may perhaps hear that by way of reproach from an enemy, which, through too much indulgence, was faintly whispered by a friend.

And as one great reason why men are loth to tell others of their faults, is, because they are wont to take it heinously. If men were more willing to receive reproof, others would more faithfully give it; of which the wise man therefore admonishes us, ver. 6. where the word Nataroth is so difficult, that it admits various interpretations; some of which I have expressed in the paraphrase. And made ver. 7, a caution against the immoderate enjoyment of pleasures which commend themselves to us by their rarer use. As the next, ver. 8, is a caution against unsteadiness of mind, and discontent with our present condition; which not only spoils all our pleasures, but often carries men restlessly to their ruin; where Melanchton suggests this useful meditation, that there is no condition of life, no function without its cares, troubles, and dangers, which makes men soon weary of it; according to the ancient saying, Optat epistipia bos piger, optat arare cabalbus. But the wise man would have us understand that nothing is more dangerous than this; and therefore to take care, lest, tired and broken with disgusts, we lightly desert that kind of life to which we are rightly called. All the ancient wisdom hath observed, that such desultory humours never thrive; about which they have many proverbs, with which I shall not fill these papers.

After this follow some advices about friendship, and other things, which have been noted before, in the foregoing parts of this book. And then he seems, ver. 14, to lay open the guise of flatterers, who hope to rally favour with their benefactors, by extolling their bounty with extravagant praises. So I have expounded that verse, not merely of those that praise others, but praise them for their kindness to themselves; as the word barak properly imports. The intention of which is only to get still more from them; which is commonly the end of all those that praise others immoderately for their rare qualities and perfections; hoping thereby to make them extraordinary kind to them above all other men. Thus the Lord Bacon hath observed about this matter; whose gloss upon these words is this, (in the foregoing place, Parab. 33.) "Moderate and reasonable praises, uttered upon occasion, conduce both to men's fame and fortune; but immoderate, stereorous, and unreasonably poured out, profit nothing; may rather, according to the sense of this parable, they do much prejudice. For, first, they manifestly betray themselves, either to proceed from too much affection, or from studious affection; whereby they may rather ingratiate themselves with him whom they praise by false commendations, than adorn his person by just and deserved attributes; secondly, sparing and modest praises commonly invite such as are present to something of their own to the commendation; contrariwise, profuse and immodest praises invite the hearts to detract and take away something that belongs to them; thirdly, (which is the principal point), too much magnifying a man, stirs up envy towards him; seeing all immoderate praises look like a reproach to others who merit no less.

But, beside this, I cannot quite pass by the gloss which some have made upon these words; who, by jachbhem babboker, (which I have applied only to their too much assiduity in praising others, as if one should say, "from morning to night,"), understand making too much haste to praise men; when it is, as we speak, but "early days with them;" and they have made no progress in those virtues for which they are commended. And then the sense is, "There is nothing more dangerous, than to cry up men too soon for their parts, or for their virtues; before they be sufficiently tried, and have made a due improvement; for this, instead of doing them service, proves many times their ruin;" making them, that is, entertain a vain opinion of their own worth, and grow idle or negligent, &c. and so dwindle away to nothing.

What he saith afterward of a railing wife, ver. 16. may be thus expressed, in short: "There are three things that cannot be concealed, because they betray themselves, the wind, a strong perfume, and a scolding wife;" with which some join the next verse, ver. 17, as a remedy for the mischief of a brawling wife, and thus render it; "as iron is easily joined with iron; so is a man with his equal." And therefore, the best way for a man to avoid the trouble of a bad wife, is, not to choose one for his consort, because she is rich, or because she is beautiful only, but because she is like him in humour, and inclination, and condition, &c. Thus the Tigurine version. And de Dieu to the same purpose, who makes this proverb no more than that of like to like, which agree together. But this is too narrow; and therefore I have followed our, and indeed all the ancient translations; who take this to be of the same signification with another old saying, "One man is nobody;" and therefore God hath formed us to have a communion with each other. The necessity of which is expressed in abundance of ancient aphorisms; which admonish us to confer with others, and to hearken to the counsel and judgement of the wise. And daily experience shows us how dangerous it is, diafarwos, to be a man's own counsellor; and what is said of artisans may be applied unto all; "every man is his own worst master." To which purpose Melanchton alludes that of Luwipides, ifylion idio xivmuon, conversation
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natures and customs) is the more aptly compared to a glass or mirror, because in a glass he can see his own image, together with images of other men; which his eyes cannot do alone, without the help of a glass."

And so this parable, it seems to me, may not unfitly be expounded after this manner: "A man may see himself, while he looks upon other men, as well as know other men by considering his own inclinations."

[h] This preface is already so long, that I must not mention the various interpretations of the 21st verse. I have expressed that which is nearest to our translation; and seems to be the truest touchstone of this sort, whereby to try the goodness or badness of men's minds. Some of which are so incorrigible, he shews in the next verse, that the sorest afflictions will not amend them.

[i] And then, in conclusion, he presses every one to diligence about his own business; and especially commends the pastoral care which men should have about their flocks and their herds; which are the best sort of possessions, he shews in several regards. First, Because most durable, for they are always increasing of themselves, ver. 24. Secondly, Because easily preserved without much labour, or fraudulent arts, God himself providing liberally for them, ver. 25. Thirdly, Because most profitable, yielding all things necessary for food and raiment, ver. 26, 27.

[k] Where he mentions particularly in the last verse, the milk of the goats, and of no other creature; because they had abundance of them; and their milk was in daily use, both for meat and for medicine. And for medicine the ancients preferred it before all other, as most moderate and temperate. So Galen and Paulus Aegineta, the 1st of which writes thus: "Woman's milk is the most temperate of all other; next to that goat's; and next to that ass's; then sheep; and lastly, cow's milk. From whence it was, (Bochartus conjectures, who hath heaped up a great deal on this subject, I. ii. de Sac. Animal. cap. ult. part x.) Jupiter, a king in Crete, about Abraham's time, (and looked upon afterwards as the greatest god), is said to have been nourished by a goat; that is, by the best of nourishments.

Ver. 1. BOAST not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Be not so confident of thy present power, riches, or any thing else, as to grow presumptuous, and brag what thou wilt do or enjoy hereafter; for thou canst not be secure of this very day, (wherein thou makest such large promises to thyself of the future), which may produce some thing, for any thing thou knowest, that shall spoil all thy designs, and frustrate all thy expectations, which thou hast for to-morrow. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Be not so blinded with self-love as to praise thyself, which is both indiscreet and imprudent; for others will only
the more undervalue thee; but take care to do praise-worthy things, which will force commendations even from strangers and foreigners, who cannot be thought too partial to thee; for this will make thee truly honourable.

Ver. 3. A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool’s wrath is heavier than they both.] We feel there is heaviiness in a stone, and that a bag of sand is a weighty load; but neither of them is so intolerable as the effects of a fool’s wrath, which cannot be shaken off so soon as they may be; for he cannot easily be appeased by us, nor can he moderate himself, till his anger hath carried him to the most barbarous cruelty. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 4. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?] And yet envy is still worse than this; for though in a fury a man hath no pity, but is transported by his violent passion beyond all bounds, (like an inundation of waters,) yet his wrath appearing openly, it may be avoided, and in time it is composed and allayed, nay, perhaps he repents of it; but envy (or a desire of revenge) is a lurking evil, which increases daily without remorse, and is more exasperated by time, till it finds some means or other to do the mischief it desires.

Ver. 5. Open rebuke is better than secret love.] He that takes an ingenuous liberty to tell others plainly of their faults, and rebuke them freely, when need requires, to their face, is a better friend, and more valuable, (though perhaps he please them less,) than he that hath more of the passion of love in his heart, but makes it not known by such good effects. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 6. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.] Just reproofs, though never so smart and severe from one that loves us, ought to be thankfully accepted, because they proceed from his care of us, and fidelity to us; but the most tender expressions of kindness from an enemy, ought to be suspected to be false and treacherous, especially when he heaps them upon us in great abundance, and with such earnestness and seeming passion, that we had need to pray him to forbear, and pray God to preserve us from being too cedulous. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 7. The full soul loatheth an honey-comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.] As hunger makes men relish the most distasteful food, when full stomachs loathe the most delightful; so poverty hath this advantage of plenty, that it disposes men to be thankful for the smallest blessings, though mixed with care and trouble; when the richer sort, if they be not very careful, are apt to be unsatisfied with, nay, to nauseate their most delicious enjoyments, upon which they have a long time surfeited.

Ver. 8. As a bird that wandereth from her nest; so is a man that wandereth from his place.] Men seldom change for the better; but as a bird that forsakes its nest exposes itself to danger, and cannot easily settle again; so he whose levity, or discontent, makes him rashly leave his country, or trade, or office, wherein he was well placed, too often undoes himself, but rarely mends his condition. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 9. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.] As balsam and fragrant perfumes marvellously refresh and comfort the natural spirits when they droop and are tired; so doth the presence of a true-hearted friend, and much more his faithful counsel, rejoice a man’s soul, especially when he is at such a loss, that he knows not how to advise himself.

Ver. 10. Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother’s house in the day of thy calamity; for better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother afar off.] Forsake not therefore a friend, whom thou, or thy father before thee, hast tried and found sincere, but betake thyself to him when thou art in distress, rather than to thy natural brother or kinsman, if he be not also thy friend; and, above all other, choose a friend near thee, if it be possible; for as a man that is closely joined unto us in near affection, is better than one of our nearest kindred, whose heart is not knit to us; so a good neighbour near at hand, is better than either friend or brother, who is so far off that we may perish before he come to our assistance.

Ver. 11. My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.] My dear child, if thou hast any love for him that was the instrument of giving thee a being, let such precepts as these make thee wise and good; which will both give thee the highest joy, and furnish me with an answer unto such as are apt to object the child’s miscarriages to want of care in his parents.

Ver. 12. A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and bideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.] He whose long experience and observation of things hath made him cautious and circumspect, foreseeing a calamity before it comes, withdraws himself in good time from the danger, into a place of safety; but inconsiderate and cedulous persons are so easily abused by crafty men, that they not only quite overlook the mischief which even they intend against them, and go on securely in their accustomed tract till it overtakes them, but make haste to fall into, notwithstanding any caution that is given them.

Ver. 13. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.] It is a great weakness to trust him who is so rash, as to be bound for one whose ability and honesty is utterly unknown to him, especially for a woman whose way of life makes her credit justly suspected; therefore have nothing to do with such an inconsiderate person, without the utmost security that he can give for the payment of what he owes thee.

Ver. 14. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.] He that spends all his time in nothing else but proclaiming his praises extravagantly who hath bestowed great benefits upon him, disparages rather than commends his benefactor, in doing so much for a base flatterer; who magnifying rather his own deserts
than the other's bounty, incurs hereafter his just displeasure. See Arg. [e]
Ver. 15. A continual dropping in a very rainy day,
and a contentious woman, are alike.] He is in an ill
case, the roof of whose house is so ruinous, that in
a very rainy day, when he shall be wet if he go
abroad, cannot be dry at home; and he is no better
that hath a scolding wife, who torment him herself
if he stay at home, and makes him tormented with
the jeers of others, if he go abroad.
Ver. 16. Whosoever bideth her, bideth the wind,
and the ointment of his right hand, whileth bewrayeth itself.
For it is altogether as impossible for him to keep the
wind from blowing, and from being heard when it
blows, or to inclose a fragrant perfume in his hand,
so that it shall not be smelt, as to make her hold her
tongue, or to conceal her bawling humour, which
she herself proclaims. See Arg. [f]
Ver. 17. Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth
the countenance of his friend.] As nothing is more na-
tural, so nothing is more powerful than society; for
as iron is sharpened and brightened by iron, so one
wit whets another, one friend encourages and cheers
another; nay, all sorts of passions are stirred up, and
men are made either good or bad, by mutual conver-
sation. See Arg. [f]
Ver. 18. Whoso keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the
fruit thereof; so be that wasteth on his master shall be
honoured.] As he that diligently looks after the
fig-tree, (especially whilst it is young and tender), and
preserves it from suffering by drought, by vermin,
or by wild beasts, &c. shall at last eat of its pleasant
fruit; so he that faithfully defends his master’s
person, or reputation, and takes care his estate be not
wasted, shall in due time be largely rewarded by him
for his integrity.
Ver. 19. As in water face answereth to face; so the
heart of man to man.] The inclinations and designs
of other men appear as plainly to the minds of those
that are wise, as their faces appear to themselves in
the water; where, as every man will find such a
countenance represented to him, (whether sour or
smiling), as he brings when he looks into it, so he
ought to expect no other affectations from others, but
such as he expresseth towards them. See Arg. [g]
Ver. 20. Hell and destruction are never full; so the
eyes of a man are never satisfied.] The appetite of
man is as unsatiatable as his eyes, which still desire
some new sight; and are as far from being filled
with all they have seen, as the infernal places with
all the souls they have received, or the grave with all
the bodies it hath devoured.
Ver. 21. As the refining-pot for silver, and the furnace
for gold, so is a man to his praise.] As gold and silver
is tried by putting it into the fire, which discovers
whether it be pure or adulterate; so a man is discover-
ed what he is, by trying how he can bear praises,
commendations, and great applause, which will shew
either the virtue or the vanity of his mind. See Arg.
[h]
Ver. 22. Though thou shouldest Bray a fool in a mor-
tar, among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness
depart from him.] The folly and wickedness of some
men is so incurable, that though unto reproofs, and
chidings, and threatenings, you should add stripes
and blows, nay, beat and knock them, like wheat in
a mortar, bruising their bodies (as we speak) till
they are black and blue, they would not grow a whet
the wiser or the better for it.
Ver. 23. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy
flocks, and look well to thy herds.] Whether thou be
a private person or a prince, let me advise thee to
look after thy business thyself, and not to trust
merely to thy servants and ministers; but go some-
times and take an exact survey of the state of thy
affairs; and more particularly, make it part of thy care
to visit thy flocks and thy herds, and know in what
case they are. See Arg. [i]
Ver. 24. For riches are not for ever; and doth the
crown endure to every generation?] For as no riches
are so durable as these, which increase and multiply
continually; so the greatest estate, even in these,
unless it be well managed, will in time be brought
to nothing; nay, the crown itself will not continue
to many generations, without due care to preserve its
revenue, of which these ought to be thought the best
and most lasting portion.
Ver. 25. The hay apprècié, and the tender grass
sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.
For the maintenance of which the earth brings forth
plentifully, without any more pains of thine, than
only in the spring-time to drive the flocks and herds
into pastures, and to look after them, when the earth
brings forth grass, and young herbs for their food,
and to gather hay in due season, which even the
mountains afford for their fodder and winter-provi-
sion.
Ver. 26. The lambs are for thy clothing, and the
goats are the price of thy field.] And if thou takest
care to preserve them, they will preserve thee; for
the sheep and the lambs will afford thee wool to make
thee clothes; and with the price of thy goats thou
mayest purchase a field, for the sowing of corn to
make thee bread.
Ver. 27. And thou shalt have goats’ milk enough for
thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the main-
tenance of thy maidens.] And both of them, espe-
cially the goats, will yield thee milk enough for thy
own food, and for the sustenance of all thy family,
both men-servants and maids, who may hence be
provided with all things necessary for their livelihood.
See Arg. [k]

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Argument.—This chapter consists, as the fore-
going did, of several mixed observations; some
belonging to the concern of private persons, others
to the public.

[a] It begins with the difference between a good and
a bad conscience, which discovers itself when
there is any danger, of which men are apprehen-
sive. And in the next verse, he observes the dif-
ference between a nation, when it is bad and when it is good; when its manners are depraved, they fall into confusion; and when they grow better (for most interpreters take the word Adam in the latter part of the verse collectively, for the body of the people), then they keep their government, and live happily. Especially when they have a wise and prudent prince, who is here also to be understood in opposition to many princes, either together or successively, by whom a nation is miserably harassed, when its wickedness brings upon it such a punishment. So Melanchton understands ver. 2, "The complaints," saith he, "are very usual concerning the negligence of princes, their exactions, oppressions, want of care to administer justice, &c. and the people still accuse them and their court; but God accuses both princes and people, and for the sins of the people he gives them ill governors; as Solomon here teaches, that for the transgression of a country, i.e. both of prince and people, many are the princes thereof; that is, none reign long; or many reign together, opposing and thrusting out one another. Now, for the cure of this he gives a singular admonition, necessary both for prince and people, which is this, that a prudent and wise man makes empire durable. That is, a wise prince will sometimes depart from his own right to quiet things, and suffer some inconveniences to prevent greater; as Fabius and Cicero did. And, on the other side, people are to be advised, lest they draw greater mischief upon themselves by seditious counsels, than those which they study to remedy."

[b] And there is none greater, he seems to tell us in the next verse, (ver. 3.), than when power comes into the hands of a beggarly fellow; who is void of all humanity, and forgets even what he himself was, and all the miseries of poverty, which he perpetuates upon them who are poor already. So Maldonate (and he alone I think) expounds that phrase, even lechem, and there is no food, to signify, before the corn be grown out of the earth; and by the sweeping rain, understands not such rain as beats out the corn when it is in the ear, but which washes away the seed before it spring up. Even so, he that spoils the poor, takes away from them, after a manner, what they have not, and extirpates the very seeds of future riches, which he deprives them of all means of gathering. Upon which subject the Lord Bacon hath discoursed very ingeniously, in his 8th book of the Advancement of Learning, chap. ii. parab. 34. "This parable," saith he, "was by the ancients expressed and shadowed forth under the fable of two horse-leeches, one full and the other hungry. For oppression, coming from the poor and necessitous person, is far more grievous than that of the rich and the full, because it seeks out all tricks for exactions, and leaves no corner unsearched where money may be found. This kind of oppression was wont also to be resembled to sponges, which being dry suck in strongly; but not so, being moist. And the parable comprehends in it a profitable instruction, both to princes and to people. To princes, that they commit not the government of provinces or offices of charge to indigent and indebted persons; and to the people, that they suffer not their kings to struggle with too much want."

But none have glossed better upon this place; than an excellent prelate of ours, Bishop Sanderson, in his sermon upon Prov. xxiv. 10. 11. where he discourses to this effect, "That it is in matter of power, as it is in matter of learning. They that have but a smattering of scholarship, it is observed, are the forerunners to make ostentation of the few scraps they have, for fear there should be no notice taken of their learning, if they should not shew when they can; and yet they do it so untowardly, that when they think most of all to shew their scholarship, they most of all, by some gross mistake or other, betray ignorance. Even just so it is in the case of power, when men of base spirits and condition have gotten a little of it into their hands, who conceive their neighbours will not be sensible what goodly men they are, if they do not by some act or other shew forth their power to the world; but having minds too narrow to comprehend any brave and generous way to do it, they cannot frame to do it by any other means, than by trampling upon those that are below them, which they do beyond all reason, and without any mercy."

Which he illustrates very handsomely upon 1 Sam. xii. 3. "If a mean man," says he, "in any of our towns or hamlets, be a little gotten up to out-top most of his neighbours in wealth, or to be got into some small authority, to deal under some great man for the disposing his farms or grounds, or have something to sell to his necessary neighbour, who must buy upon that day; or have a little money lying by him to furnish another, who, to supply his present needs, must sell off something of that little he hath, though at an under-rate, or the like; it is scarce credible, (did not every day's experience make proof of it), how such a man will skrew up the poor wretch till it falls into his hand, &c. Conclude hence, all ye that are of generous births and spirits, how unworthy that practice would be in you, wherein men of the lowest minds and conditions can, in their proportion, not only equal, but even exceed you; which should make you not only to hate oppression, because it is wicked, but even to scorn it, because it is base."

[c] After this follow several bad characters of other men; and among the rest, of him that oppresses his brother by usury and increase, ver. 8. where these two words, Necheb and Turbib, do not seem to signify greater exortion, and more moderate gain. For all usury is Necheb, as it respects the debtor of whom it is taken; and Turbib, in respect of the creditor who is the gainer by it, whether it be great or less; that the one gives, and the other receives. If there be any
other difference between these two, it either lies in this, that there were several sorts of usury whereby men increased their estates, or the one signifies the advantage men made of their money, and the other the advantage they made of their goods. About which I do not think fit to trouble the reader any farther; nor to examine whether their opinion be true, who say, 'the king was to take away their unjust gain, and give it to better men.' I have left that undetermined, whether God or man should punish the usurer, but have expressed all that the law forbids in this case, which was to take interest (as we speak) of their brethren, especially of their poor brethren, which some think are only meant; but I have contented myself to say, are principally meant.

[d] And in the next verse but two, (ver. xi.), he observes that such men as grow rich, though it be by fraud or oppression, are apt to have a mighty conceit or their own wisdom; which understanding men, though never so poor, see through, and discern to be at least but craft; and many times to be more than that which we call purse-pride, when they have no more wit, but just to save and hoard up money. Upon which place some observe that Solomon secretly intimates riches to be an impediment to wisdom, and poverty a great advantage; because the one is apt to blow men up into a vain opinion of themselves, and the other to make them humble and modest; the former of which is the greatest enemy, and the latter the best friend to wisdom. Certain it is, that money having so large a command, as to be able to purchase not only dignity, but great veneration from the multitude, that have that is apt to look no farther neither for wisdom nor virtue; which made a confident to Caesar (as the Lord Bacon observes) give him this counsel, that if he would restore the decayed state of the Roman Commonwealth, he must by all means take away the estimation of wealth; "for these," saith he, "and all other evils, together with the reputation of money, shall cease, if neither public offices, nor any other dignities, which commonly are coveted, be exposed to sale." And the truth is, saith that Lord, (Advancement of Learning, book i.), as it was rightly said that blushing is the colour of virtue, though sometimes it comes from vice; so we may truly affirm that poverty is the fortune of virtue, though sometimes it may proceed from misgovernment and improvidence. And he adds farther, "that the magnificence of princes and great men, had long since turned into barbarism and rudeness, if the poverty of learning had not kept up civility, and decency of life."

[e] For bad princes, Solomon shews, ver. 12. bring great contempt and misery upon a nation, as bad men (ver. 13. 14.) bring mischief upon themselves. But no princes are more grievous to their subjects, than such as are needy, and yet have no goodness. So I understand, with the LXX. verse 13, where that word we render raging, is well translated by the Vulgar an hungry bear, as Bochartus hath shown.

[f] Who also seems to me to have expressed the sense of the next verse most fully, when he observes, that according to the manner of the Hebrew language, there is something wanting in one part of the verse, which is to be supplied out of the other. As when the psalmist saith in Psalm. lxxiv. 11. "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand:" he means elsewhere, out of his courts. And Psalm. xci. 7. "A thousand shall fall on thy side," (viz. the left hand), "and ten thousand on thy right hand." In like manner, we are to understand this verse; as if he had said, "A prince that wams understanding, and is a great oppressor, shall shorten his days; but he that hates covetousness shall prolong them." See Parab. i. de Animal. Sac. i. iii. c. 25.

[g] In the two next verses I have endeavoured to set out several senses together, as he that examines them will perceive. And in ver. 21. have taken some notice of the Lord Bacon's observation, that men may be bribed by something besides money, to pervert justice; and more commonly by other respects than by that. His words are these, (Advanc. of Learning, b. viii. ch. ii. parab. 23.): "Easiness of humour in a judge, is more pernicious than the corruption of bribes. For all persons do not give bribes, but there is hardly any cause, wherein somewhat may not be found, that may incline the mind of the judge, if respect of persons lead him. For one man shall be respected as his countryman, another as an ill-tongued man, another as a rich man, another as a favourite, another as commended by a friend; to conclude, all is full of iniquity where respect of persons bears sway; and for a very slight matter, as it were for a bit of bread, judgement is perverted.

[h] The rest of the chapter contains plain observations, concerning several sorts of good and bad men; and concludes with the repetition of a remark he had made before, ver. 12. about the state of public affairs, which are then in an ill condition, when bad men get into authority. For virtuous men begin then to be so ill treated, that they fly or hide themselves, to avoid the abuses which they see will be put upon them. This the LXX. suggest, when they translate the first clause of the verse thus: "In places where the impious bear sway, the righteous sigh and groan," i.e. some are imprisoned, and sent into obscurity, by the unjust prosecution of the wicked, and others obscure themselves, and groan in secret under those oppressions, till there be a turn of affairs (which Solomon here intimates they may expect in due time), by the fall of those wicked persons, and the preference of better, which invites virtuous men to appear again, and by the countenance they then receive, to propagate piety among the people; who are so ready to conform themselves to the example of their governors, that there is no blessing we should pray for so earnestly as this, especially...
when the days are evil. Then that saying of the
son of Sirach should be perpetually in every good
man's mind, to support and comfort him, when
he is constrained perhaps to lie hid and conceal him-
sel, to avoid trouble and danger: "The power of
the earth is in the hand of the Lord, and in due
time he will set over it one that is profitable," Ec-
cclus. x. 4. Read the foregoing verses.

Ver. 1. "THE wicked fleeth when no man pursueth;
but the righteous are bold as a lion." An
evil conscience makes men timorous and cowardly,
like a faint-hearted soldier, who runs away at the ap-
pearance of an enemy, and never so much as looks
back to see whether he pursue him; but men of in-
tegrity are not easily affrighted, but proceed like a
young lion, with an undaunted resolution, even in ha-
zardous undertakings.

Ver. 2. "For the transgression of a land many are the
princes thereof; but by a man of understanding, and
knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged." There
are many mischiefs that people draw upon them-
sems by their wickedness, and this especially, that
falling into factions, every one thinks himself fit to
govern, and, throwing down one ruler after an-
other, they can come to no settlement, till they grow
better and more considerate; and then some truly
prudent and pious person arises, who takes the right
course to heal these breaches, and prolong the govern-
ment in peace and tranquillity. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 3. "A poor man that oppresseth the poor, is like a
sweeting rain, which leaveth no food." But there is none
more wicked and intolerable, than a needy fellow
that is got into power, but hath lost all sense of the
miseries of the poor, whom he squeezes and spoils
like a violent rain, which, instead of refreshing the
corn, as gentle showers do, beats it down, and lays it
so flat, that it can never recover, but a famine comes
upon the land. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 4. "They that forsake the law, praise the wic-
ked; but such as keep the law contend with them." From
such a man there is none so wicked but he shall re-
cieve encouragement, for they that make not the law
of God their rule, but their own lusts, will em-
ploy and promote the vilest person, and find some-
things or other to commend him for; but they that
resolutely observe God's law, are so far from ap-
proving such a wicked wretch, that they oppose him,
and declare, as we say, open war against him.

Ver. 5. "Evil men understand not judgement; but they
that seek the Lord understand all things." For the
minds of men that give up themselves to wicked-
ness are so depraved, that sometimes they do not so
much as understand, and at no time regard the dif-
ference between right and wrong, much less the dif-
fERENCE that God doth and will make between them;
but men piously affected understand and consider all
things of this nature so exactly, that they are care-
ful not to offend in the least against their neigh-
bour.

Ver. 6. "Better is the poor that walketh in his upright-
ness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich." An
honest upright man, that acts sincerely in all that
he doth, though he be never so poor, is far happier,
and more useful and commendable, than a crafty per-
son, that knows how to wind and turn himself every
way, though by his fraud and tricks he grow never
so rich and great. See xix. 1.

Ver. 7. "Who keepeth the law, is a wise son; but
he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father." He
that studies the law of God, and observes the
rules of sobriety and temperance, and other virtues
which it prescribes, is likely to prove a wise son, in
whom his parents may find comfort; but he that had
rather go into merry company, than into the school
of the wise, and there spend his time and his money
in sensual pleasures, is a shame, as well as a vexation
to them.

Ver. 8. "He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth
his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the
poor." He that increases his estate by usury, for the
money or goods which he lends to his poor brother,
(contrary to the laws provided in that case, Exod. xxix.
14. Deut. xxi. 19. 20.) shall not be able to make
his family so great as he intended, but those riches
shall be translated into some other hands, which will
exercise that charity which he neglected. See Arg.

Ver. 9. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing
the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." He
that refuses to hearken unto God, and to obey his laws,
deceives himself, if he thinks by his prayers to
please him, and make an amends for his crimes; for
God will be so far from hearkening unto him, that
he will abominate such prayers as tend to nothing,
but to make God a partner with him in his sins.

Ver. 10. "Whose causeth the righteous to go astray in
an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but
the upright shall have good things in possession." He
that studies, by false suggestions, and deceitful repres-
sentations, to seduce upright men into dangerous prac-
tices, shall fall himself irrecoverably into that very
mischief which he designed for them; while they,
preserving their integrity, shall remain not only safe,
but in a flourishing condition.

Ver. 11. "The rich man is wise in his own conceit;
but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out." A
man whose labours and cares have such success,
that he grows very rich, and is courted and compli-
mented by every body, is apt to fancy himself much
wiser than other men; but when a man of mean con-
dition, who applies himself more to understand the
value of things than to get riches, comes to discourse
with him, he easily discovers, and makes it appear,
that he is but a fool. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 12. "When righteous men do rejoice, there is
great glory; but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden." When
the righteous are 'advanced to places of trust
and authority, there is excessive joy among all vir-
tuous men, and the whole kingdom feels the happy
effects of it, in beautiful order, peace, security, and
plenty at home, and in the honour and reputation it
hath abroad; but when the wicked get up into power, it makes a rufel change, being wholly em-
ployed in finding reasons to ruin others, whose safety, 
then lies in concealing themselves in their estate. See 
ver. 28.

Ver. 13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: 
but he that confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.] 
He that studies to hide and extenuate, rather than to 
leave his sins, shall be so far from escaping by his 
impudent denial, that he shall make himself obnoxious 
to severer punishments; but he that ingenuously 
acknowledges he hath done amiss, and not only pro-
mises to do so no more, but gives some proof of his 
amendment, shall obtain pardon both from God and 
man.

Ver. 14. Happy is the man that feareth always; but 
he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.] 
From which happiness if he would not relapse, let him 
constantly preserve a pious fear and dread of 
God and of his displeasure in his mind, and be cautious 
and circumspect in all his actions; for if he be presumptuously confident and careless, and, because 
God is so gracious, regard neither his commands nor 
his threatenings, he will fall back into deeper guilt 
and misery.

Ver. 15. As a roaring lion, and a raging bear, so 
is a wicked ruler over the people.] A lion and a bear 
are not more dreadful to the weaker beasts, especially 
when hunger presses them to seek a prey, than a 
needy prince, who fears not God and loves not man, 
is to the poorer sort; who have not wherewithal 
to fill his unsatiable desires, and are the surest to be 
invaded, because the least able to resist his power. See 
Arg. [e]

Ver. 16. The prince that wanteth understanding is 
also a great oppressor; but he that hateth covetousness 
shall prolong his days.] But it is very great ignorance, 
not only of religion, but of all things else, that makes 
a prince grievously oppress and pillage his people; 
which makes his reign short, as well as unhappy; 
while he that, hating such exactions, is kind to his 
subjects, prolongs his days in much tranquillity. See 
Arg. [f]

Ver. 17. A man that doth violence to the blood of any 
person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.] 
He that murders a man, and, pressed with the weight of 
his guilt, or pursued by the avenger of blood, flies 
to save himself, shall never think himself safe, but 
lead a restless life to his very grave; for all men 
looking upon him as a common enemy, shall refuse 
to succour him; no, though they see him falling 
headlong into a pit, which he is not aware of, they 
shall not stop him, but let him perish.

Ver. 18. Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved; 
but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.] 
There is no such way to be safe, as to be honest and 
sincere in all a man’s words and actions; for he that 
endeavours to preserve himself by fraud and deceit, 
though he can wind and turn, and hath several shifts, 
he thinks, to save himself by, yet in one or other of 
them he shall perish; for the time will come, when 
he will blindly choose the wrong course, and com-
monly when he begins to fall, he sinks utterly, and 
cannot possibly recover himself.

Ver. 19. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of 
bread; but he that followeth after vain persons shall 
have poverty enough.] He that is a good husband in 
the management of his estate, shall have the satisfac-
tion of providence sufficiently, if not plentifully, for 
himself and his family; but he that is careless, and 
follows the courses of loose and wicked companions, 
can reap no other fruit of his negligence, but the 
most miserable want and beggary.

Ver. 20. A faithful man shall abound with blessings: 
but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.] 
He that is true to his word, and just in all his dealings, 
shall have abundance of blessings from God, and be 
well spoken of by men; but he whose eager desires 
make him heap up wealth, by right or by wrong, 
brings such guilt upon himself as makes him exe-
crable unto both.

Ver. 21. To have respect of persons is not good: for, 
for a piece of bread that man will transgress.] It is a 
wicked thing in a judge to incline to consider the qua-

tity of the person, and not the merits of the cause 
that is brought before him: for though perhaps at 
the first he could not be corrupted under a great sum 
of money, yet having accustomed himself to it, he 
will at last sell his sentence at the lowest rates, nay, 
be moved by the smallest considerations to forsake 
the rules which ought to guide him. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 22. He that hatest to be rich hath an evil eye, 
and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.] 
An envious, covetous wretch, that cannot look upon 
what another hath without grudging, is pushed on, 
by his impatient desires, to get riches, without mak-
ing any distinction between good and evil; never con-
sidering, in that disturbance of mind wherein he lives, 
that all may be gone in a moment, and he then stand in 
need of the mercy of those whom he would not pity.

Ver. 23. He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall 
find more favour than be that flattereth with the tongue.] 
He that rebukes a man for his evil courses may dis-
please him, nay, anger him at the first; but when he 
considers that he could have no other end in it 
but his good, he will have a greater kindness for 
such a man, than for one that humours him in every 
thing, and with flattering words soothes him up in those 
faults which he ought to take the freedom to repre-
hend.

Ver. 24. Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, 
and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the com-
partment of a destroyer.] He that lays hands upon all 
that he can rap and rend from his father or mother, 
and thinks it no sin, or no great one, (pretending they 
keep him too short, and have no need of it themselves, 
or do not use it, &c.), not only keeps the company of 
spendthrifts, but is wicked enough to be a highway-
man, and murder others, to feed his own luxury.

Ver. 25. He that is of a proud heart, stirreth up 
strife; but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall 
be made fat.] A man of a proud and insolent spirit, of 
ambitious and vast desires, is never quiet; but as he 
lives in perpetual quarrels, so hath no satisfaction in
what he enjoys, nay, many times wastes it all in suits and contentions; but he who, confiding in the good providence of the Almighty, hath an humble and contented mind, lives peaceably with others, and comfortably within himself; nay, thrives many times, and abounds with plenty of all good things.

Ver. 26. He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely, be shall be delivered.] He that relies wholly upon his own judgement is like to miscarry, because he follows the conduct of a fool; but he that, distrusting himself, takes good advice, and follows it, escapes many mischief, into which the other rashly runs, and is delivered out of many dangers, in which the other perishes.

Ver. 27. He that giveth unto the poor, shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes, shall have many a curse.] He that relieves those that are in want, shall be so far from wanting himself, that he shall thereby procure God's blessing to increase his estate; but he that regards not the miseries of others, nor is willing so much as to know them, for fear of having his compassion moved towards them, shall draw upon himself the curse of God as well as men, and fall into many and grievous fortunes.

Ver. 28. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; but when they perish, the righteous increase.] When wicked men are advanced unto power and authority, they favouring such only as are like to themselves, it makes good men scarce, who are forced to withdraw, and hide themselves from their tyranny; but when they perish, (as they shall at last,) and good men come in their place, then the righteous openly shew themselves, and the number of them increase by their example, and by the encouragement they enjoy under righteous governors. See Arg. [b]

CHAP. XXIX.

The Argument.—[a] This chapter includes the collection of Proverbs, made by the men of Hezekiah, and contains more advices proper to a prince (as he was) than any of the rest; but ushers them in with a general admonition, how dangerous it is not to profit by reproofs or corrections, (such as he and his people had by the hand of Sennacherib;) which when they work upon men's spirits, there is some hope of them; but when they become refractory, inflexible, and obstinately reject them, they are near to a final destruction. This wicked temper of mind he expresses by hardening the neck, which is a metaphor, as Bochartus truly observes, (L. iii. de Sacris Animal. c. 41, p. 2.), taken from oxen, who being put forward, draw back, and withdraw their necks and shoulders from the yoke; and sometimes are so headstrong and stiff-necked, that they cannot be brought to submit to it; unto which the scriptures often allude, both in the Old Testament and the New; for instance, Exod. xxxii. 9. Acts, vii. 51. And hither belong those expressions, Isa. xlvi. 4, where he saith his people had an iron sinew, &c. and that in Jer. v. 5, where he saith, they "had broken the yoke, and burst the bands."

[b] Then follows a tacit admonition to princes, to be good, by describing the happiness which a nation then enjoys; which they had noted twice before in the foregoing chapter, ver. 12. &c 28. but thought it so considerable and so needful, that they insert it here again, and the latter part of it once more, ver. 16. being a famous observation of his father David, Psal. xii. 9, where he takes notice, "how the wicked flourish, and go about confidently into every place, nay, take the liberty to do as they list, when men of no account are exalted to power; who, take no care to oppose growing wickedness, and to keep every man within the bounds of his duty."

[c] And after an admonition, (ver. 31,) that the study of wisdom is the only preservative against the lusts of uncleanness, which in the preface to this book, as it is observed, destroys abundance of young men, and their estates also, (for lust is very blind and very prodigal,) the next observation (ver. 4.) is concerning kings again; where isb terumotb, which we translate a man, that receiveth gifts, is in the Hebrew phrase a man of obligations. For so the word terumotb always signifies, throughout the whole Bible, heave-offerings which were offered to God; which would make one think that isb lerumotb (a man of heave-offerings) signifies here a prince that is sacrilegious, and robs the church of its proper goods; or, if we will not take it in that strict sense, it denotes one that will suffer himself to be pacified by gifts, and bribed to wink at the most enormous crimes, which he ought to have severely punished; or that is so unjust, as to find fault perhaps with the most innocent persons, on purpose that they may appease him, offering him a part of their estate to save all the rest: One or other of these is the most literal exposition of the words. But I have contented myself, with the LXX. (who render it χορήγων,) to use only general expressions in the paraphrase, which include all these, and whatsoever else that is contrary to the duty of his office. Rabbi Solomon doth not differ much from the sense of the LXX. when he translates it a proud man, he who heaves and lifts up himself in his own thoughts, imagining he is above all laws, and not bound to observe them.

[d] In the next verse, (ver. 5.) I have not wholly neglected the sense to the LXX., who refer the last clause to the flatterer himself; who cannot escape the hatred of those whom he hath ruined by his pernicious praises, or base compliances, with all their humours, &c. which is more fully expressed in the following sentence, ver. 6. where I have interpreted one part of the verse by the other.

[e] And then seems to follow again, a double admonition to princes, or those that govern under them. First, not through laziness, or contempt, to refuse to examine a poor man's complaint, and do him right.

[ver. 7. Secondly, not through profaneness, pride,
or carelessness, to stern admonition, especially any warning that is given of danger, &c. ver. 8. For when he says, "The righteous considers the cause of the poor," he seems to mean a righteous prince, or judge, (and so I have explained it in the paraphrase;) for who else is to consider of the din, (as it is in the Hebrew,) the cause of the poor which is to be judged? None but they, and the advocates who are to plead it; all which persons are obliged in conscience to search into the truth of things; not to be sparing of their pains, (though matters be intricate, though the labour be like to be long, though they shall get nothing by it,) to find out the bottom of a business; which he that refuses to do, nay, perhaps rejects the complaint of the poor, or beats them off with big words, or out of the hardness of his heart, or the love of ease, or fear of great men, or any other respect, will not give them audience, or not consider and redress their grievance, Solomon pronounces him a wicked, an impious person, and accordingly God will proceed against him.

[f.] Such men indeed may scorn these threatenings, nay, laugh at them; but thereby they will endanger the bringing all things into confusion, as Solomon observes in the succeeding words, ver. 8. where men of scorn (as it is in the Hebrew) signify such as mock at religion, and at all things that are serious; whom the LXX. call ἄσεσις, lawless, pestilent men, that regard neither God nor man, but only their own wicked humour; which brings the kingdom or place where they live into the greatest danger. Which we express by the word ensnare, and other translations by words of the import; which I have expressed in the paraphrase, but shall not mention here, because I would leave room to insert the most admirable discourse of the Lord Bacon upon this verse. "It may seem strange," saith he, (b. viii. Advanc. of Learn. chap. ii. part ii.) "that in the description of men, made and framed, as it were, by nature to the ruin and destruction of a state, Solomon hath chosen the character not of a proud and insolent man, not of a tyrannical and cruel, not of a rash and violent, not of an impious and lewd, not of an unjust and oppressive, not of a sedulous and turbulent, not of an incontinent and voluptuous, no, not of a foolish and unstable person; but of a scorners. But this is a judgment most worthy the wisdom of that great king, who best knew the causes of the preservation or subversion of a state. For there is not commonly the like plague unto kingdoms and commonwealths, as when counsellors or senators, and such as sit at the helm of government, are by nature scorners. For, in such persons, that they may win the reputation of undaunted statesmen, do ever exceed the greatness of dangers, and insult over those who give them their just weight, as timorous and faint-hearted people. They scoff at all mature delays, and meditated debatings of matters by consultations and deliberation, as a thing too much tasting of an oratory vein, and full of leudiousness, but nothing conducing to the sum and issue of business. As for fame, at which a prince's counsels should especially value, they content it as the spittle of the vulgar, and a thing that will quickly be blown over. The power and authority of laws they regard not at all, but look upon them as cobwebs, that ought not to stop matters of consequence. Counsel and precautions, foreseeing of events afar off, they reject as mere dreams, and melancholy apprehensions. Men truly prudent, and well seen in affairs, of great resolution and counsel, they de-fame with jibes and jests. In a word, they do at once overturn all the foundations of civil government; which is the more to be attended to, because they secretly undermine it, and do not assault it by open force. And it is a practice which is not yet so suspected among men as it deserves."

[g.] The latter end of the next verse, (ver. 9.), some refer to the fool, others to the wise man. They that refer to the fool understood it two ways, much to the same purpose. Some thus, "The fool will always be angry, or deride, so that the wise man cannot put in a word." Others thus, "The wise man shall be either irritated or derided by the fool perpetually." As much as to say, he shall get nothing, if he contend with a fool, but either to be derided or provoked to anger by him. This I have taken some notice of in my paraphrase; but the other being the most common opinion, that he speaks of the way of wise man's dealings with a fool, I have principally regarded. And the Lord Bacon hath made this pertinent reflection upon it, (in the forenamed book and place, parab. 13.), which it will be profitable to set down here. "It is accounted a wise rule, 'not to contend with our betters,' but it is a no less useful admonition, which Solomon here gives us; 'not to contend with a worthless person,' whom we cannot meddle withal but upon disadvantageous terms. 'For to overcome, is no victory; but to be conquered, a foul disgrace.' And it is all one, in the management of his contention, whether we deal sometime in a jesting way with him, and sometime in a way of disdain and scorn. For which way soever we turn, we shall come off with the loss of our credit, and not be able handsomely to disengage ourselves. But the worst of all is, when the person with whom we contend hath something of the fool in him, (as Solomon speaks); that is, if he be both witless and wittif, have some heart, but no brain."

[h.] The 10th verse I have expounded of a magistrate, that hath the courage to make inquisition after, and prosecute notorious offenders; and in the latter part of it, have put two senses together. As I have done also in the next, (ver. 11.), where the word raubet, spirit, being differently interpreted, hath produced several expositions. For some take it to signify anger, others to signify words, or the sense of the mind. They that take it for anger, expound it thus: 'A fool shews all his anger immediately; but
a wise man keeps it in, till he hath a fitting opportunity to express it most to purpose." If we understand it of words, the sense is; "A fool blurs out every thing that comes in his head, but a wise man speaks only as much as is necessary." If it signify the sense of the mind, then this is the meaning; "A fool utters all that he knows; but a wise man conceals many things." But the great person before named (in the same chapter, parab. 15.) thinks none of these hit the mark. "For this parable," saith he, "corrects principally, not the futility of vain men, who utter easily as well what ought to be kept secret, as may be spoken; nor the bold liberty of such as without discretion and judgement fly upon all men, and upon all matters; nor talkativeness, which troubles others even to a surfeit; but another vice more close and retired, viz. that ill government of discourse which of all other is not prudent and politic. And that is, when a man so orders his discourse in private conferences, as whatsoever is in his mind, which he conceives any way pertinent to his purpose, out it comes at once, and as it were in one birth, and in a continued speech. This is that which doth much prejudice business. For, first, A speech broken off by interlocutions, and instilled by parts, penetrates deeper than that which is continued; because that in a continued discourse, the weight of things is not precisely and distinctly taken, nor by some convenient pause suffered to fix; but one reason drives out another, before it be thoroughly settled in the mind of the hearer. Secondly, There is no man master of such powerful and happy eloquence, as to be able, at the very first dash, as we speak, to strike him dumb and altogether speechless with whom he discourses; but he will have something to answer, and perhaps to object on the other side. And then it falls out, that those things which should have been reserved for replication and refutation, being disclosed already, and tasted before-hand by this unadvised anticipation, quite lose their strength and their grace. Thirdly, If a man do not pour out all he hath to say at once, but deliver himself by parcels, now one thing, and anon casting in another, he shall perceive by the looks and the answer of him with whom he discourses, how every particular passage affects him, and what acceptance they find with him; so as what is yet remaining to be spoken, he may with the greater caution either suppress or select what is to his purpose." Thus that great person, who herein hath followed the LXX. who express the sense, rather than translate the words, in this manner; "a man void of understanding brings out his whole mind; but a wise man dispenses it part by part." [1]

The like observation he makes upon the next verse, (ver. 12.), where, by lies or words of falsehood, (as the Hebrew hath it), the LXX. truly understand ἤλθον δάμαν, an unjust report, that hurts our neighbour by calumnies, or false accusations, (as the word commonly signifies in scripture, particularly Psalm. liii.) unto which if a ruler lend his ear, he will never want lewd informers, or rather slanderers in his court, to work upon that inclination. Melancthon hath observed upon this verse, that the love of lies (as he translates it) comprehends a great many vices; according as there are divers sorts of lies; which are all repugnant to that eminent virtue of truth, in which a prince ought to excel; viz. "vanity or perfidiousness, breach of promises, calumnies, suspicions, sophistry," which defends bad causes by colourable pretences to please great men, and persuades the prince, by plausible arguments, that he is tied to no rules; unto any of which if a prince be inclined, his ministers will not fail to make him break his word perpetually, to abuse him with false stories, to confuse into his mind unjust suspicions, and to find colour for any thing, though never so wicked; of all which he gives examples.

But none hath opened this parable comparably to the Lord Bacon, in the place before-mentioned, (parab. 13.), "Where he takes it for an easy credulous temper in a prince to believe detractors and sycophants, without examination. From whence proceeds such a pestilential breath, as infects and corrupts all his servants. For some of them feel out the fears and jealousies of the prince, and increase them by fictitious tales; others awake and stir up the furies of envy, especially against all those that are best deserving in the state. Others seek to wash away their own guilt, and the stain of a foul conscience, by defaming better men. Others promote the suits of their friends, and their preferments, by traducing and debase the merit of their competitors. Others compass fabulous representations of their enemies, as if they were upon a stage; and innumerable such like. And these are the arts of such of the prince's servants, as are of a more wicked disposition. As for those who are by nature better inclined, and by education more civilized, when they perceive their innocence to be no safe sanctuary, (their prince not knowing how to distinguish between truth and falsehood), they put off the propriety of their manners, and accommodate themselves also to the air of the court, and are carried about therewith in a servile manner. For, (as Tacitus saith of Claudius), there is no safety with that prince, into whose mind all things are conveyed, as it were, by infusion and direction from others. And Comines saith very well, It is better to be servant to a prince, whose suspicions have no end, than to one whose credulity hath no measure."

After this there follows, in the next verse but one, another admonition to princes, ver. 14. And then a double admonition to private parents, to take care of the good education of their children, as the best way to make a kingdom happy, and to prevent the increase of wickedness. About which he interposes an observation between these two. In the explanation of all which verses, I have had some respect to the LXX. without any injury to our translation. [k] And so I have done in the next, ver. 18. where by vision, or rather prophecy, they understood.
an expounder of the laws of God to the people; which was the office of the prophets: who had a great stroke also in the government, (as Melancthon observes), and by their counsels, when they were followed, made the kingdom flourishing. As Elisha for about 70 years governed the counsels of their kings in the greatest calamities, particularly in the siege of Samaria; after whose death the kingdom endured not much above an hundred years, agitated by perpetual seditions. Thus Isaiah, by his counsels to Hezekiah, a good part of the people were saved. From such examples, saith he, we may gather, that when prophecy ceased, the people were scattered, (so he translates the word para), because, for want of wholesome counsellors, there follow in empires, strifes of ambition, and seditions, which all tend to utter ruin; yet the second part of this sentence, saith he, admonishes us, that a remnant should be safe in their dispersions, viz. such as kept the divine doctrine. For want of which God takes away men's instructors, when they are not obedient to wholesome precepts. So the LXX. translate this verse, (minding the sense rather than the words), "there is no expounder of the law to a wicked lawless nation," &c. God strips them even of their teachers; as some translate the word para, perish; which hath various significations, most of which I have expressed in the paraphrase; because they all agree well enough to this place.

[1] There is an exposition of the next words, ver. 19, which would be very natural, if the wise man spoke only of the commands of ministers to their servants; which they pretend sometime not to hear, that they may not do as they are bidden. But he speaks of their not amending the faults of which they have been already told; which is not the quality of all servants, and therefore I have said a slave. Or else we must interpret it, as the LXX. do of σεβασμός, a stubborn obstinate servant, whose heart is hardened against all words that can be spoken to him, good or bad.

[m] But I must make no more glosses, for fear of prolonging this preface too much beyond its just bounds. And therefore I shall conclude it with the Lord Bacon's observation upon ver. 21. (where the LXX. have expressed but a little part of the sense), "that both princes and private masters should keep a mean in the dispensation of their grace and favour towards servants; which mean is threefold. First, that servants be promoted by steps, (or degrees), not by leaps. Secondly, that they be now and then accustomed to repulses. Thirdly, (which Machiavil well advises), that they have ever in their sight before them, something whereunto they may farther aspire. For unless these courses be taken in raising of servants, princes shall, instead of thankful acknowledgments, and dutiful observance, be repaid with nothing but disdain and contumacy. For from sudden promotion arises insolence; from constant attainment of their desire proceeds impatience of being denied; and there being nothing remaining that they can farther wish, alacrity and industry will cease."

Ver. 1. *He that is often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* He that, having received frequent reproofs from good men, and perhaps corrections from God, will not yield in the least, but absolutely refuse to be guided by them, and submit unto them, is in danger to fall, and that on a sudden, into utter and irreparable ruin. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear the rule, the people mourn.* When just and merciful governors make virtuous men grow numerous, (xxviii. 18.), a kingdom is happy; but when an unjust man rules, the wicked get into places of trust, and make the people miserably groan under their oppressions. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 3. *Whoso loveth wisdom, rejoiceth his father; but he that keepeth company with harlots, spendeth his substance.* A young man, whose love of wisdom and virtue preserves his body as pure as his mind, and his estate as entire as both, gives the greatest joy to his father; as on the contrary, nothing can be a greater grief to him, than to see his son so sotish as to maintain a company of harlots; whose covetousness being as unsuitable as their lust, devoureth all that he hath. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 4. *The king by judgement establisheth the land; but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.* A king that administers justice exactly to all his subjects, restores his kingdom to a good estate, though it had been before in great disorder; but he who, having no respect to equity and right, takes the most illegal courses to enrich himself, subverts it utterly, though it be never so well settled. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 5. *A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.* He that soothes up his neighbour, by commending all that he doth, though never so directly against his interest, is so far from being his friend, as he imagines, that he is a traitor to him, and leads him unawares into such dangers, that when he finds himself perplexed in them, he will treat that flatterer as his greatest enemy. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 6. *In the transgression of an evil man, there is a snare; but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.* A naughty man hath an heavy heart at last, when he finds himself undone by those very arts, whereby he thought to have ruined others; but pious men are always cheerful, nay, full of joy; both to think that they are in safe and secure ways, and to see the evildoer caught in his own wickedness.

Ver. 7. *The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it.* A righteous man, when he is in authority, not only readily receives, and patiently weighs, the complaints of the poorest person, but is at the pains to study his cause, that he may fully understand it, and do him right, though he thereby incur hatred to himself from the adverse party; but a wicked man will not attend unto it, or not use due care to be well instructed in it. See Arg. [e]
Ver. 8. Scornful men bring a city into a snare; but wise men turn away wrath.

There are no greater fools than scorners, who, by laugh at all things serious, whether sacred or civil, put a kingdom into a combustion, when it is disposed to be quiet, and turn things topsy-turvy, and endanger its utter ruin, unless good and cautious men prevent it, who by their great piety turn away the divine vengeance, and by their prudence, and other virtues, divert the fury of men, which those scorners have raised. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 9. If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether be rage or laugh, there is no rest. Let a man be never so wise, it is no purpose for him to dispute or to enter into any contest with an obstinate fool; for which way soever he deal with him, whether angrily or pleasantly, there will be no end of the controversy; but the fool will still have the last word; nay, it is well if he do not either restless rage, or laugh one to scorn. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 10. The blood-thirsty hate the upright; but the just seek his soul. Men enviously wicked, who stick not to kill those that oppose their desires, above all others hate, and would destroy, an upright magistrate, whose integrity makes him courageously endeavour to bring them to condign punishment; but such a person all virtuous men love the more heartily, and labour to defend and preserve from their violence; or to revenge his death, if he should perish by them. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 11. A fool uttereth all his mind; but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. A fool is so inconsiderately transported by his passion, or conceit of himself, that when he comes to treat of any business, he can put no stop to his discourse; but runs on till he hath poured out all that he thinks upon that subject; but a wise man represses the heat and forwardness of his spirit, that he may pause and take time to declare his mind, not altogether, but by parcels. See Arg. [i]

Ver. 12. If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked. A prince who hearkens to the false suggestions of those that tell him he may do what he pleases, or who easily believes, without any examination, all the stories and accusations that are brought against others, fills his whole court with so many wicked men, that it is hard to find an honest minister or officer among them. See Arg. [j]

Ver. 13. The poor and the deceitful man meet together; the Lord lighteneth both their eyes. The world is made up of several sorts of men; of poor, for instance, who are faint to borrow; and of rich, who lend them money, and perhaps oppress them; but these would all agree well enough, when they meet together, if they would but consider that there is one Lord, who makes the sun to shine equally on all; and who intends all should live happily, though in an unequal condition. See xxii. 3.

Ver. 14. The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever. A king that administers justice equally to all his subjects, and cannot be moved by the power or interest of the greatest persons to deny it to the meanest, but faithfully and sincerely sets himself to help the poor to their right, or to defend them from violence and wrong, takes the surest course to settle himself in the affections of his people, and continue his kingdom for many generations.

Ver. 15. The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. The way to make a child wise and virtuous, is not only to instruct him in his duty, but to check him when he is in fault; and that not merely by reproof, but by the sharp discipline of the rod, when the other will do no good; for if he be left to his own will, or rather to wander after his own inclinations without such restraints, he will prove in all likelihood a disgrace to his mother, by whose indulgence he was spoiled; nay, fly perhaps in her face, and openly reproach her.

Ver. 16. When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth; but the righteous shall see their fall. When the wicked grow numerous, by growing great, ver. 10, they take the greater licence to transgress, and wickedness increases, by having authority on its side; but let not the righteous thereby be discourage, for the wicked men are, the shorter their reign; and they that preserve their virtue, shall have the pleasure to behold their downfall.

Ver. 17. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. It may seem most for thy ease to let thy child alone, without giving correction or reproof; but let me advise thee to put thyself to this trouble, to save thyself a greater, viz. many anxious and restless thoughts, which his ill-doing will raise in thee, or rather to give thyself the highest delight, when, by thy care of his education, he proves a great ornament unto thee.

Ver. 18. Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. Where there are none to instruct the people, and expound the will of God unto them, they first grow idle and careless, and run into all licentiousness; till, growing refractory and ungovernable, they be abandoned by God to destruction; but when they are not only well taught, but also strictly observe the laws of God, they remain in a prosperous happy condition. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 19. A servant will not be corrected by wards; for though he understand, he will not answer. A slave, and he that is of a servile nature, is not to be amended by reason and persuasions; no, nor by reproofs or threats; for though he be hear, and understand too, what you say, yet he will not obey, till he be forced unto it by blows. See Arg. [l]

Ver. 20. Sear them a man that is hasty in his words, there is more hope of a fool than of him. Observe it when you will, you shall commonly find that he who is forward to speak to a business before his betters, or before he understand it, or hath considered it, is so conceited of himself, that a man wholly ignorant may sooner be rightly informed, than he who is so well persuaded of his own sufficiency.

Ver. 21. He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length. It is so hard for a man of base condition to bear a sub-
den preferment handsomely, that it is dangerous to express too much kindness to a servant at the very first, by feeding him delicately, clothing him finely, or indulging him in too much ease, liberty, and familiarity; for this is the way to make him saucy, if not contumacious; nay, to dominion, and take upon him, as if he were a son, and perhaps endeavour to disinherit the heir of the family.  

Ver. 22. An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.] A man prone to anger is very troublesome and unpeaceable, being apt to quarrel about trifles; and, as he offends very often, so, if he let it proceed to rage and fury, he falls into abundance of sins, both in word and deed, against God, and against his neighbour.  

Ver. 23. A man’s pride shall bring him low; but honour shall uphold the blemish in spirit.] Proud and contumelious behaviour, instead of procuring men respect, throws them into the contempt and hatred of all, and at last into destruction; but he whose meek and lowly mind makes his kind and obliging, shall be highly esteemed, and the esteem he hath shall be his support when others fall to ruin.  

Ver. 24. Whose is partner with a thief, wasteth his own soul; be heareth cursing, and be compasseth it not.] He that partakes with a thief, by harbouering him when he is pursued, or by receiving stolen goods, &c., hath the same guilt upon him with the thief himself; and as he hath put his own life in danger to save the thief’s, so this will engage him to run his soul into greater danger to save his life; for beingadjured to discover what he knows, he will go near to forswear himself, for fear of being hanged.

Ver. 25. The fear of man bringeth a snare; but woeto put his trust in the Lord, shall be safe.] As all inordinate fear bereaves a man of counsel and power to help himself; so he that stands in too great fear of what men can do unto him, will be ensnared in many sins, and peril also, to avoid their displeasure; but he that confides in the Lord, hath his wise always about him, and being raised above such low considerations, preserves his integrity; and that, by God’s good providence over him, will preserve him in safety.  

Ver. 26. Many seek the ruler’s favour; but every man’s judgement cometh from the Lord.] There are multitudes of men, who are ambitious to be known to their prince, and obtain his favour for honour and preference; but few remember that there is a greater Lord than he, the Sovereign of all the world, whose grace and favour should be principally sought; for he determines and orders what every man’s portion shall be; and will both judge of men’s deserts better than any earthly king can do, and deal with them according as they behave themselves, in that condition where in they are.

Ver. 27. An unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in his way, is an abomination to the wicked.] There is such a perfect antipathy between vice and virtue, that all truly good men extremely abominate him that doth misbelief in the world, though he be never so great and powerful; as, on the contrary, the evil-doer hath every man that behaves himself uprightly, though never so useful, in utter abhorrence and detestation.

END OF THE THIRD PART OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

THE FOURTH PART OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

CHAP. XXX.

THE ARGUMENT.—[2] This chapter contains a new collection of pithy sayings, which some fancy to be Solomon’s, and therefore translate the two first words thus: “The words of the collector, or gatherer.” But why Solomon should call himself by this name, and also, instead of the son of David, style himself the son of Jachin, seems to me unaccountable. And therefore it is most reasonable to follow our translation, (unto which the wisest of those that adhere to the Vulgar are forced to consent, as most literal), and to look upon this chapter as a fragment of some wise sentences, delivered by one whose name was Agur, and his father’s name Jachin; unless we will conceive, that this son of Jachin (whosoever he was) had gotten the name of collector; because, though he was a very wise man, yet he composed nothing himself, but only gathered out of other wise men’s works, such instructions as he thought most profitable, and comprised in a few words a great deal of sense.

[2] Which conjecture, if it be admitted, nothing can better explain his disclaiming the title of a wise man, (ver. 2.,) which he would not assume to him-
self, because he was only a collector from other authors, and did not pretend to have discovered or invented any thing himself.

But take it how we will, some of his observations are here annexed to the proverbs of Solomon, after the manner of other writings of this nature. In which, (as Melancthon notes), the greater part of a book belonging to one author, some notable speeches of others have been inserted; as some of the hisylilae verses, they say, were into the poem of Phocillides.

[c] And those words of Agur are called Masa, which we translate prophesy, either to denote the weightiness of the sentences, or that they were called and selected out of some work of his, then remaining in their records, as fit (in the judgement of the men of Hezekiah, who perhaps extracted them) to accompany the proverbs of Solomon. And they seem to me to be answers to several questions propounded to him, by his scholars, Ithiel, (who was the principal,) and Ucal; who came to him, as if he had been an oracle, to be resolved in some hard doubts; asking him, in the first place, just as they did Apollo of old, (as Aben-Ezra conjectures,) who was the wisest man? to which he replies, ver. 2. "He that is sensible of his own ignorance." Much like this saying of Socrates, "This only I know, that I know nothing;" and of Pythagoras, who also refused the name of wise; which made much for the reputation of his wisdom.

[d] Upon this subject Agur enlarges, ver. 3. 4. wishing his scholars, especially Ithiel, (who I suppose asked the question in the name of the rest,) to be sensible how imperfect all human knowledge is, by considering how little or nothing we know of the works of God, which none can understand, (though they be perpetually before our eyes,) but he alone that made them. And therefore advises him to make it his principal study, to understand what belonged to his own duty, (which is the best part of knowledge,) ver. 5. and herein also to be content with what God hath revealed, and not pretend to be wiser than he hath made us, ver. 6.

[e] After which he gives answers, as I take it, unto other questions which Ithiel propounded to him. And first, about prayer. For Agur, having repressed their busy humour of inquiry into all manner of things, had raised, we may suppose, some devotion in his scholars' hearts, which made them desire to be directed in it. And he gives them most wise advice, ver. 7. 8. to be very cautious what they prayed for; just as in Plato, (Acliüb. 2.) we find Socrates giving Alcibiades instructions about this, as a principal part of virtue; in the practice of which, he tells him, there had need to be the greatest care, lest we imprudently ask those things that are not good for us. But he could not give Alcibiades such directions about this matter, as Agur here gives Ithiel and the rest of his scholars, whom he informs, that the true knowledge of God is the chiefest good, and therefore to be desired in the first place, above all other goods; and then, (according to our Saviour's rule, in after-times), having first sought the things that belong to religion, he directs them to beg of God moderate desires of all earthly things, believing that we are safer in mediocrity, or middle estate, than either in fulness or in want. To which purpose Melancthon and others have gathered together many sayings out of other writers. But none have given such reasons for this choice of a middle state, as this wise man, ver. 9.

[f] After which, he seems to answer a question, which Ithiel propounded about moral virtue; which having been largely treated of by Solomon, he only gives him one caution against hard-heartedness to slaves and servants, ver. 10. of which the Hebrew nation were generally very guilty, and thereby unconform for that favour which they begged of God in their prayers, which ought to have disposed them to be favourable unto others.

[g] And then he gives the character of four sorts of men, who are exeserable unto God, and therefore ought to be avoided by all those that would be good, ver. 11—14. Which I must pass by without any farther account of them, but what I have given in the paraphrase; because the 15th verse hath much difficulty in it, and therefore requires some time to be spent in opening it. Bochartus thinks to solve some of the difficulty, by giving a new signification of the word alfa. But all interpreters, in a manner, taking it for that thick worm in waterish places, which we call an horse-leech, I do not think fit to forsake our translation, nor to refer the beginning of the verse to that immediately foregoing, (as some do in this manner; "Detractors can no more leave off evil-speaking, than the horse-leech leave off sucking," &c.), but rather to those words immediately following in this same verse, which, notwithstanding, I take to have some connection with all the four foregoing, as I have expressed it in the paraphrase. For it seems to me to be an answer to some such question as this, (which the disciples had propounded to their master Agur, after the manner of enigmatical discourses or riddles), What is most unsatisfiable? which he chuses to give an account of in this place, the better to represent the nature of those wicked men he had spoken of before; especially of the two last, the proud, and the tyrannical or extortioner, whose desires are a gulf that can never be filled.

And at the first he seems to have thought but of two things, viz. the grave and the barren womb, which might be called the daughters of the horse-leech, because they are so perfectly of the like nature, in regard of their unsatisfableness. But he presently adds another, nay, a fourth came into his mind, as no less greedy; viz. the thirsty earth, (which in those hot countries sucks up all the rain as fast as it falls, though never so much), and the fire, which devours all the fuel that is laid upon it. And this he expresses after the manner of the Hebrews, who, intending to mention four things or more, separate them at first, and begin with a lesser number, and proceed then to all that they designed. There
are many examples of it, in Amos, i. 3. 5. 9. etc. and here in this book of Proverbs, vi. 16. and below in this chapter, ver. 18. 21. etc. Indeed there is no example like this, where the sentence begins with two, and then says three, and then four; but that might be usual of which we have no exact example, and therefore I do not look upon this as a sufficient objection against this way of explaining this verse. Which the LXX. hath taken in the Roman edition; which runs thus; "The horse-leech hath three beloved daughters, and these three are never satisfied; and there is a fourth that saith not it sufficeth."

There are those who compare certain vices with these four insatiable things, and not inetly; the desire of revenge, to the grave; libidinous desires, to the barren womb; covetousness, (or rather drunkenness), to the thirsty earth; and ambition, to the devouring fire. And it is easy to shew, how fitly all these are resembled to the horse-leech; it being the vulgar saying, That-harlots: (for instance) are the horse-leeches of young men, sucking all their money from them, and exhausting their bodies too. And the servant in Plautus, when he was about to rob the chests of the two old men, says,

Jam ego me veritas in birudinem, etc. Now I will turn myself into a horse-leech, and suck out their very blood.

But I forbear such things, because there are others more necessary to be added for the understanding the rest of the chapter.

And that which next follows, ver. 17. is a reflection upon the first generation of wicked men, (mentioned ver. 11.) who sinned against the first commandment of the second table, (as we speak,) and for their rebellion against their parents were adjudged to death by the law of Moses, Exod. xxii. 15. 17. Lev. xx. 9. Deut. xxxii. 18. And to make them more detestable, their carcasses perhaps were thrown into some loathsome place, called the valley of carcasses, or dead bodies, (Jer. xxxvi. 40.) and the valley of crows, (as Bochartus conjectures,) or ravens; whom the wise-man here speaks of. And besides this, they who abused their parents, being of a villainous nature, were likely to turn rogues, and to commit robberies, murders, treasons, or such like horrid crimes; which would bring them to the gallows, (as we speak,) or some such infamous death. The Jews indeed might not suffer the body of one that was hanged, after he had been put to death, to remain upon the gibbet, beyond the evening of that day wherein he was executed. But they were not forbidden to let him lie unburied in some polluted place, when he was taken down; and in some cases, we find, they did let dead bodies hang a long time, as we read, 2 Sam. xxi. And therefore Paulus Fagius (upon Exod. xx. 12.) expounds these words of Agur after this manner; "Disobedient children shall come to an ignominious death, and end their days by an halter, or other punishment, and so become crows' meat." But there is no necessity of this explication. For we may conceive such a wicked person to be drowned by the judgement of God upon him, and his body to lie floating on the water, or to be cast on shore, where the ravens (who frequent the waters) come and pick out his eyes, at which they are observed to fly sooner than any other part. He might perish also in other countries, where the infamous punishment of the gibbet was in use, or be slain in battle, and left there to be a prey to beasts and birds. Among which the raven is the rather mentioned, some think, because the young ones are so impious (as Vossius speaks, l. iii. de Idol. cap. 85.) as to fall upon the old ones, and kill them, when they are hungry, (which is affirmed by Elian and others,) and therefore more fitly employed to pick out the eyes of undutiful children. But I look upon this as having more of fancy than solidity in it; for others, for the quite contrary reason, make the eagles here named, because they are a bird full of piety, as Jast has been observed out of Aben-Ezra by our learned Dr Castell, whose discourse in his speech, (in Schol. Theol. p. 31.) I shall here set down, for the explication of one word in this verse, wherein he differs from all other; which is mp. This word the Hebrews interpret doctrina, and understand the verse thus; "The eye that despiseth the doctrine or the lesson of his mother." But there is no known root in their language from whence to derive this signification of it; and therefore that Doctor, out of the neighbouring languages, translates it rather sermon, old age; which is most agreeable to the sense of the place. For that which is despised by the eye is some corporal defect, (as crookedness, wrinkles, shaking of the head, etc. and such like things which attend old age,) not any thing belonging to the mind. And besides, saith he, it better agrees with what follows of the eagle's young ones picking out such an eye; for they are observed to bear a regard to their ancients, and to have a kind of piety in them.

In the next words, (ver. 18. 19. 20.) he resolves another riddle they put to him, which was this; What things are most obscure and unaccountable, though ordinary and common? Of which I have given the best explication I could in the paraphrase, but cannot farther explain here, without making this preface (which must necessarily be longer than ordinary, unless I should give no account of several things in the following verses which require explication) a great deal too much exceed the proportion which belongs to it.

Next to these four inscrutable things, he subjoins four more, which are very grievous, or rather intolerable, because of their great indignity, (ver. 21. 22. 23.) the two first belong to men, and the disturbance of the commonwealth; the two last to women, and the disturbance of private families. And there are reasons peculiar to each; as gr. a slave is intolerable when he gets the sceptre into his hand, (as they have done sometimes), partly because such persons, being ill-bred, generally have base principles, and are accustomed
to vile things, and grow insolent by their good fortune; partly, because they are full of fears and suspicions, especially that they are despised and contemptuous; and therefore believing that they are not loved, they will be feared, and care not what cruelties they exercise to keep men under. Part of which the Jews object to themselves in Sarchet Judah; where they bring in a philosopher laying this to their charge, that they affecting division in the city of Toledo, proceeded to such boldness and sauciness, that they would openly strike Christians; which fulfilled, saith he, that of Solomon, XXX. 22.

[1] The like might be said of the other three; but I shall only observe concerning the last, that there being another way of explaining it besides that which is most obvious, I have not omitted it; because the LXX. go that way, who thus render it; “when a servant-maid casts her mistress out of doors.” And there is a third way, which I have not mentioned, because it is not so agreeable to the words; “when the mistress is expelled, but the maid also is taken to wife, and preferred in the husband’s love;” as N. de Lyra takes it: examples of which we have in history, that have proved very fatal to families. But this preface, as I said, would be too long if I should name them; therefore I pass to the next.

[2] Which seems to be an answer to this question, Quid aut magnum in minimis? what is great in little? or rather in the least? ver. 24. 25. 26. &c. where he teaches us several things: first, not to admire merely bodily beauty, strength, or beauty; but rather wisdom, diligence, and sagacity, to understand and pursue our own interest secondly, to admire the wisdom, and power of God in the smaller things; and thirdly, (as Maimonides adds,) to reflect upon our own degenerate state, who neglect our own greatest good, nay, mind not self-preservation, but rather destroy ourselves by vice and wickedness: and lastly, not to refuse admiration from the brutes. Among which, saith he, the ants teach us industry and forecast; the rabbits, not to attempt anything above our strength; the locusts, to preserve society by industry, and not to break it by sedition and disturbance of the public order; and the spider, to endeavour to excel in some art or other. All of them teach us not to rely merely on strength, but to use counsel and prudence.

The first and second of which reflections I find in St. Chrysostom, who discourses admirably (Hom. xii. ad Pop. Ant. p. 139.) of the wonderfulness of the divine actions, which is in so small a body as that of the ant, hath contrived such a perpetual desire of labour. To which if we attend, we cannot but receive this instruction, ut nihil est in minimo, non est in minimo; not to affect softness and delicacy, nor fly from sweat and labours. And when the wise man sends us, saith he, to learn of these little creatures, he does just as we are wont to do in families; when the greater and the better sort have offended in any thing, we endeavour to shame them, by pointing to the little children, saying, haec non est in minimo, haec non est in minimo. “Behold, one that is a great deal less than thou, how attentive and ready he is to do as he is hidden.”

[3] But what word which we translate casius, ver. 36. (which are not so small a creature as Solomon here speaks of, nor make their holes in rocks), Bochartus hath evidently proved, signifies a mouse in these countries, (whose hinder legs are longer than their fore legs), called by the Arabsians in their language asjanbu, whose craft I have briefly expressed in the paraphrase.

[4] In what is said of the locusts also, ver. 27. I have followed him; who observes, that to go forth is a scripture-phrase for making war. In which the general was wont to divide the prey among the soldiers after a victory; but the locusts, having no settled constant commander, divide among themselves. Yet I have not neglected our translation.

[5] Which in the 28th verse hath forsaken the ancient interpreters, who take semamid, for a spider, but for a small sort of lizzard, from its spots called stelles; which is accounted by all authors a very crafty creature; and to which the characters here given by Solomon do most properly belong. As the same Bochartus hath shewn at large, L. iv. c. 7. de Sacr. Anim. part 1. But if any have a list to understand hereby some sort of spider, they may read Cassius Secundus his little book, called Arachne: in which he represents the wonderful wisdom of God in the structure of this small creature, together with its admirable agility and cunning, both in weaving its webs and nets, and in hunting for its prey, (particularly for young lizards,) and in preserving itself; and its foresight of dangers, and of opportunities to catch its prey: for instance, against rainy weather, when other little creatures grow dull in their motion and in their sight. In short, he observes, that as there is nothing in appearance so mean, so abject, so small, in which the Creator of all is not to be adored, and whose usefulness is not very great; so there are five things which are admirable in that sort of spider, which he describes; the exhausted mutes which it spins out of so small a body, the wisdom of its contrivances, strength in fighting, knowledge of the future, and usefulness for medicine.

[6] And from all these four, some have noted, that an abridgment may be made of all that is necessary for the conservation of a kingdom in good estate; where first, case must be taken for provision of food, which we learn from the pianist; then for warlike and commodious dwelling, which we learn from the second sort of creature; and then that the concord and agreement among domestick men, which we learn from the third; and
that labour, industry, and ingenious arts, be encouraged and advanced, which we learn from the fourth.

[q] After the consideration of these four little creatures, of small strength and contemptible aspect, he places four others, which are great, stately, and undaunted, ver. 29, 30. &c. In which there are two considerable difficulties, one about that word in ver. 31, which we translate a grey-hound, (the Vulgar a cock;) though Malodium ingeniously conjectures the true reading in Saint Hierom was Gallus canis, which afterward came to be corrupted into Gallus), but I take rather for a horse, (as our margin hath it,) being a far braver and more stately creature than either of those, especially when he prances, and is managed by a rider.

The other is about the last words of the same verse, which are the character he gives of a king, (who perhaps is immediately placed after the begot;) because that creature in scripture is an emblem of majesty, Dan. viii. 5, 21. Isa. xiv. 9. Jer. i. 8. &c.), alium immo, which Bochartus translates, "against whom none of his subjects ought to rise."

For though many do, yet it is so contrary to their duty, and so dangerous, that he there calls him alium, against whom none arises. So Pallas was called by the Phoenicians, Eia Alkuma, the goddess against whom none made insurrection. And the city in Boozith that was sacred to her (she being reputed to be born there) was called Alacoemens; for though it was small and built in a plain, yet it always remained untouched and inviolated, because, out of reverence to the goddess, vicis interregni vicis plane, (as Strabo speaks,) all men abstained from all force and violence to it. Thus he discourses in his Epist. qua Resp. ad tres Quest. p. 43. And I find he had said it before in his Phaleg. second part, l. i. cap. 16. where he translates medici, alium, rex invictus, an invincible king.

But there is another conjecture, of a very learned man of our own, Mr. Poock, (Not. ad Greg. Abul. Pharn. p. 203,) which is so pott, that I could not omit it in my paraphrase. For, according to the Arabic-use of the word alium, (out of which language both Rabbins and Christians take the liberty to expound the Hebrew words of the Bible, when they are singular), the sense is still more pregnant, and sounds thus: "A king with whom his people is, or whom his people follow." For as when there is such a happy agreement between king and people, there is nothing more comely, so then he appears with the greatest and most awful majesty, and strikes terror into all his enemies.

Ver. 1. THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy; the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.] Here now follow some memorable sayings of Agur, who was the son of Ja-kheh, out of whose works these weighty sentences were collected, which he uttered like a prophetic teacher to Ithiel, one of his most eminent scholars, and to Ucal, another of them, but especially to the former. See Arg. [a] [c]

Ver. 2. Surely I am more brutish than a fool and have not the understanding of a man.] aspiring his wisdom, and desiring to be res
many difficulties, Agur modestly and humbly said, 
Do not call me wise; for I am so far from that acuteness which is natural to him who excels in wisdom, that I am stupid in comparison with such a person; nay, I cannot arrogate to myself the understanding of a common man. See Arg. [b] [c]

Ver. 3. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.] And as for improvements, which are made by the help of knowing persons, I have not had the advantages of many other men; for I was never brought up in the schools of the prophets, where I might have learned some wisdom; much less have I received the knowledge of such sacred mysteries as thou inquirs after; the most I can pretend unto, is only to know what belongs to a pious life. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 4. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?] But had I a greater reach, or been better bred, it would have been impossible for me to give an account of the works of God, much less of God himself. For where is he, among all the wise men, that ever went up into heaven and came down again, to tell us the order and the motion of the stars, and all the rest that is done there? Nay, who is it that can so much as give us the least account of the wind, but God alone? who hath it perfectly in his power to make it cease, and blow again, as he pleaseth. And, to come lower yet, who but he hath tied up the waves of the sea, that they should not exceed their bounds? or who hath fixed the earth (on which thou dwellest, and therefore art better acquainted withal) within such limits, as it never breaks? By what name is he called, that can explain these things? or if thou knowest, tell me the name of his son, or of his family, that, if he be dead, we may inquire of them.

Ver. 5. Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.] The most that any man can do for thy satisfaction is this, to send thee to the book of God, and bid thee be content with what he hath there revealed of himself, and of his will, which in every part of it is so sincere, and free from all mixture of deceit, that thou mayest safely rely upon it, and take his word, that he will protect and defend all those who, in obedience to his commands, trust him for what he hath promised.

Ver. 6. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.] Let this suffice thee, and do not pretend to greater acquaintance with his will, than really thou hast; by adding anything of thy own to God's word, and vouching it for his, which may bring thee into great danger of the severest punishments from him, for being guilty of the worst of forgeries, in counterfeiting divine inspiration.

Ver. 7. Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die.] And in answer to the question about prayer, (What things thou shouldst ask of God?) I have not much to say neither, for I would not have thee multiply words, but say, as I am wont to do, I humbly beg two things of thee, O God, which I most earnestly beseech thee I may not want, as long as I stay in this world.

Ver. 8. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:] The first is for my mind, that I may be perfectly secured from being deceived myself by false opinions, especially concerning thee and religion, and from being in any way guilty of deceiving other men; and then, for the supply of my bodily necessities, I desire thou wouldst neither give me scarcity nor superfluity, but, if I may choose, a middle between both: making me such a competent allowance as may be sufficient to maintain me decently in that state and condition of life wherein thou hast placed me. See Arg. [e]

Ver. 9. Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.] For I am sensible how great danger there is, either in having abundance of wealth, which may tempt me to be so profane and irreligious, as not only to forget the donor of all good things, but atheistically to contemn thy worship and service, nay, insolently to profess that I know no such thing as the Lord, nor have any thing to do with him; or in a beggarly condition, which may press me, first to be injurious to others for my own relief, and then to run into the fearful crime of perjury, to purge myself from the charge of theft, Exod. xxiii. 8. 11.

Ver. 10. Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.] As for rules of behaviour towards others, they are generally well known, and therefore I only admonish thee to avoid one thing, (to which our nation is too prone), that is, not to abuse any poor slave, whose condition is wretched enough; and therefore, for instance, rather excuse than aggravate his fault to his master, who perhaps is too rigorous; and be sure never to load him with unjust accusations, lest, being wronged by thee, and not knowing how to right himself, he appeal to the Lord, and pray him to punish thee, and thou, being found guilty, feel the heavy effects of his vengeance. See Arg. [f]

Ver. 11. There is a generation that curse their father, and do not bless their mother.] And now, to answer your inquiry, What company you should keep? There are four sorts of men I would have you set a mark upon, and cautiously shun: First, They that are fouly ungrateful to them from whom they have received many benefits; for such a sort of men there is, who have no sense of obligations, no, not to their parents to whom they have the greatest, but will upon their father, nay, wish him dead, and cannot speak a good word of their mother.

Ver. 12. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.] Next to these are a sort of hypocrites, who have a great opinion of their own purity, and would be thought by others very virtuous; but hide the great-
est filthiness, both in their minds and lives, (which either they do not see, or will not take care to purge away), under this outward garb of holiness.

Ver. 13. There is a generation, O bow lofty are their eyes! and their eye-brows are lifted up.] There is a third sort, whose pride and arrogance is so lofty, that it appears in their very countenance, and makes them superciliously overlook all other men, as if they were not worthy of the least respect from them.

Ver. 14. There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.] But the fourth and last sort is most mischievous, whose ravenous cruelty hath no example, unless you conceive a lion or wolf, that hath teeth both small and great, as sharp as swords or knives, coming with open mouth to devour every creature that is weaker than themselves; such is the savage oppression of tyrants, extortioners, calumniators, &c. who have no mercy upon the poor and needy, but make their condition (which moves compassion in other men) so insufferable, that they are weary of living any longer in the world.

Ver. 15. The horse-leech hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:] And here I will satisfy one of your other questions, What creature is most unsatiated? I answer, the horse-leech, which sucks the blood of other creatures till it burst; as those wicked men do the livelihood of the poor, till they ruin themselves. And in this perpetual craving more and more, without any end, there are two things so like the horse-leech, that they may be called her daughters; nay, there are three that are never satisfied, or rather four, whose desires cannot be filled. See Arg. [8]

Ver. 16. The grave and the barren womb, the earth that it not filled with water, and the fire that saith not, It is enough.] They are these; death, or the grave, which having consumed so many past generations, will as greedily swallow up and consume all that are yet to come; the barren womb, which is wont to be desires of children beyond measure; the earth, which drinks up all the rain that falls upon it, and still thirsts for more; and the fire, which devours all the fuel that is thrown into it, and never ceases to burn, as long as there is any thing to feed it.

Ver. 17. The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.] I will not end this, till I have pronounced the doom of the first sort of wicked men, now mentioned, (ver. 16), who are so ungrateful to their parents, as not only to disobey their commands, but to scorn, nay, and deride their persons, and mock at the infirmities of their old age; whose villainies shall bring them to an infamous end, and expose their dead bodies for a prey to the ravens (which frequent the Brooks that run in the vallies), and to the young eagles, who shall pick out those eyes, in which their scorn and derision of their parents was wont to appear. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 18. There be three things which are too won-
derful for me, yea, four which I know not:] To your next question, my answer is, that there are three things, whose motions are beyond my reach; nay, a fourth, which is the most unaccountable of all the rest. See Arg. [1]

Ver. 19. The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a maid.] First, the wonderful swiftness of an eagle's flight into the air, quite out of our sight, (xxiii. 5); secondly, the manner of a serpent's speedy creeping, without any feet, to the top of a slippery rock; thirdly, the way that a ship makes in the sea, though it seem sometimes to sink to the bottom of the water, and to mount up into the air; but, above all, the slipperiness of youth, (which is more inconstant than the air, &c.), and especially the impatience and restless tossing of a young man's mind, his cunning and slyness when he goes a-wooing, and the wonderful arts he hath to slide into the heart of a maid, and win her love.

Ver. 20. Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.] And yet the suavity of an adulterous woman is equal to this, both in crafty contrivances of secret ways to enjoy their filthy pleasures, and in casting a mist before her husband's eyes to conceal them, when she is in danger to be discovered. For having defiled his bed, she not only looks modestly and demurely, but professes the greatest innocence, and behaves herself as if she were the honestest woman, and the kindest wife too, in the world, like one that, having eaten some forbidden meat, wipes her mouth, and says, she has not so much as tasted it, but abhors to let it come within her lips.

Ver. 21. For three things the earth is diuost, and for four, which it cannot bear:] And to satisfy your other question, What things are most intolerable? my answer is, That three things make such a disturbance, that men groan under the load of them; nay, there are four, which are an unsupportable grievance unto those that are oppressed by them. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 22. For a servant when he is reigned, and a fool when he is filled with meat.] First, the insolent cruelty of a vile slave, when he is advanced to a throne. Secondly, the petulant rudeness of a fortunate fool, especially when he grows debauched, and is in one of his drunken fits:

Ver. 23. For an odious woman when she is married, and an handmaid that is beir to her mistress.] And, thirdly, a woman whose moroseness, pride, and passion, and such like ill qualities, make her hated by every body when she gets a husband: and, lastly, a poor maid-servant, when she is puff'd up by an estate, left her by her mistress, or, which is worse, that, having supplanted her mistress, and thrust her, first out of her husband's affections, and then out of doors, succeeds in her place, and becomes his wife. See Arg. [1]

Ver. 24. There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise. To these four
intolerable things, of which all complain, I will add four more, that are very contemptible, but much admired; for though they have no bodily bulk, their wisdom is exceeding great, and very elaborate. See Arg. [m] [pp]

Ver. 25. The ants are a people not strong; yet they prepare their meat in the summer.] First, the ants, who are a creature so infirm, that one crush of our foot kills multitudes of them, and yet so provident, as well as industrious, that they prepare granaries under ground, with wonderful art, to receive their food; which they gather and lay up in harvest-time, and secure it too, that it may serve for all the year. See vi. 8.

Ver. 26. The comies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;] Secondly, the mountain-mice are a feeble sort of creatures also, but they have a leader to give them notice of any danger, and are so cunning that they provide for their safety in high rocks; into which they have several entrances and outlet, that if they be assaulted in one port, they may escape at another. See Arg. [n]

Ver. 27. The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;] Next, the locusts, which herein indeed differ from the former, that they have no king to govern them; yet go forth like soldiers to battle, in good order; and when they fall upon the spoil, divide it among themselves without any quarrel or contention. See Arg. [o]

Ver. 28. The spider taketh bold with her bands, and is in kings’ palaces.] Lastly, (the spider, which weaves a curious web, or rather,) the little spotted lizard, which takes fast hold on the flat ceiling of houses, and there goes (with its body hanging down into the air) in pursuit of its prey; which as it nimly catches, so it intrudes itself to hunt for it, even in kings’ palaces. See Arg. [p]

Ver. 29. There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going.] And here, after the consideration of these four contemptible things, it will be fit to answer your last question, What things are most stately? and there are three; or rather four things, whose motion is majestic, and go after a kindly manner.

Ver. 30. A lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any.] First the lion, when he is come to his full growth, who is the most heroical and undaunted of all creatures, never turning his back for fear of the greatest multitude of hunters, or dogs that set upon him.

Ver. 31. A greyhound; an he-goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.] Next to him, a strong and generous horse, especially when he is girt and equipped (as we speak) for the battle; and then the he-goat, with his long beard, when he walks in pompous state before the flock; and lastly, a prosperous king, of invincible courage, especially when he reigns in the hearts of his people, and marches at the head of an unanimous, victorious army, whom none dare rise up to oppose. See Arg. [q]

Ver. 32. If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought roil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth:] If thy pride or thy passion hath engaged thee in some foolish action, whereby thou hast disgraced thyself, or made thee contrive and endeavour any thing that is unwarrantable, do not add one fault to another, by excusing it, or blaming any body but thyself for it, much less by quarrelling at those that admonish thee of it, and reprehend thee for it; but step at the first motion to this, and silently acknowledge thy error. See Arg. [r]

Ver. 33. Surely the charming of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the rose bringeth forth blood; so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.] For from little things there is an easy progress unto greater. And just as you see milk is first pressed out of the cow’s udder, and then being shaken in the churn is forced into butter, and as the nose, being wrong, though at first it only purge itself, yet if it be harder pressed, there comes out blood; even so, words passing to and fro, raise an heat, and that, if continued, stirs up anger, and that, making men vehemently insist upon their opinion or their desire, turns into scolding, and that in the issue grows up to quarrels, and irreconcilable enmities.

CHAP. XXXXI.

The Argument.—[a] It is generally taken for granted both by Hebrew and Christian writers, that king Lemuel, whose mother gave him the precepts contained in this chapter, was Solomon, whom Bathsheba took early care to instruct in his duty, being, as some of no small name fancy, divinely inspired with the gift of prophecy. But as all this depends merely upon conjecture, and that without the least ground, so there is no good reason assigned why Solomon should here be called Lemuel, and not by the name he hath, both in the beginning of the preface to this book, Prov. i. 1. and in the entrance of the first part, chap. x. 1. and of the last collection also (xxv. 1.) made by the men of Hezekiah; whom Grotesco fancies to be the king here mentioned, under the name of Lemuel, only for this reason, that this chapter follows the collection of proverbs made by his servants; which hath no force at all in it, for the words of Agur follow more immediately, which he cannot ascribe to Hezekiah. And therefore it is more reasonable to conceive this Lemuel to have been a prince in some other country, who had gathered some weighty sentences taught him by his mother, (whose name is unknown,) which he thought fit to adjoin to the foregoing, because they are very wise, and of great moment, as if they proceeded from a prophetical spirit. And it is only the vanity of the Jewish nation, who would enclose all wisdom within the bounds of their own country, which hath made them ascribe that which follows in this chapter to Solomon and Bathsheba. For which, as I said, there is no colour; but it appears by the history of the queen of Sheba, and the embassies which came from the kings thitherabout, who sent to hear the wisdom of Solomon,

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(1 Kings, iv. 31, 32), that there were, even in those
times, great persons very inquisitive after know-
ledge, as there had been in the times foregoing,
in those eastern countries, and in Egypt, which
was famous for wise men; 1 Kings, iv. 30, where
we read of the wisdom of the children of the East,
(f. i. e. Arabia, where Job, a considerable prince,
and the rest of his friends, lived in former ages),
and the wisdom of Egypt. Of which country some
have thought those famous men to have been, who
are mentioned in the next words, ver. 31, where
this demonstration is given, that Solomon's wis-
don excelled all the wisdom of those countries; for
he was wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and He-
man, and Chalcol, and Darda, &c.: upon which
words, Gasper Sanchez notes, that the Sedar Oalam
says, "these were Egyptian wise men." But it is
not good to take things upon trust; for I find upon
examination of the place, (which is chap. xx.
the greater book of that name), that it stickth no such
thing; but only this, that the sons of Zara, Zimri,
Ethan, Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, (mentioned 1 Chr.
ii. 6.), were prophets who prophesied in Egypt:
but however this be, that very book acknowledges
in the next chapter, that "there were prophets in
other countries before the law of Moses was given;
though after the delivery of it, the Holy Spirit,
they fancy, forsought all the world but them, im-
mediately upon the speaking of those words," Exod.
xxxiii. 16. xxxiv. 6. For which assertion, as there
is not the least shadow of reason, so, supposing it
were true, it must notwithstanding be confessed that
there remained still among other nations, many
excellent and wise persons, both men and women;
who had such communication also with the Jews,
that many of them were proselyted to their reli-
gion; which might have countenanced their au-
thors if they had said, (and it seems to me a better
fancy than any they have), that Lemuel's mother
was a Jewish lady, married to some prince of
another country, by whom she had this son, and
took care of his instruction in the wisdom of her
people.

And by the use of the word bar three times for a son,
in the beginning of this instruction, (which is no-
where used in this book before, nor in the whole
Bible more than once, Psal. ii. 14.), one would
guess this Lemuel to have been some great person
in Chaldea. For in the next verse also, (ver. 4.),
we meet with the word melachim, (kings), according
to the termination in the language of that country.

But this is all uncertain, and therefore I proceed
no farther in it; but only note, that whatsoever
was the mother of Lemuel, she was mightily solici-
tous to have him do well; as appears by ver. 2.
Which some think to be a passionate expression,
when she saw him incline to evil courses; as if she
had said, "What dost thou mean, my son?" &c.
But it is more likely, that it proceeded from a tender
concern for his well-doing, as soon as ever he grew
up, whilst he was yet innocent and untainted. And
that he might so continue, she gives him three, or
rather four, of the most proper advices that could
be thought of for a prince.

First, to subdue that lust, which she knew to be
very violent in youth, especially in young kings,
who have more provocations, and are apt to take
more licence, than other men; but bring thereby
such mischief upon themselves, and their king-
doms, as are not to be repaired, but often end in
their destruction, ver. 3.

In order to this, she admonishes him, in the se-
cond place, to avoid drunkenness, and to preserve
himself perfectly sober; whereby he would be fit
also for counsel, and be able likewise to give a
right judgement, when causes are brought before
him, ver. 4.; which some extend so far as to think
she would not have him drink any wine at all, or
other strong liquors, (of which there were several
made of honey, or dates, and divers other things,
which go under the name of shecker). But it is
more reasonable to look upon it, to caution against
excess; which is dangerous in all men, but espe-
cially in those that are to govern others as well
as themselves. For then they blunt out the greatest
secrets, as the Vulgar translate the latter part of the
verse, or grow furious and outrageous, as the
LXX. translate the same passage; but both of them
without any ground that I can see in the Hebrew
text.

In which follows, ver. 9. the true reason of this
prohibition, and then an account (ver. 6.) of their
condition, to whom a larger quantity than ordinary
of wine and strong drink is fit to be allowed. Not
to kings, who have innumerable ways to relieve
their cares, and to divert themselves when any thing
troubles them; but to poor miserable people, that
are ready to faint under their heavy burdens and
oppressions. For whom this is a present relief, and
the only one sometimes they are capable of, when
they are in a melancholy condition. And they that
are of such a temper, or are otherwise made exceed-
sing sad, can better bear a great deal of wine, with-
out any disorder, than the sanguine, and they that
are gay and merry. There are those that, by "men
ready to perish," have understood such as were con-
demned to die, and going to execution. Unto
whom it was the custom to give a draught of wine,
to support their spirits; and in the degenerate ages
of the Jewish commonwealth, they put something
into it to intoxicate the poor wretches, so that they
might be insensible of pain. And some imagine
this custom took its original from this place in the
Proverbs, though it be not the true sense of the
words. For the latter part of this verse, and that
which follows, ver. 7. gives the best explication of
the first; and they shew she speaks of those that
were miserably poor. And so the best Hebrew ex-
positors interpret those words, Deut. xxvi. 5. "My
father was a Syrian, ready to perish," that is,
extreme poor, and in want of all things.

And thus having enlarged this second advice a
little, she passes to the third; which is, (ver. 8.),
to take such care that justice be exactly adminis-
tered,
(without which no kingdom can subsist), as himself to undertake the defence of those who were in danger to lose a good cause, for want of an advocate to plead it for them, or to open the true state of it, &c. Especially she commends to him the patronage of strangers, orphans, and poor indigent people. The first of which, in the Hebrew, are called children of change, or that are passed by; that is, persons who have changed their country, or that are in danger to suffer grievous alterations in their condition, if right be not done them, or who are deserted by all, and have none to stand by them. Several other ways there are to explain the phrase, but to the same purpose.

[g] But the great care of parents being to see their son well married, she concludes with the description of such a wife as she would have him seek; which takes up the rest of the chapter, from ver. 10. to the end. And it is in the form of a poem, (as St Hierom takes it), consisting of a sort of lambs verse; each of which begins with a new letter of the alphabet in order, the tenth with Aleph, the eleventh with Beth, and so to the bottom. Which was an elegant sort of composition among the ancients, and a help to memory also, as we see in several psalms, and other parts of scripture.

Now, whether she composed these verses herself, or got her sense expressed by some eminent poet, cannot be known, nor is it material. But I do not think fit to follow the conjecture of Huetius, (in his late Demonst. Evang.), who imagines the words of Lemuel's mother to end with the ninth verse; and here to begin a distinct composition of some other person, suppose Solomon. For though this following poem be disjointed from the foregoing words, in the LXX. and differs herein from the rest that is in the beginning of every verse, the order of the Hebrew alphabet is observed; yet there being no words in the head of it, as there is in chap. xxx., and beginning of this chapter, to denote it to belong to another author, I take it to be of the same piece with the first nine verses; that is, to be a copy of verses, delivered to Lemuel by his mother, in commendation of an excellent woman; which perhaps she did not make herself, (though there be no proof of that), and both Deborah and Hannah we find were poets), but, notwithstanding, being recommended to him by her, would, she thought, have the same authority with him, as if she had been the author. And it is very observable, that the general character of such a woman as she would have him marry, is estebeth chajil, a virtuous woman, we translate it. Which word chajil signifies both strength, (or rather valour and courage), and riches, and virtue. And, in the description of fitting persons for the magistracy, Jethro in general, saith, they should be anshee chajil, (Exod. xviii. 21.), which we translate able men; and then follows more particularly wherein their ability should consist, such as, fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness. I take, therefore, estebeth chajil to include in it a great fear of God, (mentioned after-

ward, ver. 30.), which is so powerful as to endure one with courage to do well, when piety is contemned, nay, laughed at and abused; I have not, therefore, omitted this among other words, to express the force of this phrase.

[h] And then follow, after this, abundance of other good qualities, which are included in this; such as chastity, and such a care of her husband's estate, that he might have a perfect confidence in her management; love to him without moroseness; diligence in all household affairs; frugality, gentleness in the government of her family; a prudent care in the education of her children, and in setting all the family to some employment or other; and increasing also her husband's estate, and yet giving liberally to the poor; affability and courtesy to all, &c.; which excellent endowments if her son found in a wife, she knew it would be a certain means to preserve him from following other women, (ver. 3.) when he took perfect delight in her company; and from drunkenness also, (ver. 4.), which few fall into who entirely love their wives, and study to please them in all things; for they generally abhor this loathsome vice. In order to this, she would have him marry such an one as he could perfectly confide in, and never in the least suspect of any levity, or unfaithfulness, or carelessness, when he was abroad, ver. 11. and would never be cross to him, but always loving, and kind, and pleasing, when he was at home, ver. 12.

[i] An excellent housewife also, prone to take any pains herself, that she might give a good example to others; particularly in the linen and woollen manufacture, in which the greatest women, it appears by ancient authors, constantly employed themselves heretofore, with such diligence, as is highly praised in their books, ver. 13.; where, to express her propension to this work, he ascribes a willingness and forwardness to her hands, just as, Prov. xxi. 25. he makes the hands of the sluggard to be averse to labour.

[k] Which turns to a great account, she shews, both in foreign commodities, ver. 14. and in the purchase of land, ver. 16. which the good housewife herself views, and walks about with great expedition, (ver. 17.), tucking up her garments, (as we speak), that she may be fit for motion every where, and not minding fine clothes more than her business, nor, for fear of spoiling them, neglecting that, but preferring strength in her arms acquired by labour, before the ornaments wherewith they are wont to be adorned.

[l] The profit of which she finds is so great, that it makes her love labour better than sleep, and when there is haste of work, to continue it all night; so ver. 18. may be expounded.

After which follows, ver. 19. another instance of humble greatness. Then her charity to the poor, ver. 20. her care of her own family, ver. 21.; where the last word having different senses, I have expressed them all in the paraphrase.

[m] And then is wisely mentioned, ver. 22. her
magnificence in the hanging of her house, and of her bed, and in her own apparel; which was the more allowable when the poor were not neglected, and the decking herself and house did not make her forget their necessities. The particular words there I have not room to explain. Nor those which follow, ver. 23. (after she had mentioned the honour her husband would get by such a wife, ver. 24.) for I think it is needful to give a brief account of ver. 25.

[n] Which seems not unfaithly translated by Castalio to this sense, "That she, being thus amply provided, and fortified, as it were, against accidents, need not fear any want in future times. But considering what follows, ver. 26. 27. I have chosen only to touch on that sense, and to take the strength and honour for the excellent qualities belonging to her; which I have called her principal ornaments, because the Hebrews are wont to express that which adorns any person, and is most proper to them, by the name of clothing; as Psal. cxxxii. 9. "Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness."

[o] The rest I must wholly omit, and only observe, that the fear of the Lord in the conclusion (ver. 30.) is the foundation of all these virtues, (which will either not be found where there is no devout sense of God, or not be constant and equal, but vary as several passions govern and rule their spirits), especially when it is in such a high degree, that a woman values herself for fear of the Lord, more than any thing else. So the LXX. translate it: "A prudent woman is commended, but she praises the fear of the Lord;" which may have this sense also, that her virtues commend religion unto others. Religion itself is honoured by her excellent virtues, which are so exemplary, that they make others in love with them, as well as with her.

I conclude all with the observation of Melanchthon, That this description, which he calls speculum beatae matronae, is altogether simple and plain, without any such allegories as Simonides used, who said, "He was happy that married a wife like a bee;" and that all this, in a manner, is comprehended by the apostle in those words, 1 Tim. ii. 8ff. "She shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety." Faith, saith he, is the acknowledgement of the true God, and confidence in his Son Jesus Christ, (that is, belief of the whole gospel), out of which springs the love of God, and from thence the love of her husband and children; and then holiness, or sanctification, which is that virtue we call chastity; and lastly, temperament, as he translates it, moderation in meat and drink, or rather, all manner of sober behaviour, and prudence, in the government of the family, and in the moderation of all sorts of expenses, &c. Which things the apostle particularly mentions; because in the enumeration of virtues, it is the manner of the holy writers, to name those only which are most proper and suitable to every one's state and vocation.

Ver. 1. THE words of King Lemuel; the prophecy that his mother taught him.] Unto those sayings of Agur, let these of King Lemuel be added and considered; which are weighty sentences also, (xxx. 1.), which his mother taught him with such authority, as if she had been a prophetess. See Arg. [a]

Ver. 2. What is my son, and what the son of my womb? and what the son of my vows?] And with no less tenderness and affection also, saying, Hearken, my dear son, for whose well-doing, O how much am I concerned! I want words to express the care I have about it; I am at a loss how to instruct thee according to my wishes; what shall I desire thee to do for my sake, who endured so much for thee, when I carried thee in my womb, and brought thee forth from thence? what shall I pray thee to do? for whom have I made so many prayers to God; and vows too, if I might but see thee come safe into the world, and grow to be a man, and sit upon a throne. See Arg. [b]

Ver. 3. Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. In the first place, let me prevail with thee, as thou lovest me, and as thou lovest thyself, to be chaste in thy desires of bodily pleasures, and not to give up thyself to follow thy lust after women, which will destroy the strength of thy body, weaken thy mind, and exhaust thy treasures; that is, engage thee in such courses as are the bane of kings, and, by making them neglect their government, have brought many of them and their kingdoms to utter ruin. See Arg. [c]

Ver. 4. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink.] And next to this, O Lemuel, kings of all other men, kings, I say, should be sparing, very sparing in the use of wine, and of all other intoxicating drink; and so should their counsellors, and commanders of armies, and judges, and all other ministers and officers. See Arg. [d]

Ver. 5. Let them drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgement of any of the afflicted.] For they may injure more than themselves, when they are in drink. If a cause, for instance, be brought before a prince or a judge, and his thoughts are confused by the fumes of wine, he may quite forget the standing rules whereby he ought to determine it; and things appearing to him quite otherwise than they are, he may not only judge amiss, but unjustly condemn those that ought to have been acquitted, and undo poor and afflicted people, by giving away their rights, when the comfort of their whole life depends upon his justice.

Ver. 6. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts.] If the liberal use of wine and strong drink is to be indulged to any body, it is to those miserable wretches, and the meaner sort of persons; whom it may be charity to comfort therewith, when they are in danger to perish for want of the necessary supports of life, or are oppressed with grief and sorrow in any other deplorable condition. See Arg. [e]
Ver. 7. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.] Then bring forth plenty of wine, and set it before such a disconsolate person; let him drink freely till he hath cheered his heart, and raised his drooping spirits, and be able to think of something else beside his poverty and misery, nay, till he be so merry, as quite to forget the cares and wearisome labours that it brings upon him.

Ver. 8. Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.] And that is the third thing I beg of thee, to administer justice exactly to all thy subjects, and not merely commit the care of it unto others; but sit thyself upon the bench, and if thou seest a man in danger to lose his right, because he is not able to make it out, and through fear, or ignorance, or want of eloquence, cannot speak for himself, keep not silence, but undertake his defence, especially if it be the cause of strangers, who understand not the laws, and perhaps are in danger to suffer some great damage, in their bodies, credits, or estates. See Arg. [*]

Ver. 9. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.] And when thou hast cleared the righteousness of their cause, fear not to pronounce the sentence boldly, according as the laws require; let no man persuade thee to admit delays, but bring the business to a speedy issue, that he who is poor, nay, a mere beggar, may neither be oppressed by doing him injustice, or by deferring to do him right.

Ver. 10. *Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.* And now, next to this, I shall commend a good wife unto thee; in the choice of whom a singular care ought to be employed. But alas! such a woman as I would have is scarce, and hard to be found;—one that is not only industrious, but pious, and can command herself, as well as govern her family; being enriched with all those virtuous qualities, which make her far more valuable than all the pearls and precious stones, that women love to be adorned withal. See Arg. [g]

Ver. 11. *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that she shall have no need of spoil.* I can only give the character of her, (which may serve to direct others as well as thee, in their search after such a person), in whose chastity, as well as prudence, frugality, and fidelity in ordering affairs at home, her husband hath such a confidence, that he may go abroad, and attend the public affairs, without the least care or solicitude, what will become of his domestic concerns; and not be tempted to enrich himself, or supply his own necessities, with the spoil of other men. See Arg. [h]

Ver. 12. *She shall do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.* She will not only endeavour to answer his love with an equal affection, but to provoke and excite it, by pleasing him in every thing, and avoiding whatsoever is ungrateful to him; nay, by deserving well of him, and studying to promote the interest of him and his family, and to maintain his honour and reputation, and that not only by fits, and

in a good humour, but all the days of her life, even after he is dead, if she survive him. See Arg. [i]

Ver. 13. *She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.* Idleness is so hateful to her, that she need not be desired to employ herself in some good housewifery, but of her own accord sets up a linen and woollen manufacture; to which she applies her own bands so willingly, as well as dextrously, that it appears she delights in the work. See Arg. [*]

Ver. 14. *She is like the merchant-ships, she bringeth her food from afar.* And therewith she maintains her family without expense, by carrying on a gainful traffic for foreign commodities, (which she gets in exchange for these), as if her husband set out a fleet of merchant ships, to fetch them from far distant countries.

Ver. 15. *She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.* Nor doth she indulge herself in overmuch sleep, but is an early riser, before the break of day, to make provision for those that are to go abroad to work in the fields, and to set her maidens their several tasks at home.

Ver. 16. *She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.* So far she is from wasting her husband's estate, that by her prudent management she continually increases it; first purchasing a field for corn, when she meets with one she judges worth her money, and then, out of the mere product of her own labour, adding a vineyard to it, which she causes to be well planted.

Ver. 17. *She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.* And as her diligence is unwearied, so she is neither slow in her dispatches, nor refuses any pains; but nimbly bestirs herself, and goes roundly (as we say) about her business; nay, exercises her arms to the strongest labours, both within doors and without. See Arg. [k]

Ver. 18. *She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night.* For, finding by experience, not only how wholesome labour is, but what profit her traffic yields, she doth not conclude her work with the day, but continues it as much in the night as can be spared from necessary sleep. See Arg. [*]

Ver. 19. *She layeth her hands to the spindles, and her hands hold the distaff.* And she doth not think it beneath her quality to put her hands to the spindle, but twists the thread or the yarn with her own fingers, and winds them with her own hands.

Ver. 20. *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy.* Which she stretches forth with no less forwardness to relieve the poor; being not only for getting all she can, but for giving liberally, out of her gains, to needy people, whom she supplies cheerfully as well as bountifully, and extends her charity, not only to those who are near, but to those who are remoter from her.

Ver. 21. *She is not afraid of the snow, for her household for all her household are clothed with scarlet.* Yet such is her prudence withal, that her own family
and domestic servants are in no danger to suffer hereby, in the hardest winter; for she provides them with change of raiment for the several seasons, and with double garments when the weather is cold; nay, not only clothes them, but adorns them so, that they may appear in a splendid manner, when they are to wait upon her. See Arg. [7]

Ver. 22. She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.] The furniture of her house also is very noble, and her own apparel suitable to it; in which her greatness is not the less, but the more conspicuous, because they are of her own making. See Arg. [m]

Ver. 23. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.] And so are her husband’s robes, which make him noted when he comes into the courts of judicature, and sits among the senators of the country; who call him a happy man, in such a wife as doth him honour, and eases him of all his cares, but only those of the public business; which her wisdom, diligence, and prudent management, gives him leisure wholly to attend.

Ver. 24. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.] For such is her industry, that she exercises more arts than one or two to enrich her family, making, for instance, very fine linen, with embroidered belts, and girdles curiously wrought, which she sells to the Phoenician merchant.

Ver. 25. Strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come.] But her principal ornaments are, the firmness, constancy, and vigour of her mind; her modest, comely, and decent behaviour; her generous and honourable way of dealing with every one; which (accompanied with the fore-named diligence, &c.) make her so happy, that they free her from all fear of what may be hereafter, and prepare her to meet old age and death itself, with joyful satisfaction. See Arg. [m]

Ver. 26. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.] Unto which add this singular grace, that as she is neither silent nor talkative, so she loves not to talk of frivolous, but of serious things, of which, when occasion serves, she discourses pertinently and judiciously, not expressing her passion, but her wisdom; which shews itself not only in the constant softness of her unperturbing language, but in the instructions and exhortations she gives unto doing good, exercising mercy, living peaceably and lovingly together; which is the lesson she inculcates everywhere.

Ver. 27. She looketh well to the ways of her house-bold, and eateth not the bread of idleness.] But especially in her own family, where she narrowly observes the motions and manners of every one, whom she neither suffers to gad abroad at their pleasure, nor to labour at home without good instructions; but teaches them how to live as they ought, and by this, if she did nothing else, deserves the bread she eats.

Ver. 28. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and be praiseth her.] Happy are the sons of such a mother, whose care both of their good education, and to make provision for them, excites them, when they are grown up, to extol her virtues; happy is the husband of such a wife, whom he can never sufficiently commend, but having recited all her praises, saith,

Ver. 29. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellst them all.] Daughters may do much by their housewifery, but nothing like to the care of a virtuous wife; and of all the wives that have done worthily, and mightily advanced the state of their family, there were never any comparable unto thee, whose merits far transcend them all.

Ver. 30. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.] A handsome shape and graceful behaviour is very taking, and so is a good complexion and lovely features; but alas! as the greatest beauty soon fades and vanishes, so many ill qualities may lie concealed under goodly looks, (which will utterly spoil all the happiness that a man promised himself in such a choice); and therefore a truly religious woman, who dares not any way offend the Lord, is that amiable person, and she alone, who will please a man always, and deserve perpetual praises.

Ver. 31. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.] Let every one extol her virtue, for I cannot do it enough; let her not want the just commendations of her pious labours; but while some are magnified for the nobleness of the stock from whence they spring, others for their fortune, others for their beauty, others for other things, let the good deeds which she herself hath done be publicly praised in the greatest assemblies, where if all men should be silent, her own works will declare her excellent worth.

END OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.
A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.
PARAPLAUGE

OF THE

BOOK OF PROVERBS
THE

P R E F A C E.

I. THIS book not carrying in the front of it the express name of Solomon, it hath emboldened some to take the liberty of entitling other authors to it. Hezekiah, for instance, whom the Talmudists make to speak those words in the entrance of it, "The words of the preacher," &c.; or Isaiah, as R. Moses Kimchi, with some other Jews, fancy; or, to name no more, Zorobabel, whom Grocius (in his notes upon chap. xii. 11.) conjectures to have appointed certain men to make this collection. For so he would have the word coheleth translated a collector, or heap up of opinions, rather than a preacher.

II. But there are so many passages in the book which agree to none but Solomon, that it is a wonder so great a man as Grocius should be led away from the common opinion, by such slight reasons as I shall presently mention. For instance, there never was any body that could truly speak those words which we read ver. 16. of the first chapter, but only Solomon. For neither Hezekiah, nor Isaiah, nor Zorobabel, kept such great state as he did, much less excelled him in wisdom; and who but he could boast of such things as are mentioned, chap. ii. 4.—9. to represent the splendour wherein he lived, above all that had been before him in Jerusalem? Or, on the contrary, who had such reason as he to make that sad complaint (chap. vii. 26. &c.) of the mischief he had received by women? and, to omit the rest, those words in the last chapter, ver. 9. to. can belong to none but him, who set in order many proverbs, as appears in the foregoing book.

III. Which things are so convincing, that Grocius is forced to acknowledge that Zorobabel caused this book to be composed in the name of King Solomon, (for he was no king himself, but a governor under the king of Persia), repenting of his former vain and sinful life. Which very acknowledgement carries in it a plain solution of the principal argument, whereby he was led to this odd opinion; which is, that he finds some words in this book, that are no where to be met withal, but in Daniel and Ezra, and the Chaldee interpreters. Which makes it probable, he thinks, that it was written after their captivity in Babylon. But supposing Solomon to write here as a penitent, after he had frequented the company of many outlandish women, (of whom we read, 1 Kings, xi. 1. 2.), it need not seem strange to us that he had learned the use of many of their words. And so, notwithstanding this objection, he may still be thought to have been the author of this book himself, which the Hebrews generally conceive to have been written by him, towards the end of his reign, after he had tried all manner of pleasures, even to an excess. Besides, in other books of scripture there are words, for the signification of which we are fain to have resort unto other languages, and particularly the Arabic, because they are not to be found elsewhere in the scripture, and yet, for all that, might be pure Hebrew, according to the language which was then spoken, when such books were written.

IV. But it is not fit to stay any longer in the confutation of such a weak reason as this, which hath no force in it (though it be the best be hath) to make us think of any other author of this book than Solomon. Who, if he did not write it himself, it is certain, spake the things
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contained in it; and calls himself the Preacher, because of the great gravity and dignity of the subject whereof he treats, of which he was wont to speak frequently, (chap. xii. 9.), desiring it might be understood and laid to heart, by the whole congregation of Israel, as the word coheleth seems to import, which, in the Ethiopic language, signifies a circle, or a company of men gathered together in the form of a circle, as Ludolphus hath lately observed. For the scope of this discourse is concerning the chief good or happiness of man; the great end he should propose to himself all his life long. Which is not that, he shews, which men generally follow; but that which is generally neglected. For most men mind nothing but just what is before them; which they will find at last, as he had done by sad experience, to be mere vanity, utterly unable to quiet their minds. Which must, therefore, seek for satisfaction in something else; and, after all their busy thoughts, designs, and labours, come to this conclusion, that to fear God, and keep his commandments, is the happiness of man; who ought, therefore, to use all the pleasures of this world (which is the only good it can afford us) with a constant respect to the future account we must all make to God.

V. This, it appears by the beginning and end of this book, is the scope of it. Unto which they that will not attend are wont to pick out here and there a loose sentence, which agrees with their desires; and then please themselves with a fancy that they have got Solomon on their side, to help to maintain their infidelity; not considering what he asserts directly contrary, in other places, where he presses the greatest and most serious reverence to Almighty God, iv. 17. v. 1. 2. &c. viii. 12. 13. xii. 13. together with a remembrance of the future judgement, iii. 17. xi. 9. xii. 14.; works of mercy and charity also, whereby we may do good to others, xi. 1. 2. &c. and the contempt of those frivolous pleasures, which draw our hearts from God and from good works, ii. 2. vii. 2. &c. All which plainly shew, that those words which seem to countenance men in the neglect of religion, and open a gap to licentiousness, are only opinions which he intends to confute, according to the method he had propounded to himself in this book. Wherein he first represents the various ends men drive at, which in the very entrance of it (that men might not mistake his meaning) he pronounces to be so vain, that he had no words significant enough to express their vanity; and then, their different opinions about God and his providence, and their own souls; and what thoughts he himself had tossed up and down in his mind, which at last came to that resolution I mentioned before, wherewith he ends his book. In the close of which, to give the greater weight unto what he had said, he adds this: That these were not only the result of his own thoughts, but the judgement of other wise men, with whom he had consulted.

Let no man, therefore, deceive himself, (to use the grave words of Castilio), as some, I wish I could say a few, have done; who not minding the end and drift of this book, but having met with some one place in it that seems to favour their beloved lusts, lay hold on that scrap alone, and with that endeavour to defend their licentious course of life: As if they expected they should find God just such a Judge hereafter, as they are of themselves at present.

VI. To comprise all in a few words—The sense of the whole sermon, as we may call it, seems to be comprehended in this syllogism.

"Whatsoever is vain and perishing cannot make men happy;"

"But all men's designs here in this world are vain and perishing:"

"Therefore they cannot, by prosecuting such designs, make themselves happy."

The proposition is evident in itself, and needs no proof. The assumption, therefore, he demonstrates in the six first chapters, by an enumeration of particulars, as I shall shew in the argument before, or annotations upon each chapter; and then proceeds, in the rest of the book, to advise men unto the best course to make themselves happy: evidently proving all along, from this inconstancy and vanity of all things here, that he who wishes well to himself ought to raise his mind above them, to the Creator of the world; and, expecting to give an account to him, so to
himself in the use of all earthly enjoyments, that he devoutly acknowledge his Divine Majesty, fearing and worshipping him, and doing his will.

Such, indeed, is the dulness of mankind, that, hearing all was but vanity, they might condemn every thing as evil and hurtful, and declaim too bitterly against this world. Which was so far from Solomon's intention, that having explained the vanity of all our enjoyments here, and the vanity of human cares, solicitous desires and endeavours, he persuades all men to be content with things present, to give God thanks for them, to use them freely with quiet minds; living as pleasantly, and taking as much liberty, as the remembrance of a future account will allow, void of anxious and troublesome thoughts, what will become of them hereafter in this life.

VII. But it may not be amiss, perhaps, to give a larger account of this Sermon, and let the reader see in what method it proceeds. For many men imagine it to be a confused discourse, which doth not hang together; and therefore have explained this book, only by giving an account of the meaning of each verse, as if it were a distinct sentence, independent of the rest; like those in his Proverbs. But Antonius Coranus, a most excellent person, in a small discourse of his upon this book, written above an hundred years ago, hath drawn such a scheme of it, as, I believe, will satisfy those who consider it, that Solomon proceeds after an exact order to deduce what he intended. And therefore I will translate the sense of what he saith into English; which is to this purpose.

VIII. The design of the author is to find out and to shew, what it is in which the chief good and complete felicity of man doth consist. As appears by this, That reflecting upon various things in which men place their happiness, at the end of this discourse upon every one of them, he rejects them as utterly insufficient for that purpose, but continues his search so far till at last he finds it; and declares in the concluding Epiphonema, that he had been seeking it through the whole discourse, saying, the sum of the matter is this, "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

Now, there are two principal parts of the whole Sermon. The first of which contains a recital, and confutation, of men's false opinions about their chiefest good; the other teaches in what our genuine, true, and solid felicity lies, both in this life and in the next. In both he shews very diligently, what is the end to which a man should direct all his counsels, studies, and endeavours: what he ought to follow, as most desirable above all things, and what to avoid, as the extremest of evils.

Of the first of these he treats in his six chapters; of the other in as many more than follow. Which is both a perspicuous and exact method. For being to treat of felicity, it was fitting he should divide it into false, and true, and then define aright what that true felicity is. For we must first shun that which is evil, and then pursue that which is good; according to the frequent admonitions we meet withal in the holy prophets.

The first Part.

IX. Now, the first part of his Sermon relies upon a proposition, which nobody denies, viz. That vain, frail, and troublesome things, cannot make any man happy; and such, saith he, in the very first words of the book, are all things here, "Vanity of vanities," i.e. extremely vain.

Which assumption it may seem hard to prove, if we consider what account blind mortals make of their own inventions, counsels, studies, and labours, by which they think to attain felicity. But to Solomon nothing was more easy, who having made a full and long experiment of all enjoyments here, most evidently demonstrates this by an enumeration of parts, and that in an apt, perspicuous, and compendious order. For he neither confounds the parts, too curiously pursues them, nor mentions all the false opinions of men about the chiefest good, (which would have been too tedious, if, like Varro, he had told us of two hundred eighty-five, and yet that he could not reckon all); but reducing the most probable opinions unto four principal heads, he confutes them by various arguments, drawn chiefly from adjuncts and effects.
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The first is of those who place blessedness in the knowledge of natural things, and in human wisdom; which begins at the 12th verse of the 1st chapter, and reaches to the beginning of the 2d. For in the preceding verses, he only lays a foundation for his discourse, and plains his way to the proof of what he intended.

The second is of those who place it in pleasure, which he dispatches as unworthy of a long confutation, in the three first verses of the 2d chapter. But there being those of this sect, who, joining these two together, pleasure and knowledge, imagine they will make up a complete happiness, he spends more time in shewing their vanity, from the 4th verse of the 2d chapter to the 16th verse of the third; interposing only a parenthesis, wherein he compares wisdom with folly, and the effects of both shew how much the former is to be preferred before the latter.

The third touches those who think honours, magistracies, and power in the commonwealth, to be the highest of all goods. In which number are they, who seek to extend their empire, though it be by a vast effusion of their own blood; by which means also they establish their tyranny, when they have acquired it. Which dispute reaches from the 16th verse of the 3d chapter to the 9th verse of the 5th. Yet so, that from the beginning of the 4th chapter to the 13th verse of the same, he inserts the miseries that grow from such tyrannical administration, and the vices which break in, upon the impunity of evil-doers, and neglect of the laws. Particularly, he gives us a lively description of emulation and covetousness, two of the foulest and most cruel pests of the commonwealth. In the 5th chapter, also, he inserts a discourse of that superstitious and vain worship of God, in which some, despising all other things, place their satisfaction, and most lamentably applaud themselves in it. Which dispute contains in it most excellent precepts of true religion and piety, which the reader may find in the first eight verses of the 5th chapter.

After which follows the fourth opinion of those who propound to themselves riches and wealth as their last end; which if they can attain, they doubt not they shall live very happily. Which extends itself from thence to the 11th verse of the 6th chapter, where you have the general epilogue of the first part, concerning false felicity.

The other part.

X. Then follows the second, and most elegant, as well as useful part of the Sermon. In which he teaches, that the felicity, for which men take so much pains, (every one going his own way to it), is not to be found any where but in a religious and serious fear of God; according to that of the psalmist, "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord, that walk in his ways;" and again, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments." For other things, though they promise felicity, yet they cannot perform it; because they have such a mixture of vanity, trouble, and grief with them, as will not suffer them to be absolutely good; and because, if they were sincere, yet they being so uncertain, that they may be lost before we die, and at the best are terminated within the narrow bounds of this short life, they cannot give that satisfaction and quiet of mind which we desire. But the fear of God is such a good, that it both gives true content, satisfaction, and tranquillity of mind, as long as we live, and when we die fills us with a sure hope of a better life; in which true and genuine felicity is accomplished.

For the sum of what can be said in this matter, may be reduced to this argumentation:

"That which can make a man's mind quiet, still, and calm, both in life and death, that alone can make him happy;

"Now this the fear of the Lord can do for him, and this alone:

"Therefore, this, and nothing else, will make him a happy man."

The proposition needs no proof; for then we feel ourselves happy, when our minds are so quiet and well pleased, that they neither grieve nor fear, nor solicitously desire, nor vainly hope, for uncertain things, but rest satisfied in that excellent and most certain joy and hope which arise out of a pure conscience.
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The assumption is proved from two effects of the fear of God, viz. wisdom and justice. The first of which teaches us what to follow, and what to fly; and furnishes us with such caution, that we be not imposed on in the choice of that which seems to be good for us. The other instructs us to do our whole duty towards God, towards our neighbour, and towards ourselves. In which two, all religion and piety, together with satisfaction, tranquillity, and felicity, is contained.

And, because effects are more known than their causes, and it will be uncertain what he meant by the fear of God, unless he explained it by those things wherein it consists, he begins his disputation on this subject, with those effects; and employs himself wholly in shewing what are the offices of wisdom and justice; that he might inform us not only what is the chief good to which we ought to aspire, but by what ways and means we may come to it.

XI. Of wisdom and prudence, therefore, which is conversant in the choice of things, he treats in the first place, chap. vii.; because no man can act either righteously, or valiantly, or temperately, unless, by the benefit of prudence, he be before instructed what force they are unto our happiness. He explains, therefore, its various offices in such documents as these: "That a good name is to be desired above all things; that death ought to be the subject of our frequent meditations; that those things are to be avoided, which incite to pleasure, and the contrary to be followed, which admonish us to be modest and sober; that severity and gravity are to be preferred before mirth; chastisements and corrections to be willingly admitted; flattery and soothing people to be cashiered; not to be too much disturbed at calumnies and reproaches; to take no bribes; to expect the issue and conclusion of things; to bridle anger, as an enemy to reason; to love the use of money, not money itself;" and such like, unto which, last of all, he adjoins a brief commendation of wisdom; rejecting both the larger explication of its effect and its praises to the end of the 9th chapter, and beginning of the 10th.

Now this first part, concerning wisdom, is handled in the twelve first verses of the 7th chapter.

XII. Then he enters upon the other, concerning justice; which he divides into that which respects God, and that which respects men. The former of which (comprehended under the names of religion, piety, and godliness) consists in this; that in the first place we conceive aright and judge well of God, and of his providence in the administration of human affairs; and then that we pay him that honour, worship, and service, which is due unto his divine majesty.

This discourse, which he touches upon from the 13th to the 16th verse of the 7th chapter, he resumes again in the 8th chapter, and pursues it from the 9th verse of it, to the 18th verse of the 9th chapter.

As for that justice which respects others, it is manifold. For it is either towards men, or towards women, which consists, in a manner, altogether in shunning both the extremes of it, and observing an interval, moderation or equity; and hath respect to their offences, either against ourselves or others; which we are partly to correct, and partly to bear withal. Which is the sum of his discourse, from the 16th verse to the beginning of the 8th chapter.

Where, interspersing a few things after his manner, in the praise of wisdom, he begins another division of justice, concerning the duty of subjects to their princes, from the 2d verse to the 8th; and on the other side, the duty of princes towards their subjects; of both which it may be fit to give a larger account. For this tracts is truly royal, and worthy to be read perpetually, in this most turbulent age, both by high and low; that from hence subjects may learn to perform obedience, and the greatest observance, both in word and deed, towards their princes; chusing rather to bear and suffer any thing, than to attempt rebellion against them; and kings may also remember, that they ought to govern their kingdoms according to the rules of law and equity, and not according to their own will and pleasure; God having committed unto them the sceptre of justice, clemency, and welfare of their subjects; not the sceptre of cruelty, tyranny, and destruction.

In which this wise king, observing both princes and people to be too negligent, and that hence ariseth a very great licence in sinning, lest well-affected minds should be offended at this horrible corruption of manners, he digresses into a long, but very profitable and necessary, disputation of

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God's providence, and the economy of justice. Which though the wicked deny, and deride, because they see not such manifest difference as one would expect, made between the good and the bad, in the events that befal them both; yet he advises all that fear the Divine Majesty, not to be dejected and disheartened at this, nor to search with too much curiosity into God's secrets; but stedfastly resolving, that it shall not be well with the wicked, though all things flow at present according to their heart's desire, and that whatsoever the godly may suffer now, they shall find at last that God is their friend, to look upon themselves therefore as happy men, both in the peace of their conscience in this world, and in a sure and certain hope of a better condition in the other. Upon which account he frequently inculcates this counsel, that they who are studious to fear God, and do well, being secure of God's administration, and of the event of things, should enjoy the present good things, which his divine bounty bestows upon them, with cheerful minds, and with thanksgiving to him. This discourse, (which, it must be confessed, is not altogether so methodical as some other), extends from the 9th verse of the 8th chapter, to the 18th verse of the 9th.

And because he had shewn, that the event of things is not in our own counsel and in human wisdom, but in the hand of God, lest any body should be so weak or perverse, as thence to conclude, that it is the same thing, whether we act wisely or foolishly, he again makes a digression into the praises of wisdom, shewing how much it excels folly, from the effects of both. It begins at the 17th verse, and reaches to the 4th of the 10th chapter. Where he returns to his discourses, about the mutual offices of justice between one another, both of princes and subjects.

And then, in the six first verses of the 11th chapter, he exhorts most earnestly to liberality and almsgiving, which is no small part of righteousness. And with that he concludes the two effects of the fear of God, wisdom and justice.

XIII. The rest of the work is his Peroration; in which he fully opens his opinion concerning the chief good; which he confirms to lie wholly in a truly religious fear of God. Which therefore he seriously exhorts every one to make their study as earnestly as possible; before dull and unactive old age, and death itself, (both which he elegantly describes), come upon us, and before we think of it, oppress us.

This is the method of this most excellent sermon; which I cannot but exhort all men to study diligently, and with great intention of mind, both for the author's sake, and for the matter of it. Which he handles in such a manner, as first to draw us from the desire and love of earthly things, and from the perverse use of them; and then to lead us unto the true and lawful use of them, without any offence to God, as well as without hurt to ourselves. And he reaches us how we may, without a preposterous solicitude and anxiety about events, enjoy all things in the fear of God, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind at present; and at last, by the same fear of God, and observance of his commandments, arrive at a never-dying felicity.

To conclude, he intersperses through the whole discourse abundance of common-places, both philosophical and theological; which are so fitted to make us every way more learned, more prudent, and more pious, that we shall find great use of them in all the passages of our lives.

XIV. Thus that learned Spaniard concludes his preface; which I have contracted, that I might set before the reader's eyes, in one short view, both the design and the procedure of the discourse. Of the former (the design) there is no doubt; and the latter is very regular, as it will farther appear in the explication I shall give of it. Wherein I have not followed this author throughout, in every part of this division of the book, because, though for the most part I take it to be accurate enough, yet, I think, in several places I had reason to differ from him, and take another way, to make the connection more easy and natural, and the sense thereby more clear and evident.

I beseech God, that the pains I have taken herein may not be in vain, but prove an effectual means, both to make the mind of Solomon in this book better understood, and to turn all our minds from these frivolous things, about which now they are too much employed, unto the solid and full good which he recommends to us. Who may be the better trusted in what he saith, because he had tried what satisfaction could be found in all manner of enjoyments here; and-
it could not be objected to him that he disparaged the world, merely because he could not get any share in it, or had not the liberty which was necessary to enjoy it. For no man ever had greater plenty, or gave a greater loose to his desires; but after all the experiments he could make, came to this resolution, which he had better have taken at first,—that religion and virtue are the only things that can make a man happy.

And perhaps, as God suffered St Thomas to doubt of our Saviour's resurrection, for the greater confirmation of our faith, by the satisfaction he at last received; so let this great man go astray, that by his dear-bought experience he might teach us this wisdom, to keep the closer to God in faithful obedience.

Which it will be a very great shame if we do not learn, who live under the instruction of a greater master than Solomon,—the Son of God himself. By whom we are taught these things in a more effectual manner, not only by his doctrine, but by his whole life, and by his death; in which he declared the greatest neglect and contempt of this world, and that his mind was wholly set upon the other.

And what a blessed sort of resurrection would it be, if (as Erasmus somewhere admirably speaks) we would all lay aside our dissensions, strifes, and quarrels, and study the lessons our Lord hath taught us. Whose business it was in this world, to form unto himself "a people that should wholly depend on Heaven, and, placing no confidence in any earthly support or comfort, should be after another manner rich, after another manner wise, after another manner noble, after another manner potent; in one word, after another manner happy; designing to attain felicity by the contempt of those things which are vulgarly admired. A people that should be strangers to filthy lusts, by studying in this flesh the life of angels; that should have no need of divorce, by being able to mend or bear all manner of evils; that should be wholly ignorant of oaths, as those who neither distrust, nor will deceive any body; that make not the getting of money their business, having laid up their treasures in heaven; that should not be tickled with vain glory, because they refer all to the glory of Christ alone; be void of ambition, as disposed, the greater they are, to submit themselves so much the more unto all men, for Christ's sake; that should be unacquainted with wrath, much more with revenge, as studying to deserve well of those who deserve ill of them; that should be so innocent in their behaviour, as to force commendations even from heathens; that should be born again to the purity and simplicity of infants; that should live like the birds of the air, without care and solicitude; among whom there should be the greatest concord, nothing different from that which is between the members of the same body, in which mutual charity should make all things common; that whether there were any good thing, it should help to supply him that wanted, or any evil thing, it should either be removed or mitigated by the good offices of others; who should be so wise by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to live according to the example of Christ, as to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, like a city on an hill, conspicuous to all the country round about; whose abilities, whatsoever they are, should make them forward to help others; to whom this life should seem vile, death desirable out of a longing for immortality; who should neither fear tyranny, nor death, nor the devil himself; relying upon the invincible power of Christ alone; who should act in all things, so as to be ever prepared and ready for that last and most to be wished for day, when they shall take possession of true and of eternal felicity."
A PARAPHRASE ON THE BOOK OF ECCLESIastes.

CHAP. XXX.

THE ARGUMENT.—In the eleven first verses he lays the foundation of his following discourses, and makes his way to the proof of what he intends, (viz. that nothing here can make us solidly happy), by shewing how empty all things are, and how short a time a man hath to possess them; and that while it lasts, he can only enjoy the same empty things over and over again, till he be cloyed with them. And then, ver. 11. he enters into a particular consideration of the insufficiency of human wisdom and knowledge alone, to give us full satisfaction; though this be one of the very best things wherein men place their felicity. Which discourse continues to the end of the chapter.

Ver. 1. The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem. These are the words of him, who thought the name of a preacher, or public instructor of God’s people, (to whom he calleth aloud in this book, to mind what he saith concerning the supreme good of man), no less honourable than that of the son of king David; whom he succeeded in his throne, and reigned after him in the holy city of Jerusalem. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity.] That good of which you are all desirous, is not here to be found where you seek it; for all things here below are so frail, so subject to change, and to vanish, that I have no words to express how vain they are. This is the thing which the Preacher first undertakes to prove, that they are mere emptiness, more vain than vanity itself; so full of trouble and care, as well as extremely unstable, that to no purpose are all men’s endeavours, who seek for satisfaction from them, especially if they place their highest good in them. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he takes under the sun?] For proof of this, let every man survey himself, who consists of body and of mind. And let him ask his mind, What great matter there remains, after all it cares for the things of this life? what contentment he, or any man else in all this world, hath reaped by his toilsome labours, and anxious thoughts, wherewith he hath racked himself both day and night? which have often ended in disappointment; and when he hath enjoyed his desires, this very thing hath spoiled his pleasures, that he could not long enjoy them. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.] For if they do not presently leave him, he in a short time must leave them, his body (the other part of him) being made out of the earth; and therefore, how firm and solid soever it now seems, must be crumbled into earth again. Which continues for ever, to receive back those bodies which come out of it; for no generation can abide as the earth doth, but follows the foregoing, as the next that come after shall follow it, unto the graves. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 5. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and bcesth to his place where he arose.] Out of which they cannot return and stand up in their former places, as the sun that quickens all things doth; which in a constant and regular course ariseth, and makes no more speed to go down, than it doth to appear the next morning, in the same glory again. No man dies, and appears here no more; though if he should, it would be to die again. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 6. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about into the north; it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to its circuits.] Nor is the annual course of the sun less certain than its diurnal, but it comes back the next year at a fixed time, to the very same point from whence it moved this. Nay, the winds, as fickle and inconsistent as they are, whirling with a marvellous swiftness round
the earth, return at last from whence they shifted, 
and some of them the very same months of the year, 
to fetch the same compass, and run the same round 
they did before.

Ver. 7. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea 
is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, 
thither they return again.] The like circle there 
is in watery bodies; for the torrents and brooks, that 
the rain makes, run into the rivers, and so into the 
sea, which nevertheless doth not swell beyond its 
bounds, because it restores all back again to their for-
mer places, by the vapours which the sun exhales, or 
by the secret passages through the earth; whilst poor 
man alone (who is compounded of all these, of the 
earth, the air, the water, and such heat as the 
sun administers) passeth away, and cometh to his 
place no more, but must be content to imitate these 
things only in their restless agitations.

Ver. 8. All things are full of labour; man cannot 
utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear 
with hearing.] Which is another thing that in-
creaseth his trouble, that in this short life, which he 
cannot live over again when it is done, he can nei-
ther be quiet, nor move with ease; (as the things fore-
named do), nor yet acquire satisfaction with his per-
petual motion; but tries himself even in his pleasures, 
and finds all sort of business so laborious, that he him-
self is not able to tell how tedious it is; and after all 
is done, he is no better pleased than when he first be-
gan. For the eye (for instance) and the ear, which 
are the noblest and most capacious senses, having seen 
and heard all manner of things, are as desirous of some 
new entertainment, as if they had enjoyed none at all. 
See Annot. [c]

Ver. 9. The thing that hath been, it is that which 
shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall 
be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.] But 
think of the very same things (like the sun, the wind, 
and the rivers) come about again, and we are clos-
ed with seeing and hearing what hath often pre-
vented itself unto us already, or, at least, hath been in 
times before us, and will be again in those that 
succeed us. There is nothing done now, but (the per-
sons being changed) will be acted over again in fu-
ture ages, to whom the sun can shew nothing but what 
we have seen in these days, and others have seen in 
the foregoing. And therefore it is vain for any 
man to expect that satisfaction now or in future times, 
which none have found since the world began; men 
will always loathe things present, as they have 
ever done, and long for those which are coming, 
which will ever give them the same satiety. See An-
not. [f]

Ver. 10. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, 
See, this is new? it hath been already of old time which 
was before us.] Is any man able to contradict this, and 
point us to the thing which is altogether new, and 
hath never been seen or heard of before? It may ap-
pear perhaps so to him, but that is to be imputed 
merely to the shortness of human life; which makes 
us ignorant of what hath passed in former ages, save 
only in a few things transmitted down to us by ob-
serving men). For had we continued many genera-
tions, that which now seems new and unusual to us, 
would have appeared familiar and of great antiquity, 
as really it is.

Ver. 11. There is no remembrance of former things; 
nor shall there be any remembrance of things that are 
to come, with those that shall come after.] They that 
went before us, indeed, might have registered such 
things, but as they observed little, as they have left 
the memory of less; nor will this age, or those that 
follow, be more careful, or if they should, poste-
riety will be as negligent as former ages have been, 
in preserving those records; for we differ nothing 
from our forefathers, nor will the ages to come excite 
this in which we live; but still the vanity of man, 
and of all his projects and contrivances, will continue 
to the world's end.

Ver. 12. [The Preacher was king over Israel in Jeru-
salem.] And let none imagine that I speak this only 
as a preacher, in a zealous passion, much less in a 
melancholy mood; but remember that I have long sat 
upon a throne, ruling over God's own peculiar people, 
in that city which is the very school of wisdom, 
where I wanted nothing either for the body or the 
mind, and had both opportunity and ability to make 
trial of all things wherein men place their happiness, 
and therefore may be believed, when I declare nothing 
but from my own experience. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 13. And I gave my heart to seek and search 
out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done under 
heaven; this sore travel bath God given to the sons of 
men, to be exercised therewith.] And being thus instruc-
ted with all the helps and assistances that the power 
of such a king could afford, I applied my mind, in 
the first place, and set my wits to work with all ima-
ginable care and diligence, to search into the nature 
of all creatures here below, thinking I should be 
happy if I could but find out the causes, beginnings, 
and progress of things, especially the counsels, con-
trivances, and endeavours of mankind, with the event 
of all their actions. But, alas! I soon found that 
this was a tedious business, in which when I had trave-
elled a great way, I met with small satisfaction; nay, 
found it to be the torture of the mind, unto which God 
had condemned mankind, as a punishment for their 
void curiosity, and gross negligence of heavenly wis-
dom. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 14. I have seen all the works that are done un-
der the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of 
spirit.] And having now finished these studies, and 
taken a serious view of all that falls within the com-
pass of human knowledge, I cannot say that they 
have given me any solid contentment, for we can 
know but little, and what we do know of natural 
things doth us small service; it puffs us up indeed 
like wind, but gives no nourishment; it fills with no-
tions, but of little or no use, and therefore vexes us 
at last, and breaks our heart, to consider that we have 
spent so much time and so many thoughts, which have 
written up our spirits, to so little purpose. See Annot. 
[i]

Ver. 15. That which is crooked cannot be made
straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.] For as there are inextricable difficulties in all sorts of knowledge, of which no man can give an account; so, with all our study, we cannot have skill enough either to prevent misfortunes, or to remove out of the way that which crosseth our designs, much less to alter the nature of things, (no, not so much as in our own constitutions), nor to redress the disorders in government; the defects in which, and in all other things and conditions, we are, so far from being able to supply, that we cannot number them; and yet the folly of mankind represents every thing to their desires, as if it were completely good, and wanted nothing to make one happy. See Ann. [k]

Ver. 16. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.] I myself still persisted in my reach after knowledge, though I found it so painful and so unsatisfactory; thinking within myself, that there was this good at least in it, that it had gotten me a very great name, and raised me so high in all men's opinion, that I was noted for the wisest person that had ever been in these parts of the world, there being no sort of knowledge wherewith my mind was not stored in great abundance. See Ann. [b]

Ver. 17. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.] And, as the nature of all knowledge is to excite a thirst; after more, this made me apply my mind more earnestly to comprehend, not only the greatest, but the meanest matter; to mark, for instance, the actions and occupations of madmen and fools, as well as the motions of wiser persons; but I perceived, that to be pleased merely with fame, was to live upon air; and it was an afflicting thought to observe, how little the most of the world (though they thought themselves very wise) differed from lunatics and distracted folk. See Ann. [m]

Ver. 18. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.] So that, though knowledge be the most excellent of all other earthly goods, being the ornament of the mind, which is the best part of us, yet this also is insufficient for our happiness; because, after it hath cost a man infinite pains (and sometimes exhausted his spirits, and made him melancholy and remorse, nay, thrown him into many diseases) to acquire that little wisdom he can attain, which raises also more doubts than it can resolve, and meets with troublesome opposition from various opinions that clash against it, it cannot but fill him with indignation to find folly generally applauded more than his wisdom, and grieve his very soul to see that it is dangerous for a man to know more than his neighbours, and that he is so far from being able to remedy what is amiss, that he is hated if he endeavour it, and rewarded with reproaches for his care of the public good. See Ann. [a]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. The wisdom, virtue, and dignity of an author, making his work more valuable and regarded, Solomon (or he who composed this book from what he heard him deliver, or found in his writings) begins with his quality, not merely as a king, and as the son of a great king, and of a great people, in a famous city, but, which was most considerable, as a public instructor, having ability and authority to inform all men where they should find that happiness, which they ignorantly sought, but could not meet withal. This he proclaims with a loud voice, desiring serious attention to such a weighty discourse, and that they would often re-collect, as he had done, (all which may be the import of the word kebelveh*), how frivolous and trivial all those things are which most men pursue with the greatest earnestness.

* See Preface, Numb. VI.

[b] Ver. 2. This is the subject of this book, to shew how senseless it is to place our happiness in those frail and inconstant things that we enjoy upon this earth; which he not only pronounces, but proves, to be mere emptiness. So vanity signifies, and what is consequent upon that, dissatisfaction, trouble, and affliction. See Psal. lxviii. 33. And this, beyond what can be expressed, for our translators take it to be a word of the same import with tobu, which is used in the Hebrew language, when they would signify that of which they speak to be so trivial, that it is below less than nothing, Isa. xl. 17. And yet Solomon is not content with this single word, but doubles it, to denote the extreme dissatisfaction he found in all things, which made a shew of affording him contentment, but performed nothing of that which they seemed to promise. So the word vanity is also used for that which is also false, lying, and deceitful, Psal. lxxii. 9. and other places, where idols are called vanities.

[c] Ver. 3. Here begins the proof of his assertion, by considering, first, the mind of man; which runs from one thing to another without any end, but finds no satisfaction remaining from all its restless thoughts. And then the body of man, (ver. 4.), which, as proud and lofty as it looks, must moulder into dust; and the poorest person perhaps shall tread upon its grave. For it cannot last like the earth from whence it comes, which stands for ever, as a public theatre, whereon men enter and act their part, and then go off and never appear again; and when they go, (as some prettily, rather than solidly, gloss upon the words, "The earth abideth for ever,"), they can carry none of it along with them, but leave it all behind them, unto those that come after, who pass away also, leaving the earth where they found it.
Ver. 5. The sun also, in a settled course, observes its times of rising and setting; whereas man, when he goes down to the earth, cannot, like the sun, come up again. So the 5th verse seems to be most naturally connected with the foregoing; and in like manner the 6th and 7th verses are to be expanded. There are many interpreters, indeed, who look upon the things mentioned in these three verses, only as emblems of the instability of all human affairs, and of the constant revolutions of the same miseries, which cannot be hindered by any human counsels, but will return after all the changes whereby we think to mend ourselves. Upon which sense I have just touched in my paraphrase, but not followed it, because it doth not seem to me to be the scope of these verses. In which man is represented by four comparisons with the earth, the sun, the wind, and the sea, to be more subject to vanity than other things.

Ver. 8. Which having thus illustrated, he proceeds here more particularly to consider what he has said in general words, (ver. 3.), of man's vain endeavour to satisfy himself in worldly designs and contrivances; in which he is tired, but comes to no end of his desires. How should he? when his whole business here is only to enjoy the very same things over and over again; as all men have done before us, and shall do after us, ver. 9. 10. 11.

Ver. 9. We may fancy, indeed, that we have found some new thing; but this conceit proceeds merely from our ignorance, as the Lord Bacon excellently discourses in his first Book of the Advancement of Learning, chap. viii.

"Learning and knowledge," saith he, "takes away vain and excessive admiration, which is the very root of all weak counsels. For we admire things, either because they are new, or because they are great. As for novelty, there is no man that considers things thoroughly, but hath this painted in his heart, "There is nothing new under the sun." Nor can any man much admire a puppet-play, who doth but thrust his head behind the curtain, and seeth the instruments and wires whereby they are moved. As for greatness, we may say, as Alexander, who, after his great conquest in Asia, received letters of some small gifts or skirmishes in Greece, at the taking some bridge, or fort, was wont to tell his friends, That it seemed to him, that they had sent him news of the battles of Homer's Frogs and Mice; so, certainly, if a man consider the universe and the fabric of it, to him this globe of earth, with the men upon it, and their busy motions, (excepting always the divineness of souls), will not seem much more considerable than a hillock of ants, whereon some creep up and down with their corn, others with their eggs, others empty, all about a very little heap of dust." And, as Melancthon well observes, the same desises, the same counsels, the same ends, the same causes of war, and calamitous events, return again; according to that of Thucydides, "While human nature continues what it is, the like mischiefs will happen, sometimes less, sometimes more direfully."

Ver. 12. Thus having confirmed his main propositions, by such general arguments as reach to all things in this world, he proceeds here to a more particular proof of it, from his own proper experience. And designing (before he declared his own opinion of the chief good, and by what means it may be attained) to confute the vain fancies of men about it, he reduces them, as I have shewn in the preface, to four heads. And observing that some place it in knowledge, and curious inquiries into all manner of things, others in pleasure, or in both these together, others in honour and power, others in riches and heaps of wealth, he begins with that which is the most plausible; and demonstrates, from the 13th verse to the end of this chapter, how little satisfaction is to be found in the mere speculation of things, though a man arrive at the highest degree of human knowledge.

Ver. 13. 14. Melancthon restrains these two verses to political wisdom, in the government of kingdoms. Which gives men a double affliction; First, In that the wisest men often err in their counsels; and, secondly, That events sometimes do not answer to the best counsels that men can follow. Examples of the first are innumerable; sometimes they err through ambition, as Perdiccas, after Alexander; sometimes through a false opinion of right, as Brutus; sometimes through anger, as Marius. And how many ways good counsels have miscarried, it is too long here to remember; because it is here farther observable, that sometimes more doubfulness and uncertainty of mind what course to take, is as great a torment to the mind as any other. Thus Pompey was first perplexed in his counsels, before he saw the disastrous event of his error. To conclude this, all government is so full of cares, perplexities, and impediments, that it made Demosthenes say, if he were to begin the world again, he would rather die than be promoted to it. And Eschines, that he was as glad when he was rid of his office, as he would have been to be delivered from a mad dog.

But this I take to be too strait a sense, though it be agreeable enough to what he saith, ver. 12. of his kingly office; and therefore I have enlarged it farther in my Paraphrase, though Gregory Nazianzen also seems to have a respect to it, when he thus interprets this place, Orat. I. iii. p. 750. "That all things here below are possessed with an uncooth and execrable spirit, (ἀδελφός καὶ μονογονὸς πυκνός), so that a man cannot comprehend how absurdly all human affairs are managed.

Ver. 14. The word we translate ''ευσταθία is found only in this book, and is capable of many senses, all pertinent to the scope of this place. For, according to the several fountains from whence it may be derived, this phrase may be interpreted, either anguish of spirit, or breaking of spirit, or preying upon the spirits, or (in another sense of
the word spirit) feeding on the wind or air; none of which I have neglected in the paraphrase.

[k] Ver. 15. The shortness of human wit, though never so much improved, is here represented by two things; first, That it cannot remove what is inconvenient; secondly, That it cannot supply what is deficient in any condition of life. Or, as others will have it, the first part of the verse refers to the inability of man to rectify that perverseness (as the Hebrew word we translate crooked, signifies) which he finds in himself or others; and the latter part, to the small reach of human understanding, which can attain but a very imperfect knowledge, either of words, things, times, persons, or actions; as some branch out the innumerable particulars of which we must be content to be ignorant.

[l] Ver. 16. I have not curiously distinguished between wisdom and knowledge, either in this verse, or in the 18th. But there may be this difference pertinently made, That wisdom directs a man, in the practical affairs of life, unto that which is most fit for his purpose, according to the various circumstances wherein he may be. It consists chiefly in a clear judgement, to discern our true interest, and the proper means to compass it, together with a presentness of mind, to obviate sudden accidents. And then knowledge relates to the speculation of natural things, in their causes and effects, their properties and differences, and such-like things.

[m] Ver. 17. Madness and folly may refer also to all the idle speculations, wherein men of parts and wit sometimes not only employ, but applaud themselves, as the first of those words seem to import in the Hebrew. This trifling sort of knowledge is notably described by Erasmus, in his Praise of Folly.

[n] Ver. 18. If there be any difference to be made between wisdom and knowledge, I have noted it above, upon ver. 16. As for grief and sorrow, they may be thus distinguished, "That the former, in the original word, includes in it indignation, which is a sharp anger mingled with scorn;" to find either our persons and counsels contemned, or our projects and well-laid designs defeated. Such as was in Ahithophel, whose penetrating wit made his rage the greater, to see his judicial advice rejected, and the whole conspiracy utterly disappointed. The other word, (sorrow), properly denotes an extreme great trouble and sickness of mind; and is sometimes applied to pains in the body, which is the effect too frequently of over-hard study. Melanchoth understands the whole verse, (as he did, ver. 13. 24.), of the trouble that wise men have, when they are intrusted with government, to see the confusions, errors, vices, and calamities of mankind. And their afflictions are the greater, because they are not only more sensible than other men of present evils, but foresee by the present those that are future; and therefore are tormented with a sore pain and grief, both for what they feel, and for what they fear. For they know, that from the first disorders, there commonly follow greater confusions: As when Pe-

sicles had once stirred up a war, there followed the destruction of almost all the great cities of Greece. And it is too truly said by Pindar, "That it is easy for any body to disturb a city; but God alone can restore peace unto it."

This I take to be too limited a sense; but it is no small trouble to a wise and prudent person, as Coranius excellently expresses it, to behold the miserable disorders and confusion of human affairs. For how is it possible to avoid it, may, how can a man choose but be filled with indignation, to see justice, equity, probity, fidelity, integrity, and constancy, and all other such-like virtues, slighted and disregarded by mankind; and on the contrary, injustice, baseness, perfidiosity, fraud, and such-like vices, possess the world, and carry all before them? Or what man can, without vexation, observe the preposterous judgement of mankind, which magnifies those things, that are not only vain, but hurtful and pernicious, and not only contemned, but hate, those things which are truly good for them, nay, alone desirable? No man can either be wise alone to himself, in such a multitude of fools and madmen, without the greatest grief and indignation; nor can he accommodate himself with an equal mind to the dotages of the common people, when he sees that which is better.

I shall conclude this chapter, with the Lord Bacon's observation, concerning this anxiety of spirit which arises out of knowledge, in the beginning of his book of the Advancement of Learning. "Solomon," saith he, "doth not pass this censure absolutely upon wisdom and knowledge, but only sets forth the true bounds wherein human knowledge is to be circumscribed; which if we do not observe, it will prove very troublesome to us and others. And those limitations are three. First, That we do not so place our felicity in knowledge, as to forget our mortality. Secondly, That we use not our knowledge to begat anxiety, but repose and contentment of mind. And, Thirdly, That we do not presume, by the contemplation of nature, to think ourselves able to comprehend the mysteries of God." The first and last of these are plain enough; and therefore I shall only note what he saith of the second: That "It is certain, no anxiety or perturbation of mind ariseth from knowledge, but by mere accident. For all knowledge and admiration, (which is the seed of knowledge), is pleasant in itself; but when we fall to frame conclusions from thence, which, obliquely applied to our own affairs, begot either weak fears or improper desires, then ariseth that torment and trouble of mind whereof Solomon here speaketh. For then knowledge is no longer dry light, (which Heraclitus was wont to say was the best), but moist light, steeped and infused in the humours of the affections."

As for that exposition which some have given of those words, that "he increaseth the number of his stripes, (or wounds), who increaseth knowledge," and maketh no use of it, nor takes care that his obedience rises in some good proportion with it; it is
not the proper sense of the place, but rather an accommodation of the words to another profitable purpose.

CHAP. II.

THE ARGUMENT.—Having passed his censure upon the first way men take to find satisfaction, (mentioned in the notes upon ver. 12: of the first chapter), which without all contradiction is the chief and the best of the four; he proceeds here to consider the second, which is the more common; most men immersing themselves in pleasure, as their highest good. Of which he was more capable to judge than any other man; because he denied himself no delights that he desired, and yet did not plunge himself wholly into them, but with a mixture of wisdom, as he tells us, ver. 3. Whereby he soon perceived that they who leave the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of bodily pleasure, change for the worse; for after he had tried all sorts of things that could give him any pleasure, he went back to wisdom and knowledge, as the better of the two, ver. 12. And yet, after he had considered that again the second time, he could not but confess, that there were such great imperfections in it, that it could not make a man happy; as he discourses in the following verses. Of which I shall give a more particular account in the annotations.

Ver. 1. I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure; and behold, this also is vanity. Being thus disappointed, therefore, in the expectations I had of happiness from much wisdom and knowledge, and beholding many men look jollily who had none at all, I resolved to leave off those troublesome cares and labours, and to follow my pleasures; saying to myself, Why doth thou vex and torment thy mind to no purpose? Let alone these crabbed studies which hasten old age, and indulge thyself in all those sweet delights which youth desires; try what satisfaction mirth and joy can give thee, and for that end, take no thought for the future, but enjoy to the height the present goods of this life: which accordingly I did; but believe me, though this promised much at first, it performed little, but left me more void of contentment than it found me. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it? For the noise, the tumult, the indecent motions, and scurrilous jestings of men, that let themselves loose to excessive laughter, and extravagant merriment, appeared to me like distraction of mind; and considering how unprofitable it is, I could not but with a passionate disdain put it from me; saying of it, and of mirth and dancing, and all the frolicness of mankind, What is there in it, that thus bewitcheth them? Where lies the pleasure, that thus inchanteth them, and puts them so beside themselves, that they think neither of God, nor of any thing else that is worthy of them, but of this alone? See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom), and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.] I deliberated, therefore, with myself, about a middle course of life; which should neither be altogether studious, nor altogether voluptuous, but a mixture of both; and, in pursuance of this counsel, entertained myself freely with all the delights of feasting and banqueting; yet so as not to lose my acquaintance with wisdom, but to keep my mind so intent upon it, that folly might not have its full swing; but find a check upon it, till I might make a sufficient trial, whether herein lay so much desired good which men should propose to themselves, and prosecute all the time of their stay in this world. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. I made me great works; I built me houses; I planted me vineyards: For which end I raised, with exquisite art, the most stately and magnificent works that could be contrived, for the pleasure of all the senses; as first of all, I built myself a most magnificent palace, and other goodly houses; which, when I had elegantly adorned and sumptuously furnished, I proceeded to plant about them, in a beautiful order, the choicest vines, (Cant. viii. 11.), which, besides the fragrant smell, (Cant. ii. 13.), and the lovely sight wherewith they entertained me abroad, afforded the most generous wines for my table at home. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:] To which I added delicious gardens, full of various flowers, herbs, and plants, for all the seasons of the year; and then spacious forests and parks, or rather paradises of pleasure, wherein, besides other delights, were lovely shades and covers for all sorts of beasts; nor were orchards wanting, stored with all kinds of fruit-trees, which either this or other countries could afford. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:] And that nothing might be wanting to the perfection or preservation of these places, I made, with great charge, and no less art, either fountains, or cisterns, or pools of water; not only for delight, and for fish, but to serve instead of rain, to water the flowers and herbs, especially the young nurseries of trees, that they might not die with drought. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. I got me servants, and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me:] All which requiring the care of a great many persons, I purchased servants, both men and women, in great abundance; of whom I had a multitude of children born in my house, whom I employed in looking after my other possessions, which I had in herds and flocks, of greater and lesser cattle; which were so numerous, that I killed every day for my family, ten oxen crammed in the stalls, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, with an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roe-bucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowls.
to say nothing of other provision, 1 Kings, iv. 22, 23; and yet such was the plenty, my stock did not decrease, because a new brood grew up continually in such abundance, as the like had never been seen in our country before my days. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces; I gat me men-singers, and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. By which and divers other means, (1 Kings, iv. 21, 22, 23, &c. 2 Chron. ix. 24,) I laid up vast treasures of silver, and gold, and jewel, and all that was choice and precious in other kingdoms; and especially in those provinces which were subject unto me, which were great and many, (1 Kings, iv. 24,) out of whom I picked also the sweetest voices that could be found, both of men and women; together with the rarest songs and hymns composed by the best masters in the world, and all sorts of instruments of music; than which nothing is more charming among the children of men, either to lay them asleep when they would go to rest, or to recreate their spirits when they are tired with business; to banish melancholy when they are oppressed with sorrow, and to augment their pleasures when they would be merry; being no less fit to wait upon feasts, than they that attend at the table. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me.] Thus I was not only great in place, and power, and riches, but by such means as these, added splendour also to my greatness, and made it more conspicuous and illustrious; and (which is still more glorious) I was not greater in any thing than in wisdom; which was not undermined by all these pleasures, but when they were in danger to dethrone my reason, this settled it again in its former state and authority. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour, and this was portion of all my labour.] And on the other side, my wisdom did not lay such restraints upon me, but that I took the liberty to please my eyes, and all my senses, with every thing that fell within the wide compass of their desires; it did not deny me any joy to which I had a mind, but taught me rather to reap this as the sweet fruit of all my labours; there being nothing (it showed me) that came to my share, of all that I had gotten with so much care and diligence, but only the free enjoyment of it, without which I had as good have been without it. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had bestowed, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.] But then, after I had considered seriously, how small a thing this pleasure was, how short, and how often interrupted, and laid in the balance against it all the time I had spent, and the pains I had taken in contriving these magnificent buildings, gardens, paradises, and all the rest, it seemed to me as nothing; and I cannot but leave this observation behind me, that all this is empty and unsatisfying to the spirit of man; and there is also much vexation and torment in it; to see how cross things go many times to our desires, how negligent they are who should look after such great works as mine were; but especially in this, that a man can reap so little benefit, and so transient, from such vast and long labours, chap. i. ver. 3. 14. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 13. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath already done. Wherefore I began to reflect upon my former thoughts, and to turn them back again towards wisdom, as the only good man, chap. i. ver. 13. 17. and especially that wisdom which moderates our pleasures, and keeps them from running into madness and folly, (and who is there that can give a better account of this than I? who have had such advantages above any private man to know the history of former times, as well as of my own, that I am confident, they who come after cannot pass no other judgement upon things than I do now.)

Ver. 14. Then saw I that wisdom excelth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. For I clearly discerned, that there is as wide a difference between wisdom and folly, as there is between the light of the sun, which beautifies the whole world, and shews all things distinctly to us, and the darkness of the night, which wraps up all in dismal confusion, and hides even our dangers from us.

Ver. 15. The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness; and I myself perceived also, that one event happeneth to them all.] Whence it is, that a wise man, having this light in his mind, looks before him, and round about him; which makes him cautious and well aware of dangers, into which a blundering fool, whose mind is blinded with the sottish love of pleasure, falls rashly and inconsiderately; and yet, with all his circumspection, (so imperfect are all things here, in which we place our happiness), the wisest man is not able to avoid a great many calamities, which are common to the whole race of mankind.

Ver. 16. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then said I in my heart, that this also is vanity.] Which reflection made me sigh, and think with myself, if, notwithstanding this excellence of wisdom above folly, the very same diseases, loss of children and friends, and innumerable casualties, happen unto me, even unto me who know so much, that there do unto a fool, to what purpose have I taken all this pains, and studied so hard to be wiser than he? And upon this review of all that wisdom can and cannot do for us, I concluded again the second time, that there is a vanity also in this, which makes it incapable of giving us full satisfaction. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 17. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever, seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall be forgotten; and how doth the wise man die as the fool? For as both wise and foolish are alike subject unto death, so, when they are dead, their...
names live not long after them, but they and all their
famous achievements are forgotten; there being few of
t hose things which are now done, that will be so
much as thought of in the next generation; much less
in future ages, when the memory of them will be ut-
erly lost, and cannot be recovered; and is not this a
lamentable case, that we wise men hath no more privi-
lege than a fool, either from death, or from its insepa-
rable companion, oblivion? See Asynd. [n]

Ver. 17. Therefore I hated life, because the work that
is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for all is
vanity and vexation of spirit.] This put me quite out
of love with life, because the toil and labour of it is
so great and grievous, and the pleasure it yields either
interrupted and spoiled by many unforeseen accidents,
or quite taken away by death, which leaves no foot-
steps of us behind us; for nothing is constant or of
long continuance, nothing solid, nothing satisfactory
here, but all our enjoyments leave us as empty as he
that feeds only upon the wind; nay, it torments us to
see that we must take great pains too, for such weak
and fading things, chap. i. 14.

Ver. 18. \[Yea, I hated all my labour which I had
taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the
man that shall be after me.] \[And besides all this, there
are other reasons which made me despise all those
goodly structures which I had erected, and those
beautiful works which I had contrived, (ver. 4. 5. 6.
&c.), because, as I cannot keep them long myself, so
I must leave them to I know not whom, to a stranger
perhaps, who, without any pains of his, enjoys the
fruit of all my labour.

Ver. 19. And who knoweth whether he shall be a
wise man, or a fool, it yet shall be base rule over all my
labour, wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have
showed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.
[Or if my son succeed me in the possession of them,
there is no man can assure me, whether he will wise-
lv preserve and improve what I have gotten, or fool-
ishly squander all away; in short, whether he will
prove a worthy or an unworthy inheritor of my la-
bours; and yet, such as he is, he must have an abso-
lute power over all that I leave, to dispose of it as he
pleaseth; and sottishly, perhaps, to waste in a little
time; what I wish prudent care and diligence have
been keeping up all my life long. This is a great
addition to human misery, and renders even the study
of wisdom very vain, which cannot find a remedy for
these evils.

Ver. 20. Therefore I was about to cause my heart to
despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.
[Which are so great, that, instead of pursuing my de-
signs for this world, I turned my thoughts the quite
contrary way; and, like one perfectly tired, I con-
duced it best to leave off all further cares about any thing
here; despairing to reap any satisfaction from all my
labours, particularly to attain any certainty what kind
of man he will be who shall inherit them.

Ver. 21. For there is a man whose labour is in wis-
dom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that
hath not laboured thereof, shall be leave it for his portion.
This also is vanity, and a great evil.] For what hath
happened to others may to me, who have observed a
man no way defective, either in wise contrivance, or
prudent management, an upright dealing, but as emi-
nent for honesty as he was for diligence; whose
estate fell to the share of an idle person, nay, of an
ignorant, silly, unjust, and ungrateful wretch; who
professedly consumed upon his last, that which cost
him no pains, not so much as a thought, to acquire.
This likewise, it cannot be denied, is not only a dis-
satisfaction, but a torment, nay, a great torment, to the
mind of man.

Ver. 22. For what hath man of all his labour, end of
the vexation of his heart, wherein be both laboured under
the sun?] Who may well say, To what purpose is
all this toil of my body, and these solicitous thoughts
and anguish of my mind? For all that a man can en-
joy himself of the anxious labours wherein he spends
his days, amounts to little or nothing; and what com-
f ort hath he in thinking who shall enjoy the fruit of
them hereafter?

Ver. 23. For all his days are sorrow, and his travaill
grief; yea, his heart taketh no rest in the night. This
is also vanity.] And yet, such is our folly, there is
no end of our cares; for we see many a man whose
life is nothing but a mere drudgery, who never is at
leisure to enjoy any thing that he hath, but still en-
gaged in one troublesome employment or other to get
more; which he follows so eagerly, as if it were his
business to disquiet and vex himself, and make his
life uneasy to him; being not content with his daily
toils, unless he rack his mind also with cares in the
night, which invites him to take some rest. This is
so void of all reasons, that nothing can be imagined
more vain and foolish.

Ver. 24. \[There is nothing better for a man, than he
should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul
enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was
from the hand of God.] \[Nor can any man reap the
benefit of his labours, but by studying first to free his
mind from over much care and anxious thoughts; and
then, (instead of heaping up perpetually for his heirs),
by allowing himself a moderate and decent use of all
that he hath gotten by his honest labours; cheerfully
communicating them with his friends and neighbours;
and lastly, (in order to these), by being truly and de-
voutly religious, acknowledging God to be the donor
of all good things; from whose bountiful hand pro-
cceeds even this power, both to enjoy all a man hath,
with a quiet, peaceable, and well-pleased mind, in the
midst of all troubles of this life; and, in conclusion, to
leave all with the like mind, unto those that shall come
after him.

Ver. 25. \[For who can eat, or who else can batten
herself, more than I?] For the truth of which, you
may rely upon my experience; who, and who I could
have bored up as much as any other man, those
rather freely to enjoy the fruit of my labours; and
was as forward to spend, as ever I was to get; but must
acknowledge this to be the singular grace of God to
me; who preserved me from that great folly of ne-
glecting myself, for the sake of I know not whom.

Ver. 26. For God giveth to a man that is good in his

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sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner be growth trivial, to gather, and to keep up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.) For this is a blessing which God reserves for him whom he loves; whose sincere piety he rewards with wisdom to judge when, and with knowledge to understand how, he should enjoy and take the comfort of all that he hath; especially with inward joy, satisfaction of heart, and tranquillity of mind, in this favour of God to him; whereby the troublesome affairs of this life are tempered and seasoned; but he delivers up him that regards not God to the most cruel tormentor, which are his unsatiable desires, and anxious cares, with busy labours and incessant pains to increase his estate without end, and to heap up vast treasures, which God disposes afterward to those who approve themselves to him, in a pious, just, and charitable life, with contented minds.

Now, what a vanity and vexation is this also to a sinner, to get riches for those to whom he never designed them; nay, it is a sad thought to a good man, that if his son be not virtuous, the estate he leaves is not likely to prosper with him. See Annot. [a] ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. Thus Themistocles, Lucullus, and others, (as Melanthon observes), being weary’d in their attendance upon public affairs, by many unprofitable contentsions, nay, by the ingratitude of the people, delivered up themselves unto pleasures, as better than ill-bestowed pains.

[b] Ver. 2. Laughter.] The censure he passes upon this makes it necessary to expound it of such dissolute and frolickish mirth, as I have mentioned in the paraphrase.

[c] Ver. 2. Gave myself.] The word is the Hebrew (as the margin of our translation informs the reader) imports something of excess, as in other places of scripture, Psal. xxvi. 10.; because, when men indulge themselves very liberally in eating and drinking, the blood boils and rises, the veins swell, and the skin of the whole body is distended.

Lay bold on.] The word signifies not simply to apprehend, but to keep under restraint what we have seized. As the Philistines are said to have taken David (had him in their power) in Gath, in the title of Psal. lvii. Thus I have expounded it here, as most agreeable to the sense of the place.

[d] Ver. 4. Great works.] Includes all that follows, to the end of ver. 8. consisting either in buildings, or in plantations, and water-works belonging to them, or in his household, or his stock upon his land; or his exchequer, and magazines; or in things that were for more state and magnificence, viz. royal furniture, or in great variety of vocal and instrumental music; to which some add a kind of cangliol of the most beautiful women that could be found; though for this last there is no ground to think it here mentioned, but what lies in two hard words, of which I shall give an account presently.
cause no small part of women's beauty (which they would have to be the delights here spoken of) consists in the fine shape and decent position of this part of their body. But this seems to be far fetched, and therefore I have let it, and divers other interpretations, alone, and only expressed the sense of our own translation, which takes these for musical instruments, and those of such extraordinary sweetness, that they left no part of a man's soul untouched, nor room for any other pleasure, (so some derive it from a word signifying abundance;) and had some regard to the LXX: who understand it of such as waited upon him at the table, (cup-bearers, and such-like officers,) where music also was seldom wanting, but made a part of the entertainment of great persons, as I have expressed in the paraphrase.

[i] Ver. 9. My wisdom remained.] For it was not the manner of great men, in ancient time, to pass their feasts only in eating and drinking, and after the satirical custom now, to send the cups going round, when all was taken away, but to spend the time in pleasant, but learned discourses, or in telling stories, or propounding and resolving questions, which might whet the wit, and form men's manners, or open the secrets of nature, and at the same time both refresh and instruct the mind. As we see at Sampson's marriage-feast, he propounded a riddle to be unfolded, concerning the creation of bees, out of the carcase of a lion. In Platach's Symposiacs, there are abundance of such merry and learned questions resolved. And Athenaeus, in his Deipnosophists, hath excerpt the flower of all arts and authors, poets, philosophers, and historians. In Virgil also, at the end of his first book of Æneids, Jopas is introduced singing a philosophical song, (at the feast which Dido made,) concerning the motions of the moon and the sun, and in short of all that atlas that most famous astronomer had taught. And in another place, Æneas himself relates the destruction of Troy.

[k] Ver. 10. My portion.] Though wisdom thus bridled his pleasures, yet it did not restrain him from such a free and plentiful enjoyment of them, that there was no sort which he did not taste, as highly as of was possible, without making himself a mere fool. This he calls his portion, by a metaphor taken from inheritance, which being divided into parts, every one of the children had his part given him; or from lots, which as they were used among merchants, so sometimes, in the dividing of inheritances, when the heir could not agree among themselves, about the equality of the portions which were set out for them.

[l] Ver. 11. I looked.] Having considered the value of this portion, he could not say it was much worth, but rather that there was very little in it; and therefore he prefers wisdom much before all this pleasure; and still far more before sottish and mad pleasure, ver. 12.

And yet, for all that, after he had taken the benefits of wisdom into a second consideration, ver. 13. 14. he could not but conclude again, that there is a vanity in that also. Which is threefold, as there are three ends for which men study wisdom: First, That they may provide for their safety and security; Secondly, That they may commend their names to posterity; or, Thirdly, That they may leave to their children, what their singular prudence and great diligence hath gathered together. But all these, he seews, are vain designs.

[m] Ver. 15. Happened.] For instance, he represents here, how all mankind, wise and fools, are alike liable to the same casualties, and many inconveniences, which are common to every one of us in this life. Which the Lord Bacon (in Book iv. of the Advancement of Learning, chap. ii.) extends to such considerations as this, That, "in all times, witches and old women, and impostors, have been rivals and competitors, in the reputation and opinion of the multitude, with the ablest physicians, and contended with them for the same cures. Nay, the impostor bears away the prize, and virtue lies under the censure; such is the weakness and credulity of men, they prefer a mountebank, or a witch, before a learned physician; which the poets observed, when they made Escaulpius and Circe, brother and sister, both children of the sun. And what follows from hence, but that physicians say to themselves, as Solomon in another case, It befits to me, as it doth to the fool; why should I labour to be more wise? It discourages them, that is, in their profession."

[n] Ver. 16. No remembrance.] And then for the other two, (mentioned above, k), he observes how short-lived our memorial is, as well as ourselves, ver. 16. 17, and that no man can be sure who shall inherit his labours, or what kind of person he shall be, wise or sottish, good or bad, ver. 18. 19. Which he reflects upon again in the following verses with a very heavy heart, that made him weary of life, ver. 20. 21. And then concludes the chapter, with a brief account of the true way to enjoy all the happiness that this world can afford; of which we are utterly incapable, unless we have a sense of God, be devoutly affected towards him as the author and donor of all good things. Which I have expressed so fully in the paraphrase of ver. 24. 25. that I may be content in making it too long, and therefore shall not commit another error, in enlarging it further.

[b] Ver. 26. But only observe that wisdom and knowledge, in this verse, do not differ, as they may be thought to do, chap. i. 26. but relate both of them to the same thing, only with such a distinction as I have mentioned in the paraphrase; or, as others will have it, wisdom relates to the acquisition of the good things of this world, knowledge to the use, from which prudent fruition flows the joy he mentions together, with them. Thus Coranamus.

The last words of the chapter are referred by all expositors, in a manner, only to the condition of the sinner, which immediately precedes; but since...
they have a true sense with respect to all men whatsoever, good and bad, I thought it best so to expound them, with regard to the whole foregoing verse.

CHAP. III.

THE ARGUMENT.—Upon the mention of God’s overruling providence, in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, Solomon proceeds from thence to illustrate, (in the first part of this chapter), both those things of which he had discoursed before, viz., first, The imperfection of human wisdom, which is confined to a certain time or season, for all things that it would effect; which if we neglect, or let slip, all our contrivance signifies nothing. And, secondly, That the utmost perfection at which our wisdom can arrive in this world, consists in these things: First, In being contented in this order wherein God hath placed all things, and not disquieting ourselves about that which it is not in our power to remedy, or alter, or at least not for the present. Secondly, In observing and taking the fairest opportunity of doing every thing, as the most certain means to tranquillity; there being nothing that makes our mind more uneasy, than striving against the stream, (as we speak), and when the wind is against us, labouring to bring about our ends, and to obtain our desires; and, thirdly, In taking the comfort of what we have, at present, and making a seasonable and legitimate use of it; and, lastly, In bearing the vicissitudes that we find in all human things with an equal mind, because they are necessary and unalterable.

These were the things he had suggested in the conclusion of the former chapter; and the beginning of this may have relation to every one of them.

And since he had spoken before also (ver. 9, 10. of the second chapter) concerning the moderating of pleasures by wisdom, and of the study of wisdom by seasonable pleasures, I do not know but he may have respect unto that also, and therefore I have begun with it in the paraphrase.

Castalio goes still farther, and thinks the meaning of the first part of this chapter may be, that it is in vain to expect our happiness in this world, for this is no more the time and the place for it, than seed-time is the harvest. But we must stay till the next life for it; which is the proper time for complete happiness; here we must be content with a great many tears. Which is a pious meditation, but seems not to be the scope of Solomon, and therefore I have not touched upon it.

In short, he still continues to enlarge himself upon the two first things, wherein men place their happiness, wisdom and pleasure; and comes not to the third, till the middle of this chapter, where I shall observe it.

Ver. 1. TO every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.] How vain an attempt it is, to obtain the fore-named tranquillity, by fixing our mind upon any one thing in this world, and how necessary it is, to let the study of wisdom, for instance, and the enjoyment of pleasure, labour, and rest, take their turns, God himself hath shown us, by tying us to this order in the course of things; which, whether they be natural or depend upon our will, will have their certain appointed seasons and occasions, upon which all our designs, counsels, and endeavours, have such a dependence, that if we will not observe them, we shall not only lose our labour, but miserably vex and torment ourselves to no purpose. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.] As for natural things, we see that there is a stated time for an infant’s lying in the womb, before it can be born, and the time afterwards for its growth, and stay in the world, beyond which a man cannot go, but drops into his grave; and so it is not only with other living creatures as well as man, but with herbs, and roots, and plants, which we cannot set and sow at all times, but must take the proper season both for that, and for gathering the crop, when it is come to maturity, or else our pains are ill bestowed, and we find to our sorrow that we have laboured in vain.

Ver. 3. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.] And thus it is in the diseases of our body; there is a time when they are so infectious, that they are incurable, or when it is so improper to administer physic, that it doth no good, but certainly kills; whereas, at another time, those very remedies prove effectual means to restore our health unto us: and so it is in other structures, as well as our own bodies; there is a time when it is more proper to break down a building, than it is to raise it; and when houses are built, there are seasons for repairs, and sometimes for pulling them down and erecting them anew, or else they will not stand. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 4. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.] Other alterations there are also in human life, which sometimes naturally move our tears, and at another time our laughter; nay, there are times not only for tears, but for the bitterest lamentations, which the funerals of our dearest relations, or the public calamities require; and again, there is a time, (at a wedding suppose), whic provokes us so naturally, not only to be merry, but to leap and dance for joy, that it would be absurd then to bewail ourselves, as it is to dance about the dead bodies of our friends.

Ver. 5. A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.] And in the plantations which we make, there is a time when it is fit to pick up stones, and throw them out of our vineyards or fields of corn; and there is another time, when it will be as necessary to gather up the same stones again, to make a fence about those vineyards or fields, or to repair the highways; and as it is in these natural things, so it is in those that depend upon our own disposal; there are seasons proper for husband and wife
to enjoy the ends of marriage, but there are other times when they ought to refrain, and deny themselves even these otherwise innocent pleasures.

Ver. 6. A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.] In like manner, in our traffic and commerce one with another, there is a time of gaining much, but there are other times, when a man must be content to lose by his commodities; sometimes also it is fit for him to lay up and keep what he hath gotten, but at another time it will be as fit for him to spend or give away to those that need it.

Ver. 7. A time to rent, and a time to sow; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.] In direful disasters also, as when God is blasphemed, it becomes us to rend our garments; but after a certain time, it will be as becoming to sew up the rent again; and, as on the other occasions, the proper times for holding one's peace, or for speaking, are to be observed, so, in great grief, it is to no purpose to administer comfort, till the passion be a little over, and then discourse will be as seasonable as silence was before, Job, ii. 13. iv. 1, 2.

Ver. 8. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.] To conclude, love itself may turn into hatred, so that they who are now well affected towards us, may prove our enemies, or those in whose company we now delight, there may be reason hereafter to avoid; and the like turns there are in public, as well as in private affairs, there being just causes sometimes for making war, and then, such a change in the state of things, that it is greater wisdom to conclude a peace.

Ver. 9. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? And therefore, why do we fancy any thing to be settled, fixed, and constant, here in this world, unless it be these opposite changes? Or to what purpose is all our labour and travail for any thing out of the season proper for it? And what great matter is it that we then get, since we must expect another season to part with it? See Amot. [c]

Ver. 10. I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it.] For that which I have observed from all this is, That God hath made it our business to mark the times and seasons that are fit for the doing all things, which hath great trouble and anxiety in it; and there is a farther trouble, that after we have done what we desired, we must submit to that time and season which will undo all again.

Ver. 11. He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart; that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.] And though we are not wont to be satisfied with this vicissitude of things, yet God, no doubt, hath disposed them thus most wisely; and there is such a beautiful order appears in several contrarieties, (as, for example, of heat and cold, of day and night), that we may well conclude there is so in all manner of events, though never so opposite, which God also hath given us wisdom to discern in part, having ended man with the understanding of the present state of things, in the age wherein he lives; yet as that is imperfect, (it being beyond our skill to know when our industry will succeed, and when a change will come), so he is not able to find out what respect the present changes have to the times that are gone before, and to those that are yet to come hereafter; and cannot give an exact account of the government of God, because he sees not the beginning, and the progress, and the conclusion of every thing that comes to pass. See Amot. [d]

Ver. 12. I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.] Wherefore, long consideration and experience assure me, that, leaving these fruitless inquiries and vexatious cares about the future, the only happiness that is in our power, is to make the best we can of our present condition; rejoicing that things are so well with us, and being solicitous for nothing in this world, but to obtain a good hope in God, by living piously and virtuously, and doing good to others with what we have, and this not remissly and by fits, but seriously and constantly, as long as we live. See Amot. [e]

Ver. 13. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour; it is the gift of God.] And if a man have arrived at so much happiness, as not to deny himself the use of what he hath at present, out of all a vain fear of wanting in time to come, but can so freely and cheerfully enjoy the fruit of his honest labours, as to be well satisfied in the midst of all the inconveniences of this life, let him not ascribe it unto his own wisdom, but thankfully acknowledge the great goodness of God herein; for it is a singular gift of his, to be able, with a quiet and contented mind, to take the comfort of those blessings which God's bounty has bestowed upon us, chap. ii. 24.

Ver. 14. I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God hath done it, that men should fear before him.] And, on the other side, it is not only very foolish and vain, but a great plague, to be discontented that things go otherwise than we desire; for certain it is, God hath settled them by such an eternal and immutable law, in that course and order before described, (ver. 1. 2. 3. &c. in which nothing is superfluous, nothing wanting), that it is not in the power of man to make the least alteration one way or other; therefore we must alter ourselves, and not murmur that we cannot change the course of things, which God hath thus immovably fixed, not to make us miserable, by fretting at it, but happy, by reverent submission to the divine government, and humble patience under those troubles which we cannot honestly avoid, and a due care not to offend the divine majesty, whose will shall be done one way or other, if not by us, yet upon us. See Amot. [f]

Ver. 15. That which hath been, is now; and that which is to be, hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.] This alone is sufficient to silence all our unprofitable, as well as undutiful complaints, about that which hath always been, and ever will be. For we, in this present age, are subject to no other laws, than those by which God hath governed the
world from the beginning; nor will the next produce any other method, than that wherein he hath already proceeded; but, though that which succeeds thrusts out what went before, it brings the very same things about again, as constantly as spring and fall, summer and winter, return in their seasons.

Ver. 16. ¶ And moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgement, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. ¶ But, beyond all this, it is lamentable to consider, how that which God hath provided as a remedy for a great many evils, which we bring one upon another in this world, is quite perverted, and turned to be itself the greatest evil of all other: The power and authority, I mean, which is committed unto men of great place, wisdom, and dignity; who lean so much to their own affections, that I myself have observed nothing but corruption in the highest, as well as lowest courts of judicature; for, whether men's lives or their estates were concerned, such unjust sentences were pronounced, (to the condemning the innocent, and acquitting the guilty, &c.), that I could not but conclude, There is nothing more dangerous, than for a man who hath not that fear of God before his eyes (which I now mentioned, ver. 14.) to be advanced unto honour, and entrusted with power. So vain are they that place their felicity in these. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 17. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and wicked; for there is a time there for every purpose, and for every work.] For, so rooted is this impiety in the hearts of men, and such arts there are to defeat the best endeavours to redress it, I could bring my thoughts about this matter to no other issue but this, (in which we must all be satisfied), that there is a supreme Judge of all, who will in due time make that difference between men and things, which we cannot do now, absolving and rewarding the righteous, and condemning and punishing the wicked; for as there is a time, I observed before, for all other things, so there is for this: they that govern the world have their time now, for contriving and acting what mischief they please, but he will take a time hereafter, of calling them to an account for the injustice they designed, as well as did, in the courts of judgement. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 18. I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.] But in the mean time I could not but think the condition of mankind, especially of the poorer sort of them, to be very deplorable, which made me fetch a deep sigh, and wish to God, that he would be pleased to lay these great men open, and manifest to themselves, and make them sensible, that they have no reason to look down with so much contempt upon others, much less treat them like beasts, destined to the slaughter; for, were they stripped of their external pomp and power, they are so far from excelling other men, that in many regards they do not excel the very beasts. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 19. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the

one dieth, so doth the other, yea, they have all one breath; so that a man bath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity.] For as the beasts are subject to many accidents which they think not of, so are all mankind, who can no more foresee several things that happen to them, than the beasts themselves; or, if they herein differ from them, that they can better defend themselves from some things that befall them, yet there is one thing, which makes them all equal, and that is, death; for both men and beasts not only grow old, but die alike, and while they live, one snucks in no other air than the other doth; which when they can no longer breathe, a man remains as much an unprofitable lump and putrid carcasse as a beast; and therefore herein can pretend to no pre-eminence above other inferior creatures, but they are both equally vain and perishing.

Ver. 20. All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.] And being dead, their bodies are dissolved into the same principles out of which they sprang, so that herein they are both alike again; for man, as proud as he is, derives his body from no higher original than the dust, the very same dust of which the beasts are made, into which they both, men and beasts, must return again at the last.

Ver. 21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?] As for the spirit, which makes all the difference between the beasts and us, that is invisible: and where shall we find a man, especially among those great persons, (spoken of before), who seriously considers it? and believes that the souls of all mankind go to God that gave them, (xili. 7.), to be judged by him, (ver. 17. of this chapter), whereas the souls of beasts perish with them? No; herein they differ not at all from beasts, that having buried their minds in brutish pleasures, they have no more sense of a future life than they, but imagine that their souls die together with their bodies. So senselessly stupid are they that trample upon the rest of mankind, and yet have such ignoble thoughts of themselves, that they imagine their very souls are no longer-lived than a beast. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 22. Wherefore I perceive, that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?] And therefore, considering that our bodies have no privilege above the beasts, and that mankind are so liable to be abused by those who should protect them, (ver. 16. 19. 20.), I was confirmed in my former opinion, (ii. 24.), that it is best for a man herein also to imitate the beasts; by enjoying freely the good things God hath blessed him withal, and taking all the comfort he can find in them at present, without solicitous care about the future; for this is all he can be sure of, it being in no man's power to secure him, he shall not enjoy that hereafter which he makes no use of now; much less when he is dead, can he be brought back again to take any pleasure in the fruit of all his labours, or see what becomes of them.
ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. Season.] The Hebrew words, Zeman and Gaalyl, signify either that point of time when things, being ripe, come forth of themselves, by the constitution of their several beings, as all natural things do; or that occasion which serves our voluntary actions, and is fit for effecting what we design. The Hebrews observe, that Solomon here reckons seven opposite seasons, of each sort, as a complete demonstration, by induction, of the truth of this general proposition in the first verse. Which holds good even in virtue itself; which is not proper but in its own place. For fortitude hath not always been successful, (as the Lord Herbert observes), nor temperance safe, nor justice opportune; the fury and insolence of the outrageous people having in some insurrections grown to that excess, that it has been greater wisdom to pass by a while, than to punish them. And it is very apparent also in our counsels, when they are conducted merely by human wisdom, which is not able, without a divine direction, to choose the most fortunate (as we call them) and happy seasons for undertakings. Brutus, Cicero, Heritius, Pansa, all thought to restore the ancient estate of the Roman commonwealth, (as Melancthon notes), but were deceived; and after the same manner many are still, and will be deceived. Then businesses proceed, when we obey his divine directions, and He assists; and yet then sometimes more, and sometimes less difficulty.

[b] Ver. 3. Kill.] In the third verse, I have taken the liberty of following my own judgement in expounding the first part of it; which I have not referred to punishing and sparing offenders, as interpreters do; but to the condition of diseases that are in our bodies. For though the other be an excellent sense, yet this seems to be more agreeable to the wise man’s meaning: Because he is hitherto speaking of things natural; and the word beal also directs rather to that sense which I have given of killing, than the common one. The same may be said of the next part of the verse: “there being a craziness in buildings, as well as in the body of man; and some weather so improper to raise a fabric, that the parts will not hang together; but that which cements them, moulders so fast away, that that time were better spent in pulling down an house, than in building it up.

As for the rest of the Calendar or Epbermis, (as the Lord Bacon calls it), which the wise man hath made of the diversities of times and occasions for all actions, I need give no farther account of it here, than I have done in the paraphrase.

[c] Ver. 9. What profit.] Nor is it hard to expound the inference he makes in this verse, from the foregoing induction; which I have expressed as fully as I could in the paraphrase; and more largely in the argument of this chapter. Gregory Nazianzen thinks, he only intends to reflect upon the great in-

constancy, as of all earthly things, so of human actions, (sometimes, for instance, men are madly in love with a woman, and in time they as much hate her; now they are eager to get, and at another time they profusely spend; sometimes they kill, and sometimes they are killed; sometimes do nothing but talk, and at another time have not a word to say, &c.), and therefore all his labours are vain. But I have extended it farther, with a respect to other things, which the fore-named induction suggests to us.

[d] Ver. 11. World in their hearts.] There is greater difficulty in this verse, if we connect it with the rest of the discourse, as we ought to do. Which I have endeavoured to explain, by taking the word Haolam, the world, for the present state of things in this age wherein we live, (which is a genuine sense of it); whereof God hath given us some understandings, but not so perfect as to be able to give an account of the reason and scope of every thing that we see happen in this world, because we are ignorant of what went before, and of what will follow after, when we had or shall have no being here.

It is commonly understood of the works of nature. And in this sense, the Lord Bacon (in the beginning of his book of the Advancement of Learning) hath admirably expounded it in this manner; in these words: “He hath placed the world in man’s heart,” &c. “Solomon declares not obscurely, that God hath framed the mind of man as a mirror, or looking-glass, capable of the image of the whole world; and as desirous to receive it, as the eye is to entertain the light; and not only delighted in beholding the variety of things, and the vicissitude of times, but ambitious to find out and discover the immoveable and settled laws and decrees of nature. And though he intimate, that this whole economy of nature (which he calls, The work that God hath wrought, from the beginning to the end) cannot be found out by man, he doth not derogate from the capacity of his mind, but is to be imputed to the impediments of learning,” &c.

There is one interpreter, (Coranus), who by Olam, world, understands the circular motion of things for the service of man. But I can find no such use of the word any where else; the sense would be elegant enough, which arises from thence, viz. That this revolution, being remote from our knowledge, and a secret to us, who cannot tell what day or hour it will be, we ought not to trouble ourselves about this, but make use of the present, and refer the rest to God.

Melancthon also hath an unusual interpretation, which is, That God made things so, that we should sweetly enjoy them, (that he understands by placing the world in man’s heart); but men make the use of them unpleasant, by their wandering desires, by their vain solicitude, by their diffidence; which makes them long after new things, and meddle with that which is unnecessary. Like M. Anthony, who, when he had gotten the most flourishing part of the empire, could not be content; but, out of an
unquiet nature, desired the whole, and so lost all. This he makes the sense of the latter end of the verse, which he thus translates, "Man cannot find out the work of God, neither the beginning nor the end of it." Therefore, as I said just now, it is wisdom to satisfy ourselves with what we have; for the present only is that which is in our own power.

[e] Ver. 12. 13.] And so it follows in these two verses; the sense of which, Gregory Nazianzen (Orat.lii.) hath thus briefly expressed: "The greatest good of man, I persuade myself to be tranquility, serenity, cheerfulness of mind, and beneficence, or doing good to others;" and this short pleasure alone, the divine indulgence bestows upon us, for righteousness conduct all our affairs.

[f] Ver. 14. 15.] And with this we must rest contented, for with all our toilsome thoughts we cannot alter the course of things; which God, he here shows, hath immutably settled, on purpose that we should be sensible of a power above ourselves. Which it is our wisdom to stand in such awe of, as not to contend with it, but submit unto it; that so we may obtain all the favour from him, which in such a state of things as his wisdom hath appointed, can be indulged to us. And here, I think, Melanchthon hath very pertinently observed, that Solomon doth not merely recite the vain complaints and endeavours of mankind, after the manner of philosophers and poets, but lays down a rule of life, as the best remedy that can be found for our disease. Which is, "Not to trust to ourselves, nor to indulge our own curiosity and appetites; but to be sensible of our own infirmities, to fear God, to obey his commandments, to keep within the bounds of our vocations, and to beg and expect the help of God, and to acquiesce in his holy will and pleasure."

[g] Ver. 16.] Unto these things it is better for us to apply ourselves, than it is to endeavour to be great and mighty, (which is another vain desire of man, fancying he can thereby keep off many evils), for few can be at the top of all; and so there must be still greater than we, by whom we may be oppressed; and our vexation will be so much the greater, when with all our power we cannot hinder it. As for those that are in the very highest places, (if they have not the fear of God, before spoken, ver. 14.), their power doth but betray them to do the more mischief unto themselves and others, and thereby increase the misery of mankind. This seems to be the dependence between the foregoing verses and this. Whereas the wise man passes to the consideration of the third thing, (mentioned upon chap. i. 12.), unto which some aspire as the highest happiness, viz. greatness, power, and honour. Which, if a man be bad, make him so much the worse himself, and the world by his means; and if he be good, will trouble him very much, to find there are many abuses, which by all his power he cannot remedy. For Solomon himself saw several gross impieties committed, (as he tells us in this verse), even by them who were appointed to be the guardians of men's lives, liberties, and enjoyments; which he, as a great king as he was, wanted ability wholly to redress; but still they went on so confidently in their wicked course of perverting judgement, that he was fain to leave them to be judged by the Supreme Judge of all, God Almighty. And if it were so, in the reign of a good and wise king; what could be hoped for, in the reign of those who were impious and injudicious, as most of the kings of Israel and Judah were? For such pervert all things by their covetousness, ambition, or folly; so that their subjects can have no justice, nor enjoy any tranquillity. And besides, they permit (as he shews afterwards, chap. vi.) many corruptions to creep into the divine worship, and ridiculous rather than religious ceremonies to be introduced, &c. whereupon follows a great decay of all moral virtue.

In short, this is a great part of the vanity and misery to which we are here subject; that, as Melanchthon well notes, "there are many things done unjustly, even under just governors; because they are not able to look unto all things themselves, but must manage them by other men; many of which are negligent, others wicked, and swayed by depraved affections, and yet crafty enough to cover their own guilt." Here is the only comfort, That God notwithstanding preserves government, and political order; and in his time will judge even kings and judges of the earth.

[h] Ver. 17.] The last words of this verse may, in my judgement, be thus most literally translated out of the Hebrew: 'There is a time for (judging) every purpose and every work there,' viz. in those corrupt courts of judgement; every thing that hath been transacted in the judicatures he had been speaking of.

[i] Ver. 18.] These words which follow the former, are variously interpreted; but they have a perspicuous sense, if they be taken in the coherence with the foregoing, (as in reason they ought to be), without fancying, as some have done, that they are spoken in the person of an epicure. And so I have considered them; as intended to take down the vain opinion those great men have of themselves, (which makes them tyrannize over their inferiors), by representing to them, (or rather, desiring God would effectually represent to their minds), how little they differ from beasts; save only in that which they do not at all value, or regard, viz. their immortal spirits. The word Lebaram, to manifest them, is commonly expounded of God's manifesting them unto others; but I have taken it for his showing them to themselves; agreeable to the word that follows, Lireob, "that they might see," &c. The whole may be thus translated—"that God would clear their minds, that they may see," &c. For it comes from a root which signifies, such an accurate separation of one thing from another, that the difference may be perspicuously discerned.

[k] Ver. 21.] And thus it seems also most reasonable to expound this last verse, in connection with
all the rest; and to understand the first word of it, who, concerning those persons mentioned in the beginning of this discourse: "Who among those unjust judges," &c.

CHAP. IV.

THE ARGUMENT.—Having considered the power, which many times falls into the hands of unjust and cruel men, he now represents the miserable estate of those that are subject to them, as a further argument of the vanity and vexation, unto which mankind are liable in this troublesome world. And having noted some of the principal mischiefs of this sort, (of which I shall give a distinct account in the parenthesis and annotations upon it), he concludes the chapter with some animadversions upon the condition of the greatest, nay, and the best of princes, who are not so happy as the world is apt to think them.

Ver. 1. So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of the oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.] But I have not yet done with the consideration of the miseries which mankind suffer, by the abuse of that power which is necessarily placed in the hands of some persons for the good of others. (iii. 16.) For, reflecting again upon it, I observed the innumerable ways that were practised in this world, for the undoing of others; both by violence and exactions, and by fraud and calamities, (as well as by unjust decrees), whereby so many were crushed, that nothing was to be seen or heard, but the tears and cries, the sighs and groans, of such as lay in a desolate condition, and could find no relief, not so much as one to comfort them; for such was the greatness of their oppressors, who had gotten all power into their hands, that as they could not defend themselves against them, so nobody else durst express their compassion towards them, much less plead for them, for fear of being served in the same kind themselves. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.] Which made me think it was better to be among the dead, who have made an happy escape from all these calamities, than to remain still alive; either to suffer under this tyranny, or to live in perpetual fear of it; or to behold such great grief of heart, (but without power to help them), what many miserable wretches endure.

Ver. 3. Teas, better is he, than both they, who hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.] Or rather, (for why should I compare the living with those who, though they now lie at rest in their graves, have been hertofoire very sorely afflicted?), much more desirable than either of these, is it not to have come into the world at all; and so to have had no sense of the miseries which the dead have formerly felt, and the living now undergo?

Ver. 4. Then again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.] For besides what they suffer from mighty oppressors, they give one another a great deal of trouble; pride, ambition, emulation, envy, and hatred, reigning so uncontrollably every where among all orders and ranks, all trades and professions, that when a man hath taken a great deal of honest pains, in some useful work, and brought it to perfection; instead of gaining credit by it, and being honoured for it, his neighbours look awry upon him; nay, he is maltreated, disparaged, and traduced, by those, who either cannot or will not imitate, (but only care at) his ingenuous labours. So vain it is to endeavour to excel others in art or industry, which procure a man ill-will, when he looks for thanks and commendations; and such an affliction it is to a man's spirit, to labour hard for an ungrateful world; who are tormented by that which should please them, and cannot see any worth in another, but they are vexed within themselves. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 5. The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.] But see now, (as a further instance of the vanity of mankind), what use some make of this; who are so absurdly foolish, as to be utterly discouraged, and to sit down in perfect idleness; because there are such oppressions on one hand, from those above them, (ver. 1.), and such emulations on the other hand, from those that are equal with them, and under them, (ver. 4.). A wise resolution this! to do nothing, because others do ill; not to satisfy one's self, because others will be displeased: not to satisfy, did I say? nay, he is hunger-bitten, and eaten up with cares how to live; he hath not a rag to his back to cover his nakedness, having reduced himself and family, by his laziness, to extreme penury.

Ver. 6. Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.] And though he want not excuses for his folly, yet they are as idle as his sloth; for he senselessly applies that common saying to his purpose, "One handful with ease, is better than two without it." Which is very true, if rightly understood; and may serve to remove both him, and those from whom he learns this folly; for as idleness and emptiness always go together, (and, therefore, he in vain expects to have so much as one handful without labour), so is a moderate estate gotten honestly with moderate diligence, and enjoyed handsomely with perfect contentment, better than the greatest treasures gotten by oppression or with infinite toil, and enjoyed with anxious thoughts and fretting cares, and exposing a man either to the hatred or the envy of others. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 7. Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.] Nor is this all the folly into which men fall, by the forenamed tyranny and oppression, (ver. 1.); but reflecting again upon this subject, I observed another extreme into which they run, no less void of reason and of satisfaction than the former.

Ver. 8. There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches,
For, as some grow idle, so others grow too scraping and-pensivorous; it being no rare thing to find a man that lives single and alone, without so much as a companion, and hath neither child nor brother, nor kinsman, to make his heir, and yet he sets no measures, either to his labours, or to his desires, but toils and craves without end; and, which is still worse, as he can scarce find in his heart to allow himself the necessities, much less the pleasures of this life, so it never comes into his mind to think, who shall be the better for all this when he dies; and what a madness it is, both to rack his mind with cares, and to pinch his belly, and deny himself the comfort of what he hath, for the sake of he knows not whom.

This also, certainly, is not only a senseless and unprofitable folly, but one of the greatest plagues and torments of human life. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 9. [Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.] ¶ How much wiser is he, who not only enjoys what he hath himself, but takes others into the society, to partake of the good things that God hath given him? For nothing is more comfortable than good company, as nothing is more dull and melancholy than a solitary life; and besides, when two or more are joined together in common counsel, and mutual help and assistance, they will not only act more cheerfully, but more easily effect their design, and take the greater pleasure in the fruits of their labour. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 10. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he is in distress, for he hath not another to help him up.] Or if they have any ill success, or fall into danger, it will not only make the singular benefit of fellowship the more plainly appear, because they will relieve and rescue one the other; but lamentable is his condition, who hath no friend, no companion, to reach out his charitable hand to him when he fails, (suppose into a pit); none to comfort him when he is sick; none to testify his innocence when he is defamed; or, which is worse, to restore him, when by his own imprudence or negligence he falls into a sin.

Ver. 11. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?] And, therefore, in the very beginning of the world, God did not think fit to let man be alone, but gave him an help meet for him; and as two that lie together in the same bed, cherish one another by their mutual heat, but it is hard to be warm alone; so do they that are strong, unsated, vigorous, and cheerful, infuse that courage and comfort, which silver and gold cannot give, into those that are of a weak, timorous, dejected, or melancholy spirit.

Ver. 14. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.] To conclude, we are never more sensible of the benefit of society, than when we are assaulted by a powerful enemy; whom we cannot resist alone, but by the help of a friend may be able to overcome; for as a great many threads twisted together are not quickly broken, though a single one be soon snapped asunder so he that is surrounded by his children, friends, and neighbours, will make a better defence, and hold out longer, against those that invade his right, than that wretched man can do, (ver. 8.), who, by loving money alone, hath deprived himself of all such succours.

Ver. 13. ¶ Better is a poor and a wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.] ¶ But it is not society alone will make a man happy, without wisdom and virtue. For who are better attended and guarded than kings? and yet the poorest man that is, if he be wise and good, is far happier than the wealthiest prince on earth; who foolishly abuseth his power; nay, the towardly child of a poor man is much better than such a king, though his greatness be made more venerable by his grey hairs; for, besides that, wisdom makes the poor youth contented with his condition, though never so mean, (a blessing at which princes hardly arrive); it renders wholesome admonition also acceptable to him, when by his inexperience he falls into an error; but folly makes the other impatient of all advice and counsel; and the older he is, the more obstinate; because, as his kingly dignity, he fancies, authorizes him to do what he list, so his age gives him a privilege of knowing, better than any body can tell him, what to do.

Ver. 14. For out of prison he cometh to reign, whereas, also, he that is born in his kingdom cometh poor.] By which means it comes to pass, that he who was born a mere beggar, nay, was as poor and abject as the vilest slave, rises by his singular prudence, counsel, and conduct, unto a throne; when he whose ancestors were kings, and possessed his dominions by an hereditary right, is deserted by his subjects, and, through his folly and wickedness, falls into such contempt, that he not only loses his crown, but is reduced to the greatest poverty, in which he spends a miserable life.

Ver. 15. I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.] Or, if this happen not, yet, (such is the infelicity of good princes), I have seen a great king left with nothing but the bare title, and the outward state of royalty; the hearts and affections of all nobles, gentry, and common people, from one end of the kingdom to the other, inclining to his son, (or to the next heir), that is to succeed him; unto whom they do obeyance, as if he were already upon the throne, but neglect his old father; who sees himself robbed of those honours, in which he placed his happiness, and that by his own son, who would have been more dutiful, perhaps, if he had been a private man. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 16. There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them; they also that come after, shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.] Nor is this a thing that will have an end, but a humour so rooted in all mankind, that, as in all preceding times, (before this king and his son were born), they have been weary of that which
they have long enjoyed; so this young prince, who is now followed with such applause, must not think that it will last always; but they that come after will take as little delight in him, as the present generation doth in his father; and, when he grows old, court his son, after the same fashion as they now do him, being young.

From all which it appears, that happiness is not to be found in honour and dignity; no, not in the very highest pitch of it, which is the kingly power; for there is not only dissatisfaction, but many dangers, troubles, and vexatious cares, which very much disturb and perplex their spirits. See Annot. [1]

**ANNOTATIONS.**

[a] **Ver. 1. Oppressions.** There are more evils than one that arise from the ill administration of public affairs. For they are either external or internal. And the external are two, either from superiors, or from equals and inferiors. Those from superiors he speaks of in this verse, and calls by the general name of oppressions, which comes from a root in the Hebrew, that signifies indirectly to oppress, (or rather to squeeze others, and utterly crush them,) whether it be by forcible violence, or by extortion in the traffic, or by fraud, circumvention, and false accusation. If it refer to any one of these more than to another, it is to the last. And therefore the LXX. though they translate it by several words, importing bearing down others by main strength, yet by none so frequent, as by ορεγματιον to undo others by calumni.

[b] **Ver. 4. Envy.** Those evils which come from equals or inferiors, he speaks of in this verse, and calls by the general name of envy, which is a word in the Hebrew, that signifies, when it is taken in all sense, all those vicious affections, which are the causes or the effects of envious emulation at the good qualities or prosperity of another person. Which St James calls μαχαιρις, bitter zeal or envious, iii. 14. and St Paul is wont to express by two words, ιουναι and οικοσ, strife, (or making hate), and envying, Rom. xiii. 13.; strife and envying, i.e., contentious or factious emulation, Phil. i. 15. envy and strife, i.e., invidious contention.

[c] **Ver. 5. Foldeth bis bands.** Here he passes to those evils which I called internal, which come not from others, but from ourselves. For some (seeing the forenamed oppressions, or the envy that attends upon men's industry and good successes) grow idle, and leave off all business, (expressed here by folding the bands, see Prov. vii. 17.), because it is to no purpose to get what another may presently take away, or if he keep, it raises him other enemies, who grudge to see him so happy.

By this means such a man brings himself to extreme poverty; so that phrase, "cateth his own flesh," signifies, one that is ready to die with hunger; and whose wife and children, (called in scripture a man's flesh), are in danger to starve with him. There are other explications of this phrase, upon which I have touched in the paraphrase, which admirably express the folly of him that undoes himself, to avoid being undone by others.

[d] **Ver. 6. Better is an handful.** Which though it be a very absurd resolution, yet he wants not apologies for it. Nay, as if he were the only wise man, (raptimium octavius, "wiser than seven men that can render a reason," as Bishop Sanderson speaks), he utters sentences, (but it is "like a parable in the mouth of a fool," a speech full of reason in itself, but witlessly applied), and says, that "better is a handful with quietness," &c. Wherein he makes a shew of being the most contented soul that lives; but is far from it, desiring and coveting as much as the most toiling and moiling wretch in the world, if he might but have it, and never sweat for it.

Thus some understand this 6th verse; which others take to be Solomon's advice to the envious spoken of before, or to the covetous spoken of afterward, that they would be contented with their condition; moderate riches having fewer cares, which a great estate brings along with it in abundance. Unto all which I have had respect in the paraphrase upon this verse.

[e] **Ver. 8. One alone.** And as this is the fault on one side, so, on the other, there are those who turn their thoughts altogether to save what they can; pinching themselves, by a penurious way of living, that they may seem poor and not worth the squeezing, and likewise have secret reserve of unknown treasures in case they are oppressed. This he describes here, by the example of a man, who hath neither wife, nor child, nor friend, nor companion, but lives solitary in a house by himself, where he spends little, and yet thinks of nothing but getting riches; which he enjoys not at all, only looks upon them, and wishes still to see more. One, not a second. Is properly a man without an heir, or a successor, as ver. 15.

[f] **Ver. 9. &c.** Upon the occasion of the foregoing observation, ver. 8. (the better to represent the folly of that sottish humour he there describes), he sets forth the benefit of society, which Greg. Thaumaturgus here calls Κοινωνία θίων, living in fellowship and communion together. This he shews is profitable, First, to procure us greater happiness, which is the subject of this 9th verse. Secondly, to preserve us in the enjoyment of that happiness, when we have attained it; as he shews by three instances. First, To deliver us out of dangers, ver. 10. Secondly, To fortify us against them, ver. 11. Thirdly, To repel them, when they actually assault us, ver. 12. Where is a proverbial saying of a triple cord or thread, like to which there are many in other authors; but I forbear to fill the paper with them, and leave those also who have a mind to allegorical application of these three things to seek for them in other books. For my business is only to give a brief account of the literal
sense, which is this in short;—that a companion will afford us his help and assistance many ways; and, if there were no benefit to be reaped from him, this would be an exceeding great comfort, to have one in our adversity, into whose bosom we may exonerate our sorrows; which will be the lighter, if we see there is any body that sympathises with us in our calamities.

[9] Ver. 13. 14.] And thus having represented the miserable effects of power abused to oppression, which bereaves men of the sweetest comforts of life, making them avoid society; he returns to consider the wretched state of such oppressors, though never so mighty. Both from their own folly, ver. 13. 14. (where that expression is very remarkable, He is made or becomes poor in his kingdom, as Dr Hammond well expounds it, upon Mat. i. not. a.), and from the fickleness and inconstancy of the people's affections, which creates a great many troubles even to good governors, ver. 15. 16. Where there are many difficulties in the Hebrew texts, but not such as makes the sense obscure; and an account is given of them by many authors, and therefore I shall only note what the Lord Bacon hath observed, for the illustration of the 15th verse, and what De Dieu hath noted upon the 16th.

[h] Ver. 15.] This verse sets out the vanity of the people, who are wont to press and flock about the designed successors of princes: “The root of which vanity,” saith the Lord Bacon, (Advanc. of Learn. l. vii. ch. ii. parab. 20.), “is that frenzy in the minds of men, which inclines them, with too extreme an affection, unto their own projected hopes. For the man is rarely found, that is not more delighted with the contemplation of his future hopes, than with the fruition of what he possesseth. Another thing is, that novelty which is pleasing to man's nature, and earnestly coveted; now in the successor to a prince, (called here his second), he that is next to him, these two concur, hope and novelty. Which make more men (as Pompey said to Scylla, and Tiberius after touching Macro) adore the rising than the setting sun. And though princes perhaps, who are in present possession, be not much moved with this fond humour, nor make any great matter of it, (as neither Scylla nor Tiberius did), nay, they smile, it is possible, at the levity of men, and do not stand to fight with dreams, (for hope is but the dream of a man awake), yet it cannot but inwardly vex them, to see themselves slighted, even by those on whom they have bestowed many benefits, merely in hope of receiving more from their next supposed successor. For they cannot reasonably expect more, perhaps, from him that now reigns; and therefore they make timely applications to the next heir. He hath done enough for them, and therefore they betake themselves to him, who hath yet done nothing. And besides, old men grow tenacious, morose, and sour; whereas youth is commonly liberal, jocund, without care, and am-

bitious to do great things, especially at his entrance upon the kingdom.” This, saith another learned writer, makes the long life of princes, and their power, troublesome and grievous, both to courtiers and people; of which they that live at Rome, do not want ocular demonstration.

There is nothing more needful for the explanation of this verse, but only to observe, that the child or youth, who is here called the second, doth not suppose another child or youth that is first; but only signify, that this youth is second in the kingdom. Not second in respect to another son, but second in respect to his father, who reigns before him, and when he dies, the son succeeds him.

[i] Ver. 16.] The first words of this last verse, L. de Dieu seems to me to have expressed better than any other interpreter; they running thus word for word, in the Hebrew. There is no end to any people; that is, no end for their fickleness, no bounds to their inconstancy, but one nation is as subject to it as another. And as this age follows the former, so the next will follow this, in its levity and mutability. And therefore those young princes, who are transported with the acclamations of the people, do but feed upon wind, (as some, I observed upon the first chapter, translate those words, which we render vexation of spirit); for their applauds are like to their affections, as changeable as the wind, which will turn another way, to some other person, when this present prince grows old, or he rules ill, or the people's fancy and humour alter. And then it will be indeed a sore affliction to him, to see himself despised by those who formerly cried him up as if he had been their darling.

It may be referred, also, to the very government itself, with which the Israelites were not pleased. For when they were under judges, they desired a king; and then they were not pleased with the monarchy, but wished for the old aristocracy agaın; though that in truth was the most excellent monarchy, which they would not understand, under the immediate government of God himself.

C H A P. V.

The Argument.—Under an ill government in the state, religion itself is commonly corrupted in the church. And therefore, having set forth the miseries people endure, under the oppressions of an abused power, and the extremes of folly into which it drives them, he begins this chapter with a correction of those errors that are in religion. Which is the only remedy indeed, the only comfort we have, against all the troubles to which we are subject in this world; but such is the vanity of mankind, they spoil their very remedy, and take away all the virtue of that which should be their support, turning it into mere ceremony, whilst their minds remain impure, and without any true sense of God. For they do not consider that he, who is a pure mind himself, must be better pleased
with pure thought and affections, composed to the observance of his will, and acquiescence in his pleasure, than with all the sacrifice and offerings in the world, which the wicked may bring him as well as the good.

To prevent, therefore, this new folly into which men are apt to run, when they intend to cure all the rest, Solomon shews all those who would attain true tranquillity of mind, what they must do, and what they must avoid, in the worship of God. And about the middle of the chapter, as I shall observe in the annotations, proceeds to consider the last of those four things, wherein men place their happiness.

Ver. 1. KEEP thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not that they do evil.] And now, lest any man add to the affliction and torment of his spirit, even by that which is the only care for it, let every one, who would be a true worshipper of God, in whom alone lies the happiness we seek, take care to avoid that negligence which is observable in many people, and to approach with all reverence, both of body and soul, into his blessed presence; but do not think to please him with mere postures of devotion, nor with sacrifices and incense, without the obligation of an obedient heart, disposed to do what he would have thee; for the worst men in the world may be able to offer him the richest sacrifices, but are very impious, as well as foolish, if they think he delights in the fat and the blood of beasts, (save only as testimonies of love to him, and acts of obedience unto his will;) for in that very thought they offend him, and make no conscience of what evil they do, while they believe their sacrifices alone for all. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.] And next to this, when thou makest thy prayers to God, or givest him thanks for his benefits, deliberate with thyself beforehand, what it is fit for thee to ask of him, or to vow unto him; and let not any sudden passion make thee inconsiderately, either with thy mouth or in thy mind, desire what is not fit for thee to have, or promise what is not fit for him to receive, or thou art not able or willing to give. But remember, first, how infinitely great the Lord and Governor of the world is, who comprehends all things, and then, how little and vile thou art, who prostratest thyself before him; and therefore do not dare to speak to him as an equal, whatsoever comes into thy mind, much less to make him large promises, which thou canst not perform; but let a sense of his majesty, and of thy meanness, overcome thee into a profound reverence of him, expressing itself rather in ardent sighs and groans, than in abundance of words, which signify nothing, but want of a serious apprehension of him. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business, and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.] It is so difficult, at the same time, to speak much and wisely unto God, that a man, whose thoughts have been distracted with a great deal of troublesome business in the day, is not more likely to be disturbed with confused dreams in the night, than he who pours out abundance of words in his prayers is in danger to vent a great many vain, unseasonable, absurd (if not impious) things, which are utterly unworthy of the divine majesty. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools' plays, pay that which thou hast vowed.] Yet this is not his greatest danger; for such men, having in a fit of zeal bound themselves to God in magnificent promises, are very loth to perform them when they are cool again. And therefore, let me rather advise thee, when in great straits and difficulties, or after great blessings received from him, thou art apt, out of abundance of devout affection, to vow what thou wilt do for him, to deliberate and consider, as I said, in the first place, what thou art truly able and willing to give him, and then, having once vowed it to him, be no less forward to perform than thou wert to promise; for he is highly offended with those that childishly trifle with him, or impiously mock him with delusive promises, and do not keep their word with him; and therefore let me again advise thee, to be very faithful, and cheerful too, in discharging such obligations speedily. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.] For though the innumerable benefits he bestows on thee, may require some such grateful return from thee, yet it is a less fault not to vow at all, than having vowed, not to perform; the one being but a neglect, the other an affront, nay, a contempt of his majesty, who needs nothing indeed that thou canst give him, but will not suffer a scorn to be put upon him. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 6. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou before the angel, that is was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?] Therefore do not hastily engage thyself in such vows as the weakness of human nature, and thy fleshly reluctance, will not suffer thee to perform, much less think of being absolved from the obligations thou layest on thyself, in the presence of God, and of his holy angels, by such foolish excuses as these: It was a mistake, I did not mind what I said, or, That was not my meaning; for this will but increase thy guilt: And why shouldest thou farther incense the anger of the Almighty, (who is too much provoked already, by thy breach of faith with him), not only to defeat those designs, for the success of which perhaps it was that thou madest thy vows, but bless all thy undertakings, and bring thy whole estate to ruin. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 7. For in the multitude of dreams and many words, there are also divers vanities; but fear God.] For all this folly, inconsistancy, and falsehood of mankind, proceeds from the want of a serious awful sense
of God; in whose worship and service they therefore devise, after the manner of men in dreams, a multitude of senseless things; hampering themselves, for instance, in many vows, from which they seek afterward in vain to extricate themselves, and therefore plainly violate and break; the cure of which lies in an holy fear of offending God, with which possess thy soul, especially when thou comest into his house, that it may preserve thee from speaking much unto him, and from vowing any thing, which is either unworthy of him, or so inconvenient to thyself, that afterward thou shalt not find in thine heart to make it good. See Annot. [7]

Ver. 8. ¶ If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgement and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for be that is higher than the highest regarded, and there be higher than they.] ¶ And this also will preserve thee (if thou always preservest it in mind) from being too much troubled at that abuse of power, which began this discourse, (iii. 16.) when thou seest, for instance, those who should vindicate and protect the poor, become the instruments of their oppression, so that even in the courts of justice, to which they fly for relief, their rights, and their lives perhaps, are violently wrested from them, be not dejected at this bold license which they take, but remember that these great men have one higher than themselves, viz. the king, whom God hath set over them, as well as over others, to inspect their doings, and to judge them; and if he neglect his duty too, there are higher than them all, viz. God, and his holy angels, whom he will employ to punish both them and him. See Annot. [8]

Ver. 9. ¶ Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the field.] ¶ And now let us consider, how senseless the love of money is, which is the cause of all this rapine and violent dealing. And this appears from the fruitfulness of the earth, which brings forth more than enough for all men's necessities; if husbandry be not neglected; an employment no less noble than innocent, for kings themselves, in former times, have not disdained to give their mind unto it; nor is there any prince now, who is not so much indebted to it, that it ought to be one of his principal cares, to encourage, secure, and protect it.

And yet, such is the vanity of mankind, that, disregarding these riches, which lie not very deep in the earth, all their business is, with incessant pains and danger, to dig into its bowels for gold and silver, which tempt them also to oppress and squeeze the poor, to pervert judgement, and do all manner of evil, to extort their money from them. See Annot. [7]

Ver. 10. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase: this is also vanity.] And what can it do for him that sets his heart upon it, but only to increase his desires, that they can never be satisfied? for though necessary things have certain bounds set them by nature, beyond which we do not desire them, yet money, and riches, and all unnecessary things, are unlimited, and therefore excite an endless appetite after them, which very appetite also deprives him who indulges it, of the fruit of all his abundance; for, imagining he parts with so much of his happiness, as he doth of his money, he hath not the heart to make use of it for his pleasure, nor scarce for his necessity. This is another strange folly, or rather madness, which infects mankind, and miserably torments them. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 11. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the owner thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?] But let us suppose that he useth his riches, yet it is but a small portion of them that he can enjoy; and as his estate increases, the greater family and retinue (if he will live like himself) he must maintain, who have a larger share than himself in the daily provision that is made by his expenses. And as for the rest that is not expended, (which he calls peculiarly his,) he hath no other benefit from it, but only that it feeds and entertains his eyes; from which he derives all the true pleasure he hath above them, if he keep a good house willingly, that he sees many continually supported by his hospitality; but this very thing, if he be covetous, is his torment, that he beholds so many mouths, which eat at his cost and charges. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 12. The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.] And as he that tills his ground, or serves him in any other labour, hath commonly a better appetite, and stronger digestion, and therefore more health than himself; so he sleeps soundly, and is recruited with new vigour against the morning, whether his supper be small or large; when his rich master, if he eat sparingly, hath his head so full of cares and fears, or if he cram himself, hath it so filled with unquiet vapours, that he cannot sleep a wink; or tosses up and down so restless, that he is not at all refreshed by it, but by his crudities prepares matter for many diseases. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 13. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.] And, besides all this, there is another thing which is very calamitous, and may rather be called a grievous plague, than a mere affliction; that these very treasures which men have heaped up, and preserved with a great deal of care, from thence expecting their felicity, prove in the issue their utter undoing; for I myself have seen some of these miserable men murdered by their servants, or by thieves, nay, by their own children, that they might be masters of these riches; which bring them also, perhaps, at the last, into the same or the like destruction. See Annot. [an]

Ver. 14. But those riches perish by evil travail; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.] Or, if this happen not, these riches perish, (to their no small grief and trouble), by fire, or shipwreck, or bad bargains, or ill debtors, or these very crafty practices
whereby he seeks to increase his estate; or by some other misfortune or misadventure; so that the son, whom he thought to have left possessed of abundance of wealth, hath nothing at all to support a wretched life. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. As he came forth from his mother’s womb, naked shall be return to as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.] These things, indeed, do not always happen, but this which follows doth; that though he die possessed of all that he hath gotten, yet he cannot carry one farthing away with him; but in this, he and the poorest wretch are both alike, that as he came naked into this world, so he must be stripped again when he goes out of it; and though his labour hath been great, and his estate no less, yet it is not in his power to take along with him so much as a winding-sheet, but what others please to bestow upon him.

Ver. 16. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go; and what profit hath be that hath laboured for the wind?] This is another grievous affliction and sore torment to mankind, to the wealthy, that the things on which they have set their hearts, cannot accompany them into the other world; for as the richest man that ever was, brought nothing hither, so he can carry nothing thither, but must leave all that he hath behind him; and then what advantage have he? what pleasure? wherein doth he differ from a mere beggar? But in this only, that he hath taken a world of pains to no purpose, for that which gives no satisfaction, and which he can hold no more than he can the wind.

Ver. 17. All his days also be troubled in darkness, and be bath much sorrow and trouble with his sickness.] And as at death he can find no comfort in all his wealth, so he took as little perhaps in his life; but dwelt obscurely, and, denying himself even what he had, led such a sad, melancholy, and sordid life, that his meat, and his drink, and the very light itself, gave him no pleasure; for such a man never thinks himself happy, but when some hope of gain shines upon him; and therefore at other times he pines, and grieves, and frets, and vexes himself at every thing that makes an expense, or crosses his covetous desires and designs; insomuch, that the sickness of the soul appears in his pale and careful looks, and in his lean and meagre body; which consumes and wastes, even by the sorrow and sadness, the vexation and displeasure of his mind. See Annot.

Ver. 18. Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the fruit of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life which God giveth him; for it is his portion.] Behold therefore the truth of that observation, which I have made more than once, (ii. 24. iii. 12. 13. 23.,) and now repeat again; that it is best for a man, and most becoming, freely to use and enjoy the riches he hath gotten by his honest labours; both for the constant supply of all the necessities of nature, and for moderate delight and pleasure, for the entertainment of his friends, and the relief of his poor neigh-

bours; and this not for a fit, but all the time that God is pleased to continue him in this world; for this is all that falls to his share, or that can truly be called his part in the good things of this life; and the only way to prolong his days, and enlarge his portion in them. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 19. Every man also to whom God hath given richer and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.] And whosoever he be, whom God hath blessed, not only with plenty and abundance of worldly goods, but also with such a noble and generous mind, that he is not their slave, but truly master of them; being able to enjoy them innocently, and to take his full share in them, and that with cheerfulness, and delight in doing good to others; let him be very thankful to Almighty God for so great an happiness, and acknowledge it to be a singular gift of his bounty, wherewith he rewards his honest labours.

Ver. 20. For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.] For he that is thus highly favoured of God, will not think life tedious or irksome, but (forgetting all his past toils, and taking no care for the future) spend his time most pleasantly; because God hath given him his very heart’s desire, and he hath attained the scope of all his labours, in that inward tranquillity of mind, or rather joy and gladness of heart, wherewith God hath compensated all his pains, and testified his extraordinary kindness to him.

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1.] To prevent or cure that folly mentioned in the argument of the chapter, he advises three things about the worship of God. The first of them is in this verse, to look to the disposition of their mind, when they go to God’s house. And this pious disposition of mind consists also in three things: First, in frequenting the house of God, the place where he is worshipped: Secondly, in a reverent behaviour there, suitable to the great thoughts we have of God, and to the humble sense we have of our own meanness; expressed by keeping or observing the feet, i.e. taking care to put off their shoes, or sandals, as the manner was in those countries; and to go barefoot into the holy places, answerable to which now is uncovering the head in our churches, &c. as Dr. Mede well discourses in more places than one, book ii. p. 441. 546.; and then, lastly, in readiness of the will to obey all the divine precepts, as the best of sacrifices. For this is the sacrifice of wise and good men; and all other sacrifices, without this, are but the sacrifices of fools and wicked people, who are able many times to furnish the altar with more burnt-offerings than the best of men. But they are such fools as not to consider, that this very thing increases their guilt; that they imagine God will be pleased with the sacrifice of beasts, without the sacrifice of themselves; in entire.
obeidence to his will. So our translation seems to understand the last clause of this verse; which may be thus also translated, "For they make no conscience do evil." It is no part of their religion to abain from wickedness; but, fancying by their sacrifices they shall alone for that, they do not fear to commit it. To this purpose Maldonate expounds it, more plainly than any that I have read.

[b] Ver. 2.] Here he gives the second advice; which is about prayer, and about vows to God, or, (as St Hierom seems to take it, and to which Melanchton wholly confines it,) about the doctrines we deliver concerning God; which should be very well considered, before we affirm any thing of him. The two first are most proper to the place, especially the latter of them; both which I have comprehended in the paraphrase of this verse.

[c] Ver. 5.] The reason for the foregoing precept, (of not using many words), taken from the consideration of God's greatness and our meanness, (ver. 2.), together with the enforcement of it in this verse, is thus explained by St Hierom. He requires us, that whether we speak or think of God, we should not venture beyond our ability, but remember our imbecillity; and that, as far as the heaven is distant from the earth, so much do our thoughts fall short of the excellence of his nature. And therefore our words ought to be very moderate; for as a man that is full of thoughts, commonly dreams of those things whereof his head is full, so he that attempts to discourse much of the divinity, falls into folly. Or rather thus, Our words ought therefore to be few, because even those things which we think we know, we see through a glass, in amagnate, and we do but dream of that which we fancy we comprehend. So that when we have said a great deal, (and to the purpose, as it seems to us), the conclusion of our disputations is folly.

And so much, we may be certain, he suggests unto us, that in a multitude of words spoken unto God, (as I rather understand it), there must be many of them as idle as men's thoughts are in a dream. For the third verse sounds thus in the Hebrew, "For a dream proceeds from (or by) a multitude of toilsome business; and the voice of a fool from (or by) the multitude of words." That is, if a man have a multitude of cares in his mind all the day, they will produce strange, extravagant, or distracted dreams in the night; and in like manner, if a man utter abundance of words, without consideration and due weighing what he saith to God, many of them must needs be foolish, whether they be vows, or whether they be prayers unto him, (or whether they be discourses concerning him, for we may refer it, if we please, to all). And the sense will not much differ, if that preposition which we translate from, be translated with, in this manner: "As dreams come with a multitude of business," (i. e. bring before the mind, in a confused manner, what we have been doing or thinking of all day), "so a fool's voice comes with a multitude of words," i. e. he utters a great deal of incoherent confused stuff, &c. Or thus, The voice of a fool comes in a multitude of words. And then the sense will run thus: "As a multitude of business tires a man, and makes him but dream at last about it, (and therefore he had better leave off, before he be unfit to attend it), so when a man enlarges himself too far in his prayers or discourses of God, he doth but babble in the conclusion, and therefore had better be shorter."

[d] Ver. 4.] And now follows the third advice about the performing of vows that have been made. Which is double; first, not to delay the performance, nor put it off from time to time, (which is the subject of this verse), lest we be tempted at last not to perform our vows at all, which is the second thing; of which he speaks in the next words, ver. 5. and 6. where he cautions against excuses which men are apt to make for not being as good as their intentions. Greg. Thaumaturgus hath expressed both excellently in a few words, (alluding to the Hebrew word וּלָמֵל which signifies to complete), "אֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה וְאֶחָדָה. "A promise being made by a vow, let it receive its perfection (or completion) by performance;" and that with all speed, as soon as it is due. For a vow is an imperfect sort of a thing till it be made good; it hath only the beginning of a good thing, and wants its finishing, which if it have not, it becomes ugly and odious. For God loves not (that is, hates) to be so dealt withal, as if he did either not understand, or not mind what we say to him; or would put up that affront which the poorest man cannot but resent; who looks upon himself, as not only abused, but despised, when men give him fair words, which either have no meaning, or deceive him when he depends upon them. This Solomon represents in the 4th verse, as far worse than promising nothing at all; in which men may be unkind, but in this they are unjust.

[e] Ver. 6.] And he presseth it farther in this verse, where by Malach. Angel, there are those that understand that particular angel, which is supposed by some (but cannot be certainly proved) to attend upon every particular person; others understand the priest, who is God's minister; but I have followed Mr Mede, (book ii. p. 438.), who takes angel here collectively for more than one, (as tree is put for trees, leaf for leaves, Gen. iii. 2. 7.), which attended upon the Divine Majesty in his house, where the vow he is here speaking of was made, (ver. 1.) Which angelical ministry in God's house was represented to the Jews, by filling all the curtains of the tabernacle with the pictures of cherubims, Exod. xxvi. 36. 37.; and by carving the inside of the walls of Solomon's temple with the same, 1 Kings, vi.; and by the ark of the testimony being overspread with two mighty cherubims, (having their wings lifted up, and their faces looking down towards it, and towards the mercy-seat), called the Cherubims of Glory, i. e. of the divine
presence, Heb. ix. 5. And all to signify, that where God's sacred memorial is, there the blessed angels, out of duty, give their attendance; and therefore the LXX. I observe, in this place, instead of before the angel, have κατὰ τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ Θεοῦ, before the face of presence of God; whose ministers the angels were, and before whom the vows men engaged themselves in being made, they were witnesses also and avengers of their excuses, or of their delays, to make them good.

As for the Vulgar translation of those words, (it is an error), which is this, there is no providence; I have taken no notice of it, because it doth not seem to be the genuine meaning; for why should a man make any vows, who believes no providence over him, unless we will say, that he might alter his opinion afterwards; and so we may put both senses together thus: “I was in an error, there was no providence, and therefore I need not trouble myself about my vows.”

[f] Ver. 7.] In these words he concludes his discourse about religion, with a repetition (as some take it) of the third verse, a little varied and enlarged; which may be thus paraphrased according to our translation: “To sum up all that concerns this matter; since in a multitude of words, as dreams, there must needs be much vanity, therefore have a greater reverence of God than to speak any thing rashly, or to make larger promises to him than thou art truly willing to make good.”

In the Hebrew the words run thus: “But from a multitude of dreams (or when dreams are multiplied) both vanity and words are multiplied; therefore fear thou God.” Which may have this meaning; “They do but merely dream of God, and are not awakened to a lively sense of him, who make either those vain excuses, or those idle promises; of which that thou mayest not be guilty, possess thy soul with an awful dread of his majesty.” This is exactly agreeable to the Hebrew, if we take vanities to relate unto the excuses of ignorance or error before mentioned, and words and promises; and by multitude of dreams, understand a great many conceptions concerning God, more like dreams than waking thoughts of him.

Interpreters explain the words many other ways, whom the learned reader may consult. I have followed my own conjectures; and shall also propose another translation of the words, which seem to me very natural and easy, which is this: “When, in abundance, dreams, and vanities, and words, are multiplied, then fear thou God.” That is, have a great care of thyself, and let the thread of God overawe thee, lest thou offend when thy head is hot, and full of dreams, and vain imaginations, which dispose thee to speak absurdly.

[g] Ver. 8.] As the foregoing verse concluded his discourse about religion, so this concludes the third general head, whereby he demonstrates the vanity of all things, begun, ii. 17. Which he here admonishes us, should not too much disturb, much less astonish us; because God will set all right in his due time. So he began it, iii. 17. and so be he ends it in this verse. Which hath some difficulty in the last part of it, which we translate, “He that is higher than the highest,” &c. Word for word, “High above the high observeth.” But why in Hebrew never signifies simply above, but always from above, or from on high, and therefore should be translated here, “He that is high, from on high observeth.” And then the only question is, Who is meant by the high, whether God, or his vicegerent, the king here on earth? I have expanded it of the latter, because otherwise the same thing must be said over again immediately, which is not usual indeed in scripture; but where there is no necessity of it, and where the words will better bear another sense, they are not to be so construed. And the last word of the verse will no way be so plain, as by referring it both to the high person mentioned before, and to all his inferior potentates and judges, whom he observes from on high, that is, from his throne, or from his seat of judgement. Where he ought to call them to an account, and examine any complaints that are made against them; or if he do not, both he and they are observed by the Supreme Judge of all, and shall be accountable to him, whether they will or no.

[h] Ver. 9.] And now it seems, in this next verse, to make a transition to the fourth general head, (mentioned in the beginning), concerning the vanity of those who place their happiness in getting and heaping up a great deal of money.

It is an obscure verse, both in its connection, and in some of its phrases; and therefore is diversely expounded by interpreters. To help out the connection, I have made bold to prefix a little, and also to add such a conclusion in my paraphrase upon it, as I took to be most agreeable to what follows, and to what went before. I have expressed also both senses of the last clause, which we render, “The king is served by the field,” but may more literally be translated, “The king is a servant (or is addicted) to the field.” For among the greatest persons did not think it below them to follow husbandry, (whence just praises Cicero hath given us in his Offices, but especially in his book De senectute), as we are taught by the examples of Hiero, Philomelos, Aetius, Archelaus, Cyrus the younger, in profane story; and by the example of king Uzziah, in scripture, 2 Chron. xxviii. 10. Which did not at all abuse their courage, or dull their wit, but only made the one more patient of toil and labour, and the other more solid and more serious. Whence it is that we find the greatest captains among the Romans, such as Camillus, Regulus, Fabius, Cato, Cincinnatus, were fetched from the plough; as Gideon among the Israelites was from the threshing-floor, and Ehud called to the high office of a prophet, as he was driving one of the twelve ploughs his father had going in the field.

And therefore Maldonate's translation of these words is not to be despised, who (and he alone, as I
can find) thinks they are capable of being rendered thus: "By following husbandry diligently, a man may grow so rich as to become a king." Melancthon alone translates the whole verse thus: "The king in the earth is above all for the tillage of the field." Where Solomon, saith he, distinguisheth a king from a tyrant. A tyrant depopulates his country, and lays all waste; a good king cherishes his people, especially honest husbandmen and farmers, and loves to see them thrive, together with all good arts. The vulgar Latin, I suppose, aimed at something of this, though it be taken otherwise by those that follow it. Agreeable to which is this memorable passage in a Persian writer, quoted by Mr Pocock (in his Notes upon Abul Feraqii, p. 202. 203.) That in that "country they kept a solemn feast every year, wherein the king descended from his throne, laid aside his royal apparel, threw away the veil from his face, and conversed with most ordinary people, even with the country swains and husbandmen, with whom he ate, saying, 'I am one of you, nor can the world subsist without tillage, which is performed by your pains,' and that tillage subsists, it "is owing to the king; so that neither of us being able to subsist without the other, we are, as it were, individual brethren."

There are those that comprehend pastureage as well as tillage, under these words, because the ancient patriarchs were shepherds. But there is no need of this, and husbandry or gardening was far more ancient, even as old as Adam; and after the flood we find Noah thus employed, as Isaac also was in succeeding times.

[1] Ver. 10.] The latter end of this verse runs thus in the Hebrew text: "Whose loveeth (viz. silver) reaps no fruit of his abundance," i. e. doth not enjoy it, as St Hierom expounds it, which is very often the miserable condition of worldly-minded men.

[k] Ver. 11.] The latter end of this verse, also, is capable of contrary senses, which I have expressed in the paraphrase, but shall not give an account of it here, because I see these annotations already grow too large. For which cause I will not note particularly every thing that is observable in the following verses, but only touch upon some of them, under this observation, that he seems to demonstrate the vanity of that sort of happiness which men place in riches, from ten considerations. The two first are contained in the tenth verse; that the desires of such men are unsatiable; and the more unsatisfiable they are, the less they enjoy of what they have.

The third and fourth in the 11th verse, that if they will enjoy it, the more they have, the more others must also have of it; and the pleasure of this is very small, being no more than to behold a great many people eat and drink at their cost.

[f] The 12th, ver. 12. That their servants commonly sleep more sweetly than they. For so baptized (which we translate labouring man), signifies one that serves, that undertakes work for another, or any way ministers unto him.

[m] The sixth. That their riches expose them to the danger even of their life, by poison, or by open violence, ver. 13. Where the first words rai cbole, sore evil, import such an evil as makes one sick, when he thinks of it, especially when he fears it. For the Hebrew word cabalab always carries in it the notion of sickness and weakness, and that sometimes accompanied with pain and torment, (as in the case of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 1.), and proceeding from a deadly wound, as in the case of Ahab, 1 Kings, xxii. 34. It may therefore be translated here a tormenting or a deadly evil, or an evil that disables a man, and makes him so feeble and languishing, that he is unfit for any thing. For the LXX. frequently render the noun that comes from hence, eisimin; see ver. 17. of this chapter.

[n] And, seventhly, Though they escape these dangers, there are many other ways whereby their riches may be lost, which seem to be included in that phrase, ver. 14. injan ra, an evil business, or matter; which may signify, as well the way of their perishing, as that they perish with the great grief and affliction of him that losest them. Whether that way be, by their very merchandise in the way of their trade, or by their own frauds and subtilities in traffic, whereby they over-reach themselves; or lastly, by other accidents, as we call them, such as fire, storms, &c.

And then follows the eighth, That he leaves his son a beggar, which is no small trouble to them both, he having bred his son in expectation of an estate, which never comes to him; or if it do, neither father nor son can enjoy it longer than their lives, ver. 14. 15. Which is the ninth thing; if their riches do not leave them, they must leave their riches, ver. 16.

[o] And whilst they live, (which is the last, ver. 17.), they spend their time, perhaps either in filthy lusts (as Gregory Thaumaturgus understands those words, eateth in darkness) with vile harlots, or in wretched niggardice, and such sordid penuriousness, that the miser even eats up himself, taking no joy, no comfort in any thing that he possesses. So darkness signifies being opposed to light in scripture, which denotes joy and gladness: and thus the LXX. here explain it by adding a word, in darkness and in unwrapping. It may refer also to this dismal habitation (to which I have had respect in the paraphrase) in some bye-place, where he hopes nobody can find him, or in a room whose windows are shut up and barred for fear of thieves.

The last clause of this verse runs thus word for word in the Hebrew, "Sorrow is multiplied," (or there is much sorrow), "and sickness, and wrath;" the force of which I have expressed in the paraphrase; and shall only note, that the first word sorrow (as was observed, ch. i.), includes in itself indignation, together with heaviness; and the next word, sickness, includes in it pain and anguish, as was ob-
served before; and the last word, (zetepb), wrath, denotes the highest commotion of that sort. For being applied to the sea, it signifies such a boiling rage as makes it foam. There is another word, indeed, which we render hot displeasure; but this is joined with it, (Psal. xxxvii. 1.), as equivalent to it, or the effect of it.

[p] From all which he concludes this chapter, as he had done his discourse upon the foregoing subjects, with this meditation, (which some call sententia intercalaris), that the greatest blessing a man can enjoy in this life, is to have an heart to use what God hath given him for his own honest pleasure, with due acknowledgements to God, and charity to others, ver. 18, 19, 20. Where (ver. 19.) there are two words to express abundance of worldly good, as I have paraphrased them. The last of them, nekasim, is larger than the former, comprehending all manner of goods, (cattle and all), which a man gathers together. For it seems, by a transposition of letters, to be derived from kenas, to collect or gather, chap. ii. 8. from which comes the Latin word censum, the revenues which a man is esteemed to have, and accordingly is rated, and pays subsidies.

CHAP. VI.

The Argument.—The first ten verses, at least, of this chapter, are a continuation of the same argument he handled in the latter part of the same foregoing, and therefore ought to be connected with it. For they set forth the vanity of riches in the possession of a covetous wretch, who only increases the number of unhappy men in this world, being never the better for anything he enjoys, as he shews in the conclusion of the chapter.

Ver. 1. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men;]

But alas! this divine benefit, though above all others, is coveted by very few; for I have observed this most wretched, miserable humour, reigning among mankind, which, though it be the greatest mischief, is grown so common, that it hath overspread the face of the whole earth. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.]

When a man is blessed by God, with such abundance of money and goods, and height of honour, that he need not, unless he will, want any thing which his largest desires can wish should administer to his pleasure; yet so great is his ingratitude to God, and his uncharitableness to men, that for these, and other sins, God denies him the power to enjoy these gifts of his bounty; to which he is a slave; rather than their master: for he possesses them as if they were not his own, but kept by him for somebody else, and those not his children, nor his kindred, but a mere stranger perhaps, who (either in his life-time, or after he is dead) devours all that he hath saved. What can be more senseless than this? Nay, what sorer plague can infect mankind? See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. ¶ If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that be have no burial, I say, that an untimely birth is better than be.]

Unless it be this, that one of this sort of men, being blessed also with abundance of children, and with an exceeding long life, yet thereby is made only so much the more, and so much the longer miserable; being so solicitous for posterity, that he hath no heart to take the comfort of any thing he possesses at present, no, nor so much as to take order for his decent funeral, when he is dead; but he goes out of the world without any notice that he hath lived in it. Of such an one I pronounce, That an abortive, which came into the world before its time, is not so despicable as he. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. For be cometh in with vanity, and parteth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness:]

For though in this they are both alike, that they come into the world to no purpose, and go out of it so obscurely, that nobody minds their departure, and leave no memory behind them that they have been in it; See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. Moreover be hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the crier.]

Yet in this they differ, that an abortive, having never seen the light of the sun, much less been acquainted with any thing in this world, had no desire to enjoy that of which it was perfectly ignorant, and was as utterly insensible of grief and pain, as it was of joy and pleasure; whereas this man's insatiable desires, carrying him after every thing he sees, torment his soul with anxious thoughts, care and labour, which not only make him pine away with grief for what he cannot get, but deprive him of the comfort of what he hath. And how much better is it, never to live at all, than to live only to disquiet a man's self with restless solicitude of mind, and toilsome pains of body, for that which he can neither keep, nor part withal, with any contentment?

Ver. 6. ¶ Yea, though be live a thousand years twice told, yet be hath seen no good; do not all go to one place? ¶ Men are so fond of life, indeed, that because the one lives long, and the other not at all, they imagine the former to be incomparably more happy: but let us suppose this covetous wretch to live more than as long again as the oldest man that ever was, what is he the better for it, when his greedy desires, not suffering him to enjoy his goods, multiply his miseries equally to his years? which will expire also at last; and then, what are his riches able to do for him? can they privilege him from going down into the grave, and rotting there like the abortive? See Annot. [e]

Ver. 7. All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.]

And while he lives, to
what purpose is his restless labour? Seeing, if he desire only what is necessary, it is easily provided, and having food and raiment, a man may be contented: and if he extend his desires farther, they are infinite, and therefore can never meet with any satisfaction.

Ver. 8. *For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?* For let a man be otherwise never so wise as well as rich, yet if he bridle not his desires, he is little better than a fool; and he that is poor, but hath so much understanding, as to know how to behave himself among men suitably to his condition, and to be contented therewith, is incomparably the wiser and the happier man. See Annot. [F]

Ver. 9. "Better is the sight of the eyes, than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit." It being much better to enjoy what a man hath at present, than to live upon the hopes of that which his ravenous desires continually pursue; which sure is a very foolish thing, and another great part of the miseries of human life; that men are still craving more, when they know not how to use what they have already, and neglecting what they possess, wish for that which perhaps they cannot get, or if they do, can give them no more satisfaction than what they possess. See Annot. [F]

Ver. 10. *That which hath been, is named already, and it is known that it is man; neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.* And what if a man have already arrived at great renown, (as well as riches), still it is notorious, that he is but a man, made out of the dust; and therefore weak and frail, and subject to many disastrous events, which it is not possible for him, by his most anxious cares, to prevent, or by his power and wealth to throw off when he pleases. See Annot. [F]

Ver. 11. "Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?" And since there are so many things, and of great consideration, that add to the natural uncertainty which attends all worldly enjoyments, what can a man promise himself from all his cares? And how frivolous are his hopes! and how senseless are they, when they will not suffer him to enjoy any thing, for fear of diminishing that heap which they would fain increase. See Annot. [B]

Ver. 12. "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?" For (beside all that hath been said) there is this great mischief will still remain, that if he should attain his hopes, he cannot tell, whether it would not have been better for him to have been disappointed; for, alas! what man is there that hath kill enough to know, whether that eminent station (for instance) to which he aspires, will prove so good for him as the private condition wherein he is? and the same doubt may be made of all other things which he desires in this short life; which passes away insensibly, but very swiftly, and ends in the like uncertainty, what shall become of a man's family and possessions, which he leaves behind him, when he departs out of this world. See Annot. [I]

**ANNOTATIONS.**

[c] Ver. 1. Common. Covetous wretches, it seems, were no rare creatures in those days; but the nation of the Jews abounded with them, being of the same humour they are now, scraping up riches by right or wrong, which they scarce ever enjoy. But I have expressed also the other sense of the word *rabba*, which signifies great, (Gen. vi. 5.), as well as many or frequent.

[b] Ver. 2. Riches, &c. He describes in this verse the ridiculousness, as well as the misery, of this penurious humour, by the example of a man who wants nothing, and yet wants all that he hath, being like one that stands up to the chin in water, but fears to take a sip to quench his thirst. For to those two words, riches and wealth, (mentioned in the 15th verse of the foregoing chapter), he here adds a third, to express the greatest plenty, viz. glory. Which is more comprehensive than the other, including in it all those goodly things which may do a man credit, and raise him to a splendid condition in this world. For so Laban's sons call the ample possessions which Jacob had got in their father's service, "all this glory," (Gen. xxxi. 1.), or substance, as some render it; which made him (as we now speak) a substantial man, for it denotes any thing that hath weight in it, and makes a man to be valued.

Evil disease. That which was called *rao cholek*, a sore evil, chap. v. 13. 16. is here called *choli ra*, an evil disease, sad sickness, or grievous torment. Which is only an inversion of the words, the same sense being still preserved.

[c] Ver. 3. Days of his years, &c. He seems to represent in this verse an higher degree of that evil disease, by the example of one, who hath not only great store of money, and lands, and honour, but also abundance of children, and such firm health, that he lives to a great age. Which is expressed by two phrases, which we translate thus, "Live many years, so that the days of his years be many;" but to avoid another tautology, the latter clause should be thus translated, "And the days of his years be abundantly sufficient;" so many, that he cannot reasonably expect or desire more. For thus *rabb* signifies in many places, where we translate it enough, Gen. xxiv. 25. "straw and provender enough;" Gen. xxxii. 11. "I have enough, my brother." And yet this man, thus abundantly provided for a long happiness, doth no good, either to others or to himself, with what he possesses; but grudges even the expences of a funeral, after he can hold his riches no longer. So I understand these words, "he have no burial." Which are generally understood, I confess, of lying neglected, without any interment; which the Hebrews (every one knows) look upon as a great judgement.
(see Jer. xxii. 19.); and so Anton. Corunus glosses upon these words: "By the just judgment of God, such wretches, who would not feed the poor while they lived, become the food of dogs, or crows, when they are dead."


With vanity.] Or in vain, to no purpose. Which some refer to the covetous wretch, others to the abortive before named; but I have referred to both. For this makes the clearest sense, if in the next verse (ver. 5.) we suppose that he compares these two together, and prefers the latter before the former, as he plainly doth in the conclusion of it.

[e] Ver. 6. See no good.] To see, is to enjoy, as the phrase is used in many places; particularly Lev. xx. 17. John, xvii. 24. And the sense of this verse is, That the life of a covetous man is so far from making him happier than he who never lives at all, that if he should live as long again as Methusaleh, he would only be so much the more wretchedly miserable. For when he hath tired himself with labour, he hath not taken one step towards satisfaction; which he might have had with less pains, if he had taken the right course to it, ver. 7.

[f] Ver. 8. What hath.] There is so great a difficulty in this verse, that I did not know how to connect it with the foregoing, but by taking the latter part of the sentence; as if Solomon had said, "What comparison is there between him, (viz. the man before named,) and the poor that knows how to walk before the living?" i. e. the poor man, who hath so much skill as to know to live well, is infinitely to be preferred before him, whose wisdom still leaves him such a fool, that it doth not restrain his superfluous appetites. And this suits well with the next words, (ver. 9.), where the sight of the eyes being opposed to the wandering of the desire, it is reasonable to take it for the fixedness of a man's mind, to rest satisfied in what is before him, that is, in things present.

Or the words may admit of this construction, (which is come into my mind, since I wrote the paraphrase), What excellence is there in the wise man (that is, in the opinion of the wretch before mentioned, there is none) more than in a fool, especially if he be poor, &c. That is, to all other miseries of the rich curials, that is commonly added, That they are very ignorant of what is most truly valuable, having no esteem of the wisest man in the world, no more than of a fool. Nay, they prefer a rich fool before a poor wise man; who knows how to carry himself so decently, that he is not afraid to appear before any man living. This is a great sottishness, (ver. 9.), and breeds no less sorrow, to be led by blind appetites, and not by reason and judgement. For so the words of the 9th verse may be interpreted; "Better it is to understand aright, than to follow after one's desires."

[g] Ver. 10. That which hath been.] The sense that I have given of the beginning of this verse (taking the first word for an interrogation, and name for renoun, as is common in scripture) seems to me to be the most simple, and most agreeable to the whole discourse. And, it is that which Melanthion hath expressed in these words: "Although a man grow famous, yet it is known that he is but a man, and he cannot contend with that which is stronger than himself;" that is, he cannot govern events. But I shall mention two other interpretations, which some give of it. One is this: As he was made at first, so his name was given him, i. e. the name of Adam, signifying that he was taken out of the earth, and therefore mortal. The other is this, He that hath been, his name is called already; that is, his memory is abolished together with himself. This is Maldonate's sense, but is not agreeable to the Hebrew phrase. His name is called, for that in the scripture signifies rather the contrary, viz. fame, and honourable mention, as I have expressed it word for word out of the Hebrew, in the paraphrase. The common interpretation may be found in all commentators, which is this, That God hath appointed what every man shall be, whether rich or poor, &c. and therefore it is in vain for them to contrive, as they do, to be other than what they are. For it is to endeavour to alter that which is immutably settled by the Almighty.

[h] Ver. 11. Seeing there be.] This verse sums up all this matter about riches, or, as others will have it, the whole foregoing discourse, concerning all those four things wherein men place their happiness; whether wisdom, pleasure, honour, or wealth, which draw so many and so great (for the Hebrew word includes both) inconveniences along with them, as sufficiently demonstrate a man is still to seek for the satisfaction of his desires, if he look no farther.

And so they would have the last verse to be an introduction to the following discourse in the next chapter, where he shews wherein that true and solid happiness lies, which mankind vainly pursue in the fore-named enjoyments. But I have connected it with what goes before in this chapter, as the particle (for) in the beginning of it shews it ought to be.

C H A P. VII.

THE ARGUMENT.—Having discoursed, in the foregoing part of the book, of the courses men take to make themselves happy, he now seems to proceed to prescribe the best remedies that can be found against that vanity to which we are subject, by setting down many wise precepts for our direction and conduct, support and comfort, in a troublesome world. Where, it is confessed, that our happiness can be but imperfect, yet so much we may attain as to be well satisfied, and not vex ourselves that we cannot make things more certain and constant, nor
dispose men to be more just and equal to us than they are.

And if we examine the following particulars, we shall find they are comprehended in this general direction,—the change of our mind; thoughts, and opinions—which must be quite altered, for that things, which at present, look like paradoxes, must be judged the greatest wisdom. Such are all the doctrines that begin this chapter, (quite opposite to the common opinions of the world), that "a good name is to be preferred before precious ointment, and the day of one's death before one's birth-day; mourning before feasting; sadness before laughter; rebukes before commendations; the end of a thing before the beginning of it; a patient suffering spirit before a stout haughty mind; wisdom before riches," &c. These and such like are the maxims of true wisdom, and piety, which must be learnt, in order to the settlement of our minds, in peace and tranquillity, notwithstanding the vanity, that is in all things.

Ver. 1. A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth.] But though there be such uncertainty in all other things, yet a good name, which a man gets by a virtuous life, is lasting and durable; and as the conscience of well-doing gives a greater pleasure to the mind, for the present, than the most fragrant ointment, can, do to the senses of voluptuous men, so the fame of it will remain after he is dead; and he will still live in a good report when all those sensual joys expire, like the vapour of the ointment, which is soon dispersed and lost, after it is poured out; and therefore, if we would be happy, we ought to order our life in such a manner, that death, which fools and wicked men fear, may be welcome to us, and only let us out of the troubles into which we are brought at our birth. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. ¶ It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.] ¶ And that it may befriend us, it is our wisdom, to think often of it, and consequently choose rather to converse with those things, which will make us serious, than with those which will make us merry; to go, for instance, into the company of those who are mourning for the dead, rather than of those who are feasting for joy, that a child is born, into the world; for in the midst of those pleasures we are apt to be dissolute and to forget ourselves; but that sad spectacle inclines us naturally to be considerate, and disposes our mind to humility, modesty, gentleness, sobriety, and charity; which are the fate of all, and we follow him to his grave, who a little while ago perhaps was as vigorous and strong as ourselves. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.] Sadness, therefore, and sorrow, is much more profitable, for us than mirth and jollity, (as we see in those severe and stern rebukes, which make men sorrowful for their faults); because that grief which makes a man look sadly, whether it be for his own sins, or other men's calamities, is apt to do his soul good; by giving him a right understanding of God, and of himself, and of all things else. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.] Whence it is, that wise men affect to think of such things, when they do not see them, as shew them how vain all our worldly pleasures are; but fools seek all occasions to put by such thoughts, and to divert themselves with servility, and pleasure. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.] And that would be in the number of these wise men, must look upon this as one of the first steps towards it, to lend an obedient ear unto the reproofs of him who is truly wise and virtuous, which, though never so sharp and rough, are to be infinitely preferred before the smooth praises and commendations of a great many fools; may, ought to sound more gratefully in our ears, than the most delicious music, songs, and jests of all the merry companions in the world. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.] These jolly fellows, indeed, make a great noise and show, as if they were the only men that enjoy this world; but alas! their mirth and joy is but for a sport, and then ends in heaviness; like the crackling of thorns, which sometimes blaze under a pot, as if they gave a mighty heat, but leave the water in it as cold as they found it;

All their jollity, therefore, is more vanity. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. ¶ Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad, and a gift destroyeth the heart.] ¶ And there is the greater need to be well instructed, and therefore to hearken to the wise (ver. 5), because there are other things besides vain pleasures, and flatteries to disturb and unsettle our minds, if we be not well fortified against them. For the better any man is, the more he is in danger to suffer from slanderers, revilers, and all sorts of injurious persons; whose violence sometimes is so great, that unless a man be provided with more than human wisdom, (and it be deeply rooted in his heart), it will not only miserably disquiet, but even distress him. Nor is this his only danger, but that power and authority which raises him above the former, may expose him to another, unless he be armed with great integrity; for his mind may be corrupted by gifts and presents to do injustice unto others, which he hates should be done to himself. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.] And he will be the better able to resist them both, who is so wise as to look, not merely to the beginning of them, but attend to their conclusion; for that which seems grievous at the first appearance, in the issue proves very advantageous; and, on the contrary, that which promises fair at first hath a
deadly farewell with it; and therefore it is much better to endure patiently, and humbly wait to see the issue, than to be provoked by pride and disdain, hasty to precipitate events; for he that scorns to wait and attend upon the leisurely progress of things, commonly undoes himself and his affairs, by his fierce and violent attempts presently to compass his desires. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. Be not basty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger restless in the bosom of fools.] It is another point, therefore, of that wisdom which must make us happy, to repress the motions of anger that we feel in ourselves, and not to suffer them, without great deliberation, to have any effect; for anger is an enemy to counsel and advice, and is indeed the property of fools, who out of weakness of mind, and shortness of thoughts, are familiarly transported with it upon the slightest causes, and not easily appeased again, as wise men are when they chance to be incensed.

Ver. 10. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this. It is wisdom also to correct in ourselves that complaining humour, which is apt to be ever finding fault with the present times, and commending the foregoing ages, as far better and happier than the present. For perhaps it is not true; and thus much is certain, that he is foolishly inconsiderate who imagines that then there was no evil, and that now there is no good; or if it be true that there was no good in those times, let us not murmur and repine, asking why we are cast into a troublesome age, full of oppression, (suppose), and violence, and wrong, (ver. 7.), but rather submit to the providence of God; considering that there is no age so bad as to hinder us (which is the principal point of wisdom) from being good; and therefore let us do our duty, believing God hath such reason for suffering the times to be, as they are, that we have no reason to quarrel at them, or to call in question his wisdom, goodness, or justice. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 11. Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. Yet do not think that wisdom or virtue consists in despising riches, but only in using them well when we have them, and in being contented without them; for as we cannot be happy by riches alone without wisdom, so we cannot be completely happy with wisdom alone without riches; for he hath a vast advantage to do good every way, who is rich as well as wise; it giving him an authority, even to speak more freely than other men, and making what he speaks to be more regarded; but of the two, wisdom and virtue must always be preferred, which can do greater things, and bestow nobler benefits upon mankind, than treasures alone can do. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 12. For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.] For as wisdom, for instance, contrives many ways whereby a man may innocently defend himself from danger, so can money oft-times purchase his protection and safety; but herein is the pre-eminence of wisdom, that when neither of them can shelter a man, nor stay off the calamity that invades him, it marvellously supports, revives, and comforts the souls of those who are owners of it, under all the evils which it could not help them by honest means to avoid. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 13. Consider the work of God: who can make that straight which hath made crooked? And in order to it, the highest piece of wisdom is, to live in a serious sense of the sovereign power of God; and to consider, that as he hath settled all things in heaven and earth in an unchangeable course, so nothing comes to pass without his providence; with which it is in vain to struggle, when he is pleased either to cross us in any of our designs, or to send any public calamity, which by all our art and power we can neither avoid nor remedy. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 14. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. No, we ought rather to accommodate ourselves to the present state of things, and when we are in prosperity, to enjoy God’s blessings cheerfully, with thankful and charitable hearts, but so soberly also, as not forgetting that affliction may come; and when it doth, let us take it patiently, considering, among other things, that there may be a change to a better condition again: for as both the one and the other come from God, so he hath ordered they should have their turns in such due season, and balanced the one with the other with such exactness, that the meanest man hath no reason to complain of him, nor the greatest to fancy himself more than a man, who cannot invent any means to dispose things otherwise, much less, better than God hath done. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness; and there is a wicked man that prospers in his wickedness. I know what may be objected to this, having all my life long made observations upon all manner of things in this troublesome world; and it seems very hard that a just man’s integrity should not be able to preserve him, but he is therefore perhaps destroyed because he is better than others, when a wicked man escapes, nay, is countenanced and encouraged, or suffered to prolong his days in (and perhaps by) his wickedness. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 16. Be not righteous over-much, neither make thyself otherwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? But, besides other things which may be replied to this, (as that good men are sometimes removed from, and wicked reserved unto future evils), it must be noted also, that some pious men are more strict and rigid than they need be, and not so prudent as they ought to be, but unnecessarily expose themselves to danger: And therefore it is good advice, in order to a safe and quiet passage through this life, to be temperate in thy zeal, and not to overdo, either by ex-
tending thy own duty beyond the divine command-
ment, or by correcting the inverteate vices of others,
and opposing the vulgar opinions too severely or un-
seasonably, whereby they are only exasperated and
enraged, but not at all amended; for why should
a man bring a mischief upon himself without any be-
 nefit unto others? See Annot. [n]

Ver. 17. Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou
foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time? And
on the other side, let not impunity tempt any man to
presume to grow so enormously wicked and foolish,
as to embrace and follow the lewdest opinions; for this
may awaken the public justice against him, even for
the common safety; or the divine vengeance, nay,
his own excessive wickedness, may cut him off be-
fore he come to the natural term of his life. See
Annot. [o]

Ver. 18. It is good that thou shouldst take hold of
this, yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for
he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. The
advice is so profitable, that he who loves himself will
not only apprehend it, but take fast hold of it, and
diligently observe it, never departing from either part
of it, but, while he wisely manages himself to de-
cline dangers, honestly and faithfully performs his
public duties; for nothing can do a man so much service in
this, as a true fear of opposing the Divine Majes-
ty, which will preserve him both from rash and
heady forwardness, and from consulting merely his
own private safety and interest. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 19. Wisdom strengtheneth the wise, more than
ten mighty men which are in the city. And this pious
prudence, which proceeds from the fear of God,
will be a stronger guard and security to him that is
endued with it, both against all inward fears and out-
ward dangers, than a multitude of valiant comman-
ders and all their troops are, to defend a city when
it is besieged by its enemies. See Annot. [q]

Ver. 20. For there is not a just man upon earth, that
doth good, and sinneth not. Though this must always
be understood, when we thus discourse, that no man
is either so perfectly wise or completely virtuous, as
ever to mistake and commit a fault; but sometimes
the best of us may slip into a sin, notwithstanding all
our caution and care, and thereby fall into danger.
See Annot. [r]

Ver. 21. Also take no heed unto all words that are
spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee. The
consideration of which frailty of mankind is useful
many ways, not only to abate our severity in censoring
or chastening public offenders, but to teach us gentle-
ness towards those who do us private injuries; and
therefore not to regard (for instance) every word
that is spoken against us, but rather to dissemble our
knowledge of it; first, because otherwise we shall
have no quiet, for perhaps we may chance to hear our
own domestics speaking slightly of us, which we may
easily pass by and overlook, but cannot take notice
of without great disturbance. See Annot. [s]

Ver. 22. For often-times also thine own heart know-
eth, that thou thyself likewise hast curst others. And,
secondly, because if thou examinest thy own life,

3 K a
that would be stedfastly wise and good, (ver. 23.), as the conversation of women, especially those that are of a lewd inclination.

Ver. 28. Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not found.] And where to meet with any of them, with whom it is safe to have society, I am still to seek, though very desirous to find: for though here and there I have found a truly honest man, among those multitudes that attend upon me in my court, yet I cannot say that, among all my acquaintance of the other sex. (and I have a great many, 1 Kings, xi. 5.) I have met with so much as one, that is what a woman should be, modest, plain-hearted, humble, sincerely virtuous, without guile, hypocrisy, and dissimulation. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.] Only observe this, that I do not herein accuse (far be it from me) the Creator of the world; for I am assured of nothing more than this, that as God made all other things very good in their several kinds; so he made both men and women in perfect integrity, with a clear understanding to judge aright, and with an honest will, inclined to do accordingly, prescribing them also no other rule of life, but such as was just and good; but they, affecting to be greater than God intended, and to have more liberty than he allowed, raised scruples and doubts, questions and disputes, about their duty, inventing many ways to shift it off, and so deprived themselves, by following their own vain fancies, and false reasonings, rather than his blessed will. See Annot. [x]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Among all the maxims of true wisdom and piety, which are to be learnt for the settlement of our mind in peace and tranquillity, notwithstanding the vanity that is in all things, Solomon recommends to us, in the first place, the care of that, which men foolishly lose, by minding nothing but heaping up wealth, or pleasing themselves in a voluptuous life, &c. viz. to acquire a good name. Which nothing but a virtuous use of all things can bestow upon us, and when we have it, will give us a singular delight at present, and embolden our memory when we are laid in our graves.

Which good name (as Melancthon observes) consists in two things; in the approbation of our own consciences judging aright, and in the approbation of other men who also rightly judge. Both which are required by God, that we should do right things, and that others should approve of what is rightly done. Unto which they are bound, for two reasons; that the difference of virtue and vice may be the more conspicuous, and that others may be taught by examples. He requires, therefore, that infamous persons be cast out of society, and that they be shunned, whose manners are without injury.

Now, since such an approbation is a divine ordinance, it is manifest we may desire this glory, and by the same reason, that we must avoid all scandal, and take care that we may be commendable.

Which Solomon here compares to a precious ointment, because nothing was more grateful and refreshing in those eastern countries, and therefore used not only in feasts, but at other times, when they were weary or languishing, for comforting the brain, rectifying the spirits, cheering the countenance, supplying the joints, and for other services tending to health as well as pleasure. Which made ointments to be held in the greatest price and estimation, and to be mentioned among the treasures of kings, 2 Kings, xx. 13. Isa. xxxix. 2. Suitable to this is that of Pindar, “A bath of warm water doth not so refresh the tired bones, as glory.” And this of Thucydidès, “That honour is the nourishment and food of an old man,” who lives upon the reputation he hath gotten by worthy deeds, which will make death not unwelcome to him. So the latter part of this verse must be understood with reference to a well-spent life, for otherwise it would only be a discontented saying, like that of the heathen, “The best thing is not to be born; the next best to die presently.” Unto which doctrine (as Melancthon speaks) the church is a stranger.

I cannot well pass over this verse, without observing what all interpreters note, an elegant paranomia, (as they call it); that is, a near affinity both in the letters and in the sound of these two Hebrew words, isebem, name, and isebethem, oil or ointment; as there is afterward, ver. 5. 6. between these other words, isbey; a thing, isrim, things, and is, a pot. Which being found also in several other parts of the Bible, it shows that such allusions are not unseemly, nor ought to be censured as affectations, if they be sparingly used, and wisely, gravely; and decently scattered in a discourse, not fustolously, upon every occasion; but judiciously. [b]

[b] Ver. 2. Now, the wise man knowing that nothing stirs us up more powerfully to a religious life, than the frequent remembrance of our mortality, (which, alas! we are not willing to think of), he next advises that he would be happy to embrace all occasions that may put him in mind of it; “the meditation of death.” Being, as was anciently said, “the very abridgement of all philosophy.” All the precepts of wisdom, they thought, were comprised in this; and therefore no wonder Solomon not only begins with it, but presses it so largely as he doth in the following verses; to the end that we may make our life not only a meditation, but an exercise of death, which in the Christian language is called mortification. In short, the thoughts of death will, without any other teacher, (if we keep it always in mind;) instruct us in all those virtues which will procure us a good name, some of which I have touched in the paraphrase. And the more healthful we are, the more we had
need to charge ourselves with the thoughts of it, because that is apt to make us forget it. So I have taken 'eat', not merely for living, but lively, vigorous, lusty, and flourishing, as we translate it truly, Psal. xxxviii. 19. 

[c] Ver. 3.] In the explication of this verse, I have touched upon another sense of the first word of it; which signifies not only sorrow, but anger or indignation also; by which some expound this verse, and understand thereby, either the anger of God afflicting men for sin, or the angry reproofs that are given sinners; which are better for them than prosperity, or to applaud and honour them in their folly. But this is mentioned ver. 5, and therefore I take it not to be intended here.

The truth of the latter part of this verse is admirably explained by St Paul, in 2 Cor. vii. 11. As for the phrase, I shall only note, that an ill look is an exact translation into our language, of the Hebrew phrase, which is here translated badness of the countenance. Now, a man may look ill, not only by sickness, but by reason of any other thing that afflicts him. (as we find in the case of Nehemiah, ii. 2.), some of which I have expressed in the paraphrase.


[e] Ver. 5. Rebuttal.] The word includes roughness and severity in it, and is opposed to the smooth ha- 

The comparison between rebuke and flattery, Coranites thinks is continued also in this verse, upon which he paraphrases in this manner. "As thorns put under a pot, and kindled, make such a crackling, as if they would set the whole house on fire, and by their noise raise an expectation of the greatest flame, but presently end in smoke and vapours; so senseless flatterers make a great buzzing in men's ears, and blow up their minds, extolling them to heaven with their praises, but in truth make them not one whit the better," &c. But I do not see how the word laughter can be well applied to this, and therefore I have omitted it, and only thought fit here to mention it.

[e] Ver. 7.] The connection of this verse with the preceding is a little obscure, unless we translate it as Maddomet does, (followed by Mandler;) "A wise man despiseth calumnies, and a mind that can be corrupted with gills," which is an excellent ad- 

And if we expound it of things, it is but a dilute sense to say, that "a thing perfected is better than a thing begun." Others, therefore, take it to be the same with that, Primus coronat opus; which is true, but do not complete the sense, unless we understand it in this manner. That the conclusion of all things is to be expected, before we judge of them. For whilst they are growing and coming on, they appear with a quite different face from what
they have, when they are gone and shall be no more.

In the latter part of the verse, "patient in spirit," is properly one that is long before he grows angry, or falls into any passion; who is opposed to "proud in spirit," because it is high-mindedness (as the word signifies) which makes men's passions rise and swell hastily. It may have relation to the former part, and be expounded in this manner: "A patient man and slow to anger dispatches business better than a proud, huffing, and blistering spirit; whose passion so disorders his mind, and indisposes it for the management of affairs, that he seldom brings them to a good issue."

Or thus, "A proud man is a bouteau, who begins the fray; but the patient in spirit is the man that must end it, (if ever it be well ended); and that is much the better work, and the greater honour to him who is employed in it, and effects it."

Or, which is still clearer, "We ought to attend to the end of a thing with patience; because it cannot be known what it will prove, nor whether it tends, in the beginning; and we should be the more prone to be patient in spirit, if we would expect the issue of every thing." Thus Coranus paraphrases upon the words most excellently, but a little too long, "It is no small part of wisdom, to judge of things and of business proposed to us slowly and maturely, &c.; for we see frequently that insconsiderate men, finding a thing very hard and difficult in the beginning, and never thinking how profitable and pleasant the issue may prove, immediately despond, and out of an impatience (shall I say?) or rashness of mind, desist from the most excellent enterprises; and many times betake themselves to worse. From which rashness and inconstancy he will be very far removed, who, ended with divine wisdom, waits for the desired and happy conclusion of his affairs. And unto this nothing contributes more than a slow, constant, and patient mind, that can endure labour and pains; which, stedfastly and quietly considering how fruitful the end may be which he effects, will not suffer himself, by any difficulty, trouble, or weariness which he meets withal in the beginning, to be drawn from his purpose. Far different from those who, out of a proud arrogant humour, think it is baseness, and unbecoming a gallant man, to attend upon the slow and leisurely progress of things, and to expect their events."

Thus he; which sense I have not neglected in my paraphrase, but comprised it among the rest; and it is thus, in part, expressed more briefly by a wise man in that age, when he told his friend, (who was undone because he would not mind it), that "he was like an unskilful player at tennis, ever running after the ball, whereas an expert player will stand still, to observe and discern where the ball will light, or where it will rebound, and there with small travel will let it fall on his racket, or on his hand."

[k] Ver. 11.] Most take this verse, as denoting their happiness, who have riches as well as wis-
dom, which commonly is despised without wealth. But the words may bear another construction, (which I have not neglected, because it agrees well with what follows), that wisdom is equal to an inheritance, nay, much to be preferred before it. For they may be thus translated; "Both wisdom and an inheritance are profitable for men in this world, but especially wisdom." Or, as Maldonate renders the last clause, Et residuum est videntibus solae, and there is a remainder to those that see the sun. That is, when all things in this world fail us, the fruits of wisdom only remain with us.

[1] Ver. 12.] This is farther explained in this verse; where it will be needless to do more than barely observe, that the word we render defence, is shadow in the Hebrew, which in their language signifies protection and comfort, Gen. xix. 8. "For this cause they came under the shadow of my roof," i.e. that they might be secure from violence. Num. xiv. 9. Their shadow (i.e. protection) is departed from them.

[20] Ver. 13. 14.] Here follows an admirable advice, to comply with our present condition, and suit our mind unto it; because we cannot bring things to the bent of our own mind, and therefore had better study to conform our mind to our condition, whatsoever it be, whether prosperity or adversity. Into which the divine wisdom hath divided our life, and so proportioned them one to the other, that none can justly find fault with his divine disposal, nor, all things considered, tell how to mend them, or order them better.

So I have understood the last clause of ver. 14 in which is the only difficulty, "and nothing after him." Which words (after him) some refer unto God, and make the sense to be, that after him (or beside him) a man shall find nothing certain; and therefore it is best to depend upon him alone. Which I have not taken notice of in the paraphrase, and therefore mention here. Others refer after him, unto man, and that two ways, (which it may be fit just to set down). Some translate it thus; "For this end, that man may find out none of those things which shall befall him hereafter; and so, being perfectly ignorant of what is to come, neither presume in prosperity, nor despair in adversity." Others thus, (which is Maldonate's gloss), "That a man losing, in time of adversity, what he had gotten in prosperity, might not adhere too much to the things of this world." Melanchthon alone interprets find nothing in this sense, "that he might not betake himself unto unallowed courses," but in prosperity keep himself within the bounds of his vocation, and not be carried beyond it by vain curiosity; and in adversity, expect the help of God, in the use of such remedies as he hath ordained.

[30] Ver. 15.] This verse may either be joined with the precedent, or with the following; I have connected it with both, in my paraphrase upon it and ver. 16, where I have attended to the scope of the wise man in this chapter, and accordingly interpreted that and the 19th verse, which will admit of several other expositions.

They are commonly expounded of public justice, which ought to be neither too rigid, nor too remiss and negligent. Insomuch, that Melanthon's words are, non dubium est; there is no doubt he speaks of political justice, which governs the things of this life, and consists in a mean between cruelty and negligence. Too much severity becomes cruelty, as it was in Aurelian; and too much indulgence confirms men in wickedness, as it was in the days of Arcadius. A good governor, like Augustus, takes a middle course, and doth not seek that middle with too much subtilty; but rather, as in God, lets mercy prevail over judgement. The like admonition, saith he, is subjoined about wisdom; for, as too much severity becomes cruelty, so too much wisdom, that is, subtilty, becomes caviling, sophistry, and cheating. And thus he interprets ver. 17, that a magistrate should not tolerate enormous vices.

Dr Hammond alone, as far as I have read, makes the 16th verse, "Be not righteous over-much," &c. to be the objection of a worldling, who takes that for an excess of duty, which brings any damage or worldly destruction upon him. Which is answered, saith he, in ver. 17. "Be not wicked over-much," &c.; that is, the fears, and from thence the prudent (but oftentimes very impious) practices of the worldling are the more probable path to the most hasty ruins. Vid. Answ. to Cawdrey, chap. ii. sect. 2.

But this is not coherent, in my opinion, with the rest of the chapter, and therefore I have followed rather the opinion of Gregory Nazianzen; who interprets it of heat and zeal, more than needs, without reason and discretion; which, as it makes all the schisms in the world, so produces a great many evils. And the same passion, saith he, is both about righteousness, and about wisdom:玉工兩以無議也, 且與無議也, &c. Vid. Orat. xxvi. p. 146.

I shall omit other interpretations, (which are collected by Del Rio, and more copiously by Hacks. Lib. ii. Miscellan. c. 1.), and mention only that of Groceius, who expounds it of a vain affectation of justice and wisdom. Which interpretation is in part followed by the Lord Bacon, (L. viii. de Augment. Scient. cap. 2. parab. 31.), whose discourse upon the words I shall not send the reader to seek, but set it down entirely, because it is very useful. "There are times, saith Tacitus, wherein great virtues are exposed to certain ruin. And this fate befalls men eminent for courage or justice, sometimes suddenly, sometimes foreseen afar off. But if prudence be also added to their other accomplishments, that is, if they be wary and watchful over their own safety, then they gain thus much, that their sudden destruction proceeds from counsels altogether hidden and obscure; by which, both envy may be
avoided, and their ruin fall upon them unprovided.

As for that minima (over-much), which is set down in the parable, (since they are not the words of some Periander, but of Solomon, who now and then notes the evils of men's lives, but never com-

mands them), it is to be understood, not of the virtue itself, (in which there is no minima), but of a vain and invidious affectation and ostentation thereof.

A point something resembling this, the same Tacit-

rus intimates in a passage touching Leptidus, setting it down as a miracle, 'that he had never been the

author of any servile sentence, and yet remained safe in such cruel times.' This thought, 'saih he, of ten comes into my mind, whether these things be governed by fate, or whether it lies also in our power to steer an even course, free both from
danger and from indignity, between deformed Bat-

tery and abrupt and sullen contumacy.'

[0] Ver. 17. There are those who, by sitirka, un-
derstand not, Be not too wicked, but Be not too bawdy; make not too great a stir and bustle about the things of this world, (especially in dangerous times); do not destroy thyself by too much toil and labour, or by too much stirring, when it is better to be quiet and sit still. Of which I have taken no notice in the paraphrase; and therefore mention it here. For though the word be not used commonly in this sense, yet it is its original signification. And the advice of the son of Syrach is something to this purpose, Eccles. vii. 6. 7.

[p] Ver. 18. The foregoing advice he looks upon as so useful, that he presses it farther here, ver. 18.

and promises more security from such a religious prudence, as teaches us moderation, and yet keeps us strict to our duty, than from the greatest armies that men can raise for their defence, ver. 19.

For (as Mellinioth observes) Alex. Pheraus was slain by his wife and his brethren, though he lay in an high tower, well garrisoned, to which none could ascend, but by ladders. And the father of Alexander was slain in the midst of a public pomp, his princes and his guards looking on; as Julius Caesar was in the senate.

Ten mighty men, every one knows, is, in scripture-

phrase, as much as many mighty men. And so Bochactus interprets that difficult place, Numb. xi. 31, where, speaking of the vast quantity of quails that came into the camp, Moses saith, 'he that gathered least, gathered ten homeris;' that is, saith the fore-named writer, 'many heaps; for so he think's homar should be there translated, as in some other places, l. 1. de Sacr. Animal. cap. xv. p. 165. part ii.

[q] Ver. 20. Here he seems to limit what he had said before, with this exception, that 'no man can be always so wise and cautious, as never to offend.' Which Melancthon truly calls Politica sententia; and refers to lapses in government, like that of Josiah, who was a very good prince, but perished by engaging rashly in an unnecessary war. And therefore the character of a governor, as well as

of a man, must be fetched from the constant strain

and bent of his actions, and not from particular

facts. 'For he is a good' governor that always

intends to do right, though he sometimes miscarry

(as David and the fore-named Josiah); and he is an ill governor, who hath no such design, but quite contrary; though sometimes he do well, as Cambyses. The difference, therefore, must be
taken from their perpetual will and inclination.

There are those who connect this verse with the next, rather than the foregoing; but I have referred it to both, and not unfeitly, I think, as may be seen in the paraphrase upon ver. 21.

[c] Ver. 21. Which the Lord Bacon, (l. viii. c. 2.

parab. 4), refers principally to vain curiosity; and thus discourses upon it: 'It is a matter almost beyond belief, what disturbance is created by unprofitable curiosity, about those things that concern our personal interest; that is, when we make a too scrupulous inquiry after such secrets, which, once disclosed and found out, do but cause a disquiet, of mind, and nothing conduces to the advancing of our designs. For, jure, there follows vexation and dis-

quiet of mind; human affairs being so full of treachery and ingratitude, that if there could be procured a magical glass, in which we might behold the ha-
treds, and whatsoever malicious contrivances are any where raised up against us, it would be better for us, if such a glass were forthwith thrown away, and broken in pieces. For things of this na-

ture are like the murmurs of the leaves of trees, which in a short time vanish. Secondly, This curious-

ity loads the mind too much with suspicions and ungrounded jealousies, which is the most capital enemy to counsels, and renders them inconsistent and involved. Thirdly, The same curiosity doth sometimes fix those evils which otherwise of themselves would pass by us, and fly away. For it is a dangerous thing to irritate the consciences of men; who, if they think themselves to lie undiscovered, are easily changed for the better; but if they perceive themselves to be detected, drive out one mischief by another. And therefore it was deservedly esteemed the highest wisdom in Pompey the Great, that he instantly burned all Sertorius's papers, unpursued by himself, or suffered to be seen by others.'

Some take this verse to speak of those, who willingly lend their ears to informers and detractors, who will bring them what is said abroad, whether true or false. And therefore, saith Solomon, 'since there is no man but who offends sometimes, not thou thyself excepted, do not hearken unto those who reckon up other men's faults, lest thou hear thy own from those that are of thy family.' Thus Maldonate.

[s] Ver. 23. Here he seems to resume his discourse,
in the beginning of the book, concerning the short-

ness of human understanding, and the difficulty of finding the truth and the reason of things. But no account can be given, why he thus starts from his
subject, on a sudden, without any coherence. And therefore I have endeavored to give another account of this, and the following verse; which I have so interpreted, that they may be knit to the foregoing. I cannot say, that herein I have followed any guide, but my own judgement; which led me to think this to be a continued discourse. But they that dislike my connection, must rest satisfied (as far as I can see) with that of Coranous, (which hath more colour for it than any other); who takes this verse to be a preface to what the wise man had to add concerning the subtle arts of women to draw men in, if they be not exceeding cautious. Their wits being so versatile, their cunning so sly, and their allurements so many, that he professes he found them inexplicable, though he had spared no pains to penetrate into them. This he makes the sense of ver. 23. 24. 25.

[1] Ver. 26.] And then in this verse, Solomon gives an account of the danger they are in, who suffer themselves to be ensnared by the arts of naughty women, (who are so numerous, that he advises him who would be good, to be very cautious how he enters into familiarity with that sex), who have brought sore calamities upon the greatest men; such as Sampson, David, and Paris, and many other, besides Solomon himself. The next verse I have made to relate to that.

The two words we translate snares and nets, (to which he compares her heart, i.e. her invention, devices, &c.), both signify nets. Only the former signifies the nets of hunters; the latter, the nets (or drags rather) of fishermen, (Ezek. xxvi, 5.), as the LXX. distinguish them. The former, indeed, is applied also to fishes in this book, chap. ix. 11. and therefore the truer difference perhaps is, that the former signifies finer, the latter coarser, but stronger nets; such as cannot be broken, but will certainly destroy, as the root from whence eborem comes, denotes. Both these words are in the plural number, to denote the vast multitudes that they catch, and the innumerable ways they have to entangle them, and hold them fast.

[2] Ver. 28.] Gregory Thaumaturgus interprets this verse altogether of their chastity, after this manner: "I have found a chaste man, but never a chaste woman;" and, indeed, of that he is speaking, which makes this sense not unreasonable, though I have not so restrained it: nor do I think this is to be looked upon as the true character of women in general, in all ages and countries, but of such only as Solomon was acquainted withal, and of those in that and the neighbouring nations; especially of women there excelling in beauty, which commonly betrayed them to their ruin, and to the ruin of others, without an extraordinary grace to preserve them.

[3] Ver. 29.] In the beginning of this verse, Medanachon thinks, Solomon speaks not of the first creation of men, but of the rule of men's actions, which God proposed to them; the sense being, as

if he had said, "God instituted a good order how men should behave themselves in all things, but they contrive how to go beyond their bounds." As David, for instance, had many wives of great beauty, but he would not be content without another man's. Anthony had a great power, but he would be a monarch; which is the fault of many other great men.

This I have not altogether neglected; and also taken notice of De Dieu's interpretation of the last words of the verse, "Men sought out the thoughts of the great or mighty;" taking rabhaim for magnates; that is, not contented with his own condition, "he affected to be like the angels, nay, like God."

Maimonides refers it to the evils and miseries man draws upon himself here in this world; understanding by cheshbbomoth, (inventions), man's foolish reasons, whereby he precipitates himself into all the evils he endures. "For he thinks he wants this and that, when he doth not; and he thinks this and the other thing makes him miserable, which hath no hand in it." But we may say, as Malachi doth, (chap. i. 9. "This hath been by means of your own selves;" and as the wise man elsewhere, (Prov. xix. 3.) "The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord." More Nevoochim, part iii. cap. 12.

The common editions of the LXX. may be corrected out of Epiphanius, Hæres. XLIX. who quotes this verse thus:—Ουκ ευρηκα διαβολον, (in the common editions, even in the Polyglott Bible, it is ευρηκα diaboulon, most absurdly), ὅπερ διαερέων τῆς σοφίας τῆς γυναικὸς οὐκ εἰσίν. According to which, I have partly framed my paraphrase, taking eurhe to refer to the understanding, and eur hypo to the will; but I have attended also to the common reading in the latter end of the verse; which is not eurhe, but

CHAP. VIII.

The Argument.—In this chapter the wise man pursues the design of the former. Wherein he, having given several advices, as a proper remedy for the vanity and trouble we find in all things, (the principal of which are seriousness, mindfulness of our mortality, integrity, meekness, patience, prudence in not exasperating men when he can avoid it, caution in conversation with women), he now adds several other of no less moment; which have respect not only to private, but also to public persons. And they amount to this, (that I may give as short a summary as I can of the chapter), to shew how happy we all should be, if both subjects and princes also would be advised and considerate. But if they be not, good men should make themselves less miserable, by not being either too much disturbed at it, or giving any public disturbance; much less by disbelieving providence, though they do not see the world governed as they would have it, to the encouragement of the good, and the punishment of
the bad; but to enjoy what they can honestly, in
the present condition wherein they are; and be
contented, and submit to the divine government,
(though we do not understand it), when any altera-
tion comes; and not add this affliction unto all the
rest, anxiously to inquire into those things of
which we are not able to give an account.

Ver. 1. **Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the**
interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom
maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall
be changed.] There is no man so happy as he that is
wise enough to understand, and to live by these rules;
but let that man remember also, that as true wisdom
gives the greatest comfort, confidence, and courage to
himself, so it is apt to make him kind and gentle un-
to others; and, therefore, let no man pretend unto it,
unless it dispose him unto such virtues; for the deeper
insight he hath into men, and business, and things,
and the better able he is to solve all doubts and dif-
ficult cases, and thereby satisfy both himself and other
men, the more friendly, courteous, and affable, should
he be to all; and the more humble, meek, and
gentle also; which is far more majestic, and will
gain him greater reverence, than austerity, surliness,
and pride. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. **I counsel thee to take the king's commandment,**
and that in regard of the oath of God.] And let no
man think I have respect merely to myself, in what
follows, because I am a king; but look upon this as
a principal point of wisdom, both for his own and the
public safety, to live in a dutiful obedience to the
king's edicts, and commands, which do not thwart
the laws of God; and that not merely for fear of his
displeasure, and the penalty of the law, if it be bro-
ken or neglected, but out of respect to God, whose
minister he is, and whom his subjects called to wit-
ness unto the sincerity of their hearts, when they
sware true faith and allegiance to him. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. **Be not hasty to go out of his sight; stand**
not in an evil thing, for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth
him.] Let not thy passion transport thee to show the least
disrespect to him, much less to refuse his commands
unmannerly, or to do any thing that may draw thee
out of his favour; but, if thou hast offended him, let
thy next care be not to persist obstinately in the error,
but to humble thyself, and beg his pardon; not imag-
ing thou canst flee so fast from his anger, that it
shall not reach thee; for his power is so large, that it
will one time or other lay hold on thee and punish
thee. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. **Where the word of a king is, there is power,**
and who may say unto him, What dost thou? For
the king's commands are backed with power, so that if
he give sentence against thee, his officers are ready to
do execution immediately; never examining whether
if it be right or wrong, but holding themselves obliged
to do as he bids them. And, indeed, who may ques-
tion him, or call him to an account, that hath no supe-
rior? Or who can control him, that hath all the
power of the kingdom in his hands? See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. **Who keepeth the commandment shall feel**
no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both
time and judgment.] Therefore, not only for con-
science sake, but for thy own safety and security,
yield obedience to the king's commandment; for so
thou shalt avoid the trouble both of thy mind, and of
thy body; and if thou pretendest to wisdom, shew it,
not in opposing him, and contending with him, but in
a prudent declining what thou canst not honestly do;
and in observing, and taking the fittest season, and in
the most inoffensive and winning manner, to insinuate
good advice, when the king commits an error. See
Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. **Because to every purpose there is time and**
judgement; therefore the misery of man is great upon
him.] For want of which sort of prudence, men
suffer very much; because there is a certain season
for, and a certain manner of doing every thing; which,
it if it be not understood, (and it requires no small pains
to be able to discern it), or not embraced, it is not
only impossible to be done, but many and great in-
conveniences ensue upon that oversight, or neglect.
See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. **For he knoweth not that which shall be; for**
who can tell when it shall be?] For no man can
be sure that the like opportunity will return again;
future things being so much in the dark, that neither
he nor any one else can inform him what shall be
hereafter, or when that will come, which in the course
of things may probably be expected. See Annot.
[e]

Ver. 8. **There is no man that hath power over the**
spirit to retain the spirit: neither hath he power in the
day of death; and there is no discharge in that war,
neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to
it.] But let no prince, though never so great, pre-
sume hereupon to abuse his power to tyranny, be-
cause he hath no superior to control him; but re-
member these things following. First, That though
he command over men's bodies, yet he hath no do-
minion over their minds and spirits, nor can he hin-
der them from thinking what they please, no more
than he can the wind from blowing where it listeth;
and, next, That he cannot command them long, for
death will come and irresistibly seize on him, as well
as on the meanest man; nay, he cannot rule the
chances of war, nor promise himself certain victory
in the day of battle; or if he have had a great while
good success, yet neither his policy nor his power
shall be able aways to defend him from the revenge
that will be taken of the injustice, cruelty, and im-
piety, which he exercises in his government. See
Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. **All this have I seen, and applied my heart**
unto every work that is done under the sun; there is a
time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own
hurt.] There is no reason, therefore, to be so much as
ambitious of great power; for in the view I have
taken of all manner of things in this world, which I
have weighed also and considered daily, I have ob-
served that sometimes unlimited power breaks itself in
pieces, and the dominion to which a man is promoted ends in his own ruin, as well as theirs whom he pillages and tyrannically governs. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 10. And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.] And among other things, I also observed such wicked men carried to their graves, who had been honoured as gods while they lived, because they were God's ministers, and sat in the judgement-seat, in the very place where he himself is present, but were no sooner gone, but they were forgotten, in that very city where they had enjoyed such high authority; so vain is the pomp wherein great men live, and wherein they are buried, which vanishes together with them, and, if they were not good in their place, is no more remembered. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.] But these observations move not vain men, who look no farther than their present prosperity. For though God hath pronounced a dreadful doom against all wicked men, and especially those that abuse their power unto tyranny, over others, yet because execution is not presently done upon them, but they live in all earthly splendour, both they, and others also by their example, grow more audaciously presumptuous in their wickedness, and think of nothing but doing mischief, by rapine and all manner of iniquity in the world. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 12. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him.] Not considering or believing this, of which I am assured, as an undoubted truth, that though such a powerful sinner commit innumerable spoils upon his poor subjects, and no harm befall him a long time, yet as God will make those good men an amends, whose reverence to his majesty makes them chuse rather to suffer than to sin, and, notwithstanding all their oppressions, maintain their integrity, and continue in awful obedience unto him, and unto their governors; See Annot. [m]

Ver. 13. But it shall not be well with the wicked; neither shall be prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he shall not fear God.] So he will take a time to punish that impious tyrant, because he despises God and his providence, and fears not this divine vengeance; nor are we without examples of such men, who have hastened their own ruin, and by their violence shortened their reign, and vanished away suddenly, like a shadow.

Ver. 14. There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.] Such examples, indeed, do not deter them from wickedness, because they see instances on the other side, (which is an afflicting consideration), that virtuous men sometimes fall into such miseries as the wicked rather deserve to suffer, and, on the contrary, these impious men enjoy all the prosperity, which one would think belongs only to the righteous: this, I have acknowledged already, is the lamentable condition of things, and a great part of the trouble of this world, to which I have given the best satisfaction I could, iii. 17. v. 8. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry, for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.] And must again commend that advice wherewith I concluded one of these discourses, (iii. 27.), that this ought neither to discourage a man in virtuous proceedings, nor make him careful and solicitous about events, but only move him, in the fear of God, (of which I just now spake, ver. 11.), to be merry whilst he may; for there is nothing better, than soberly and freely to enjoy the present good things, which the bounty of God bestows upon us, with thankfulness to him, and charity to others; for when a man, by his pains and labour, hath gotten a great estate, this is all that he can call his, God having only sent him what he hath, for his present use, while he tarryeth here in this life, and then he must resign it unto others, and give an account how he hath used it unto him. See Annot. [o]

Ver. 16. ¶ When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth; (for also there is that neither day nor night setteth sleep with his eyes;) In this, therefore, rest satisfied, and do not trouble thyself with curious inquiries, Why things are administered with such inequality, as is before mentioned; for I have travelled as much as any body in that disposition, and with great application of mind, have made a most diligent search into the causes and reasons of the whole management of affairs here in this world, (my mind being one of those that are as eager and greedy of knowledge, as others are of riches, for which they till all day, and take little rest in the night). See Annot. [o]

Ver. 17. Then I beheld all the works of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labour to seek it out, yet be shall not find it; yea farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet be shall not be able to find it.] But this was all the satisfaction at which I could arrive, that the providence of God, without all doubt, governs every thing in this world; but why he suffers the wicked to prosper, and the virtuous to be oppressed by them, why he doth sometimes speedily cut off a wicked tyrant, and sometimes defer the execution so long, that he lives to do a world of mischief, and yet goes perhaps to his grave, in peace, (ver. 10.), it is impossible to give a full account; for there is little or nothing that any man can know of the secrets of his counsels, or indeed of any other of his works, which are inscrutable by us, though a man take never so much pains to find them out; nay, though the wisest man in the world make it his constant business, he
will be still forced to confess his ignorance; and the height of his knowledge will be to know, that God's ways are past finding out.

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. To the advice he had given in the foregoing chapter, he now adds some new ones; the first of which is this, that "the wisdom which will make us happy in this world, must not make us morose and supercilious, severe and rigorous, but kind and benign, gentle and easy." And the more we know, the more humble we ought to be; and by the very cheerfulness and pleasantness of our countenance, invite others to us, and not by our frowning forbid them, or make them afraid to approach us.

This I take to be the meaning of the first verse in my paraphrase, upon which I have had respect to several acceptations of the several words, which it will be too long to give an account of. They that will consult interpreters will find how they vary; and therefore I shall only mention the exposition of Melamedon upon the latter part of the verse, (which is not commonly known), which, following the LXX., he thus translates; "Wisdom is the light of a man's countenance, but a pertinacious" (for impudent, obstinate) "person is worthy of hatred." Which he explains in this manner, that wisdom, which can judge aright when severity is profitable, or when lenity will do best, when it is fit to make war, when to be quiet, brings a man great gladness; but a pertinacious person, who is stiff and obstinate in his opinion, and will not hearken to those that give him good counsel, but follows the motions of his own anger, and obeys his passions, destroys himself and others. As the pertinacious humour, for instance, of Pericles and Demosthenes was most pernicious unto all Greece.

[b] Ver. 2. This pertinacious humour shews itself oft-times, in opposing the sovereign authority: whereby men create to themselves and others great trouble in this world. And therefore Solomon advises men in the next place, (desiring them not to dislike the counsel, because the king gives it), to live in dutiful subjection to their prince, as a singular means of leading a happy life. For it is hard to say, whether the prudence and justice of a sovereign in ruling well, or the humble and peaceable spirit of the people in complying with the established orders, contribute most to the public welfare. Certain it is, that it is much safer and easier (as well as more honest) to submit and be quiet, than to contend and unsettle the peace of kingdoms, though princes do not govern as they ought. Melanchthon makes this verse to contain two precepts, (as the LXX. also seem to do), in this manner; "Observe the commandment of the king, and the word of the oath of God." A sentence, saith he, exceeding worthy of consideration and remembrance, in which he commands us to observe the command of the king, but with this restriction, that we observe the law of God, and do nothing contrary unto that. For he calls the law the oath of God, because God made the sanction of it, in promises and threatenings, with an oath. But this interpretation wholly neglects one word in the Hebrew, viz. al; and it draws both abrahah and obedim from their ordinary and usual sense, to a meaning that is forced and strained. For which reason another exposition is not natural; which makes this indeed one precept, but instead of taking the latter part of it for an obligation to observe it, turns it into a restriction of it, in this manner; "keep the king's commandment, but according to the oath of God," that is, as far as religion and the faith we owe to the great Lord of all will suffer.

This is true, but not the true sense of the Hebrew word ordh; which some would have relate to the covenant with God in circumcision, which is still farther off from the business than the notion which Melanchthon had of it. Our translation is the plainest and most literal: Be obedient to the king, and that in regard (or because of the matter) of the oath, to which God is a witness, and a severe revenger of the breach of it. From which a moderate interpreter doth not much vary; whose words it will not be unprofitable to set down in this place, which runs thus in English. Regard the king's mouth, i.e. "Do whatsoever comes out of his mouth; whatsoever he commandeth and appointeth, out of that authority which he hath by divine ordinance; and chiefly the intention of the oath of God, (so he translates the latter part of the verse), that is, the oath whereby every one citeth God as his witness and judge, that with a good conscience he will obey the king, because God hath so commanded." Thus Josh. 24. Which oath is either tacit, the very being in the condition of a subject carrying with it, (as the late primate of Armagh speaks), by implication, a silent oath of fidelity and obedience; or express, in the direct form of an oath, which princes have, for their better security, been wont to exact of their subjects. This is an ancient form, still remaining in Vegetius, of the oath wherein the soldiery bound themselves to the Christian emperors: "By God, and by Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, and by the majesty of the emperor, which, next after God, was to be loved and honoured," i. i. e. 5. Where he adds this remarkable reason for it, because to him, when he hath received the name of Augustus, faithful devotion is to be performed, and all vigilant service paid, as unto a present and corporeal god. The violation of which oath, though made to a heathen prince, how heinously God takes, even as a despising of an oath made to himself, and a breach of his own covenant, those terrible threats do sufficiently demonstrate, (Ezek. xlvii. 12.—14. &c.), which are denounced against Zebediah, who rebelled against the king of Babylon, "who had made him swear by God," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.

Some of the Pharisees were the first that we read of,
who would not take this oath of allegiance, but, (as Josephus tells us, l. xxvii. Antiq. cap. 3.), boasting themselves to be the most exact observers of the law of God, and therefore the most in his favour, (while they were full of inward pride, arrogance, and fraud), dared openly to oppose kings, and presumed by their motions to raise war against them, and annoy them; refusing, saith he, to take the oath, when all the Jews had sworn to be faithful to Caesar. Of this sect, he adds, there were above six thousand, who were so far from lessening their crime by this refusal, and making what they did against his authority to be no rebellion, that it heightened it very much, and was in itself a piece of rebellion; they having a natural allegiance unto him, by being born his subjects.

There are some who, from the beginning of this verse, argue this book not to be Solomon's; because he saith of himself, “I observe the mouth (i. e. commandment) of the king.” So they translate the first words; which the LXX. translate as we do, and so do the Chaldee, the Syriac, and Arabic interpreters. For though the Hebrew word be αἰων, I, it signifies nothing to this purpose, because he doth not say I observe, but simply I do thou observe. There being a distinct note φανερωθητι, and what follows; showing that it is a short form of speech, to be supplied by such word as this, I say, or I command, or counsel, or rather charge thee. And the reason, perhaps, why the principal verb was omitted, might be, (as the learned Primate of Ireland, Usher, conjectures), because no word could be found significative enough to express the deepness of the charge.

Some may think that I have dilated too much upon this verse; but they may be pleased to consider how useful, if not necessary it is, at this time, when men begin again to plead the lawfulness of resistance. Which is so plainly condemned in this place, that the most learned asserter of the old cause were extremely puzzled to make it agree with their principles in the late times of rebellion. There is one who (in his book called Nature's Dowry, ch. 21.) calls in the assistance of a great many Hebrew doctors to help him to another translation of the words, and yet, after all, is forced to acknowledge that our English is right enough; and is content to admit it, with this proviso, that “the king manage well the affairs of the commonwealth;” as much as to say, do what they would have him.

The first word in this verse is capable of several senses, which I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase. For it originally signifies such a passion and perturbation (particularly that of anger and terror) as makes a man precipitate in his motions; being transported sometimes by cómimo, and sometimes by νάπαλτο, in the LXX.; and the meaning of the wise man is, that in pursuance of the foregoing counsel, (ver. 2.), we must take care, if we desire to live happily, to suppress our passions, and not to shew the least discontent with the government; especially not hastily and rashly to fling ourselves (as we speak) in a fume, out of the king's presence, on any occasion; much less receive his commands with impatience, or, which is worst of all, incur his just displeasure by sullen disobedience. For though we may think to escape the effects of it, we shall find ourselves deceived; princes having long arms (as the phrase is) to reach those that offend them, though they flee never so far from them. This is the sense of ver. 3.

And so it follows, in the end of this verse, “Who may say unto him, What dost thou?” i. e. must. Who hath any authority to call him to an account? as much as to say, none hath, but God alone. According to that of an eminent Rabbi, (quoted by the fore-named Primate in the entrance of his book about Obedience), “No creature may judge the king, but the holy and blessed God alone.” To allow the people (either collective or representative) to have power to do it, is to make them accusers, judges, and executors also, in their own cause, and that against their sovereign. Nor, secondly, can any man safely attempt it, but he shall meet with punishment either here or hereafter. Which is no new doctrine, but the same with that of St Paul, (as Luther here honestly notes), “They that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation;” which none shall be able to avoid. “Therefore, it is safe simply to obey magistrates.” Which he repeats again upon ver. 7. “A man cannot do better than simply to obey.” So preachers, saith he, should exhort the tumultuous and seditious. “For judgement, vengeance, or punishment, is ordained and decreed by God to all the disobedient, which none shall escape.” And thus much the author of Nature's Dowry is forced to acknowledge, from the evident light he saw in this place, “That the scope of the words is, that as we tender our own safety, we ought not to withstand the magistrate in his edicts, which are consonant to the word of God.” And it is wisdom, saith he, (out of Elisha Gallico, an Hebrew interpreter), "in a private man, when the magistrate enjoins what is repugnant to God's will, to remove out of his dominions, rather than contest with him." Which some conceive to be imported by the word τελευ, (go out, or go away), in the foregoing verse.

From whence he again concludes it is the most prudent course, as well as most honest, to comply with those that have authority over us, in a
dutiful obedience, or humble submission. So I have expounded the word commandment, for the commandment of the king before mentioned. Which if we do not oppose, it is the way to preserve us from knowing sorrow, as we speak, very agreeably to the Hebrew phrase in this place; if by evil thing, we understand the evil of punishment, rather than of sin. Many, indeed, by commandment, understand the precepts of God; which if we keep, we shall not fall into any evil practices, particularly, not into rebellion. Which is a good sense, and the reader may follow which he pleases; for the latter part of the verse will agree with either. Wherein he suggests, that the wisest thing we can do, when princes require any thing grievous unto us, is not to rebel, but to watch the fittest opportunities to petition for redress; and that after such manner as may not give offence; so I have expounded time and judgement, in this and in the next verse.

[f] Ver. 6.] For the truth is, a great part of the happiness of our life depends upon our discretion in observing and chusing the fittest opportunity for every thing, and the right manner of doing it. Especially when we have to do with kings, and great persons; concerning whom the wise man may still be thought to speak, both in this and the following verse.

[g] Ver. 7.] If the Hebrew reading would bear it, the Vulgar translation (which the Syriac follows) of this verse, hath given an excellent reason, why a man is at such a loss to discern what is fit for him to do upon all occasions, (especially how to direct his behaviour towards kings,) "Because he knows little of what is past, and less, or rather nothing, of what is future." For prudence consists in the remembrance of things past, consideration of things present, and foresight of things likely to come hereafter.

Luther refers it wholly to the miserable condition of a rebel in this manner; "He desires various things, and hopes for mighty matters by his disobedience, but is lamentably deceived. For of the very impurity which he promised himself, he cannot be secure; but in an hour when he thinks not of it, judgement overtakes him, and he perishes in his disobedience. In short, the wicked contemns present obedience, and minds not future punishment. The wise man acts quite otherwise, and, remembering what mishiefs attend upon the rebellious, is studious, therefore, to be obedient."

[h] Ver. 8.] Hence he takes occasion to give some good advice to princes themselves, (which seems to me the plainest sense of this verse), not to abuse their power, because none can withstand them, or so much as question them; but to remember how weak they are upon many accounts, and therefore ought to be moderate in their government, if they intend to live happy. For otherwise they must expect their people's hatred, which they cannot hinder, no more than they can death, which is not in their power to resist. And if they be engaged in war, they will find their subjects assist them so coldly, that it may endanger the loss of their crown. So that clause may be understood, which we translate, "There is no discharge in war," (the word that being not in the original); that is, it will be too late then to discharge their subjects from the heavy burdens whereby they have oppressed them, when they have need of their service against an enemy. Or, as I have expressed it in the paraphrase, they cannot command what success they please in war, but the event will be dubious; taking the word mishichot, for a dart, a javelin, or such like weapon, which we cannot direct and guide in that confusion, so as certainly to hit the mark at which it is thrown. So the Targum translates it, "Nor do the instruments of arms profit." Or we may take it for a commission to raise forces, (it being but once more used in the Bible, Psal. lxxviii. 49. and there the mishichot of evil angels, seems to be a company of angels, sent with a commission to do the execution there mentioned), which is too late to issue in the day of battle, if he be beaten; or if he be not, yet let him not flatter himself (which is the sense of the last clause of the verse) as if he should always escape, for the divine justice will one day hold him on, and punish him.

Thus, with reference to princes, the LXX. seem to understand this verse; who having said, ver. 4. ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου, "the king commands with authority," thus translate the first words of this, καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἀποτιθῆκεν, but "no man (no, not the king himself) hath authority in all things, for example, not over the spirit of man." But this verse also may be expounded, (as some interpreters understand it), to be a continuance of the foregoing discourse, in this manner, that no man can bridle the wrath of the prince, (by spirit understanding anger), or hinder the irruption of it. And it is in vain also for men to seek to save themselves from the sentence of death which he hath pronounced against them. For if they should wage war with him, it is not likely they would overcome or escape in the day of battle; or, if they did, they would meet some-time or other with a just punishment for their rebellion. Which is the meaning of the last clause, (if the words be thus taken), "Wickedness (that is, rebellion) shall not deliver those that are the authors of it."

[i] Ver. 9.] This and the following verse agree very well with that exposition which refers ver. 8. to princes, who sometimes are advanced to rule over others to their own hurt. So we translate the last words of this verse, which Luther (who is not alone in that opinion) will have still to belong to subjects, over whom a prince is sometimes placed to be a scourge unto them. Notwithstanding which, saith he, the king's commandment is to be observed, and sedition not be moved. Which he repeats again, (so full he was of this doctrine), The wise men here grants that there may be evil governors to
punish their subjects, and yet these are also to be tolerated.

[k] Ver. 10.] This verse I have taken wholly to belong to wicked rulers, because all the ancient translations do so, as well as our English. Though most of the modern interpreters will have the first part of the verse to refer unto wicked governors, and the latter part unto good, whose memory is abolished, when the other (so bad is mankind) are extolled and honoured; for which I see no reason, but look upon it as contrary to the design of the wise man in this place, and therefore I have rejected it.

The place of the holy may be expounded divers ways, but it seems to me most natural to take it for a periphrase of the place of judgement, (mentioned iii. 16.), in which the judges sustained the person of God, who was in their assembly, and judged in the midst of them, Psal. lxxvi. 1. whence the judgment-seat was called the “place of the holy,” i.e. of God the “Holy One of Israel,” whom the Jews now constantly call by the name of “the Holy, that most blessed One.” St Hieron understands it of the temple, (but then it must be translated not the place of the holy, but the holy place, which is not agreeable to the Hebrew), and expounds the words thus:

“The wicked buried, who were esteemed saints in the earth; and while they were thought worthy princes in the church, and in the temple of God.” I have sometimes thought that the words might, according to this sense of the holy place, be thus word rendered out of the Hebrew, (if the grammarians will permit holy here to be a substantive), “I saw the wicked buried, and they (that is, such as attend their funeral) came, and even out of the holy place followed.” That is, the priests waited on the horse, to do them the greater honour. Or thus, “The funeral pomp reached from the very temple to the place of burial.”

[l] Ver. 11.] From whence he takes occasion to shew what is the very root of men’s malicious and incurable wickedness. And the first thing to which he ascribes it, is, their thriving a long time in evil courses; which makes them hope this prosperity will continue to the end of their days. And if they can but live splendidly, they care not what becomes of them when they die. Now, though there be a pitbagam, a decree, a definitive sentence, (as the word signifies), passed against them, yet nothing being done upon it so soon as we expect, it both hardens the heart of those sinners, and mightily discourages better men; who hereupon grow angry, or flag in their duty; to both which Luther would have what follows referred.

But it properly belongs to the evil-doers, who, upon the suspension of the judgement passed upon them, sin on with great confidence, and have nothing else in their thoughts but malicious contrivances. Both which may be denoted by this phrase, “their heart is filled in them” to do evil.

[m] Ver. 12.] Yet this is not to be understood, he here shews, without exception, but sometimes the divine justice proceeds to quick execution. Which is a thing noted by heathens themselves, that God cuts tyrants short, and suffers them not to ravage so long as they hope to do. And thence they exhort them to moderation, according to that of Stesichorus, quoted by Aristotle in his Rhetorics, (as Melanchton here observes), “Do not injure any man, for the very grasshoppers will chirp it in the fields.” That is, the poor who are oppressed send out their complaints, and move God to punish tyrants.

[n] Ver. 14.] Here he discovers the other root of men’s incurable wickedness, viz. the examples they see of those who live virtuously, and yet live miserably. Which proves a great scandal to those who admire worldly things too much; and makes them angry, at least, to behold how all was given heretofore, for instance, to wicked priests, and now godly ones have scarce bread to put into their mouths. They are the words of Luther, who observes, that soldiers have better pay than many of Christ’s ministers, who are to lead his people, and conduct them unto heaven.

[o] Ver. 15.] Notwithstanding which, the wise man advises him that would live as happily as the state of things here will permit, not to grow sullen at this, (ver. 15.), much less to doubt of God’s good providence; nor to be disturbed, though we are not able to give a reason why virtuous men suffer very much, when the wicked at the same time escape. Which I take to be the meaning of the two last verses, which I have referred to our ignorance of this particular matter, as St Hieron also doth, whose words are these: “He that seeks the causes and reasons of things, why this or that is done, and why the world is governed by various events; why one man is blind and lame, and another is born with eyes and sound; one is poor, and another is rich; this man is noble, that inglorious; he gets nothing by his inquiry but only this, to be tormented in his own questions, and to have his disputations instead of a rack, and yet not find what he sought.” That word in Hebrew which we translate because, is found only in this place; but from Joshua, i. 7. (where it is found in composition), the doctors conclude it signifies for that, or because of; and so the meaning here is, that a man shall not be able, by all the labour and pains he can take, no, though he be a wise man that is thus laborious to discover the reasons of things, and give an account of the difference which he observes in the divine dispensations.

C H A P. IX.

The Argument.—This chapter begins where the foregoing ends, the wise man proceeding still to justify what he had observed about the most puzzling question in the world, “Why the good and bad fare all alike, without any constant visible distinction.” His resolution, cautious, remedial, about
Ver. 3. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all; yea also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.] This (it must be acknowledged) is one of the most grievous things in this lower world, that all things being thus blended together without any distinction, some draw from thence this lewd and wild conclusion, that there is no difference between virtue and wickedness, and therefore take the greatest licence to do evil confidently and boldly all their life long; pursuing their own lusts and passions so flagrantly, that they hasten their end; and death, which spares nobody, (but is the most common of all other things), seizes on them before they think of it. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. ¶ For to him that is joined to all the living, there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion.] ¶ But who would chuse to be a companion of these men who run themselves so fast out of all hope? which still remains (in the midst of all our changes here) as long as a man remains in the number of the living, but is lost when he is dead; in which respect the meanest and most contemptible person here in this world hath the advantage of the greatest king when he is gone out of it. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 5. For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.] For while men live, and are well, they have sense and relish of such things as they possess; and, knowing they must die, are taught thereby to use them with a sober freedom; because when they are gone from hence, they become perfect strangers to all things here, and can no longer enjoy any benefit of their labors, (iv. 9.), the fruit of which falls into the hands of other men, who never so much as think what is become of them.

Ver. 6. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.) Nor doth it then signify any thing, whether a man was loved, or hated, or envied by them; but all these passions are so extinguished with them, that nobody counts their favour, nor fears their ill-will or displeasure; for, though they have been never so powerful, they have nothing more to do with us here in this world; nor can we, if we would transmit any of our enjoyments to them, in the place where they are.

Ver. 7. ¶ Go thy ways, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.] ¶ And therefore, shaking off both all anxious cares, and also all perplexing thoughts about God's providence, (ver. 1.), excite thyself, by the remembrance of death, to a cheerful enjoyment of those good things present, which thou justly possessest; use them while thou hast them, with a well-pleased, contented, nay, joyful mind; believing, if thou hast approved thyself to God in the rest of thy works, it is very acceptable to him, that thou shouldst thus rejoice
in his love; who hath made all things here for the service of man, and blessed thee with a comfortable portion of them. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 8. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy beard lack no ointment.] For which reason, do not live either sordidly or sadly; but at all seasonable times, entertain thyself and thy friends liberally, with such pleasures as may recreate and refresh thy spirits, after thy honest labours; for innocent mirth, suitable to thy condition, is as becoming those that are good, as the filthy delights of men lewdly voluptuous are abominable. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 9. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity, which be hast given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou taketh under the sun.] Flee, therefore, adultery and fornication, but solace thyself exceedingly with thy own wife; and loving her with the most tender and constant affection, take all the comfort her society can afford; for it is the greatest God hath provided for mankind in this troublesome life; and therefore both seek for such an one as thou canst love, and when thou hast her, delight thyself in her company, with such unalterable kindness, as may help to sweeten the afflictions to which we are subject in this world; for thou canst reap no other fruit of all thy toil in this life, but to take an innocent pleasure, with tranquillity of mind, in such good things as those which the providence of God bestows upon thee. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 10. Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.] In which, that thou mayest take the sincerest pleasure, let it not make thee slothful, much less dissolute; but dispose thee rather to be vigorously industrious, in doing all the good that is in thy power; for which end, lay hold on every occasion that presents itself, and improve it with the utmost diligence; because now is the time of action, both in the employments of the body and of the mind; now is the season of studying either arts or sciences, or wisdom and virtue; for which thou wilt have no opportunities in the place whither thou art going in the other world, which is designed for rest from our present labours, and for the reward of them. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 11. [f] I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.] But do not presume merely on thy own industry, though never so great, for good success in thy undertakings, nor fancy that nothing shall interrupt thy pleasures, but look up unto God, and leave all to his providence; for, (to return to what I said about events, ver. 1.), I have observed, that they do not depend upon our will and pleasure, but upon him; we being apt to think, that he who, for instance, can run swiftest, will certainly carry away the prize; and that he who hath the greatest

forces, will win the victory in a battle; when it falls out quite otherwise, that both of them lose the day; and more than that, the wise and the learned in their professions, cannot sometimes get their bread, but men of greatest reach are poor, and ingenious artists not at all regarded or encouraged according to their deserts; for there are certain seasons, wherein, by various accidents which unexpectedly start up, all men's nimbleness, strength, valour, wit, cunning, and dexterity, prove ineffectual. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 12. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare: so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.] For no man can foresee many evils that befal him, no, not the time of his death; which surprises him unawares, when he thinks no more of it, than the silly fish or birds do of the net or the snare wherein they are caught to their destruction; nay, as they are intangled, when they swim or fly securely, in hope to catch their prey, so do men perish by those counsels and actions from whence they expected the greatest advantages; and are undone by some sudden and unavoidable mischief that seizes them, when they thought themselves at the top of their hopes. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 13. [f] This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:] But though events be not in our power, being over-ruled by a higher providence, we ought not therefore to imagine, there is no use of prudent counsel and forecast; for that sort of wisdom, which we call political, how mean soever it may seem in some men's eyes, is with me of greater price than wealth and riches. And this single observation shows that I have reason for it. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 14. There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:] There was a city of small circuit, ill fortified, and manned by a very small garrison; against which a mighty king, with numerous forces, made his approaches; and having intrenched his army, and drawn a strong line about it, and raised his batteries, doubted not to take it speedily, or to have it surrendered into his hands;

Ver. 15. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city: yet no man remembered that same poor man.] When by a strange providence of God, there unexpectedly appeared a wise man, but he so poor that nobody minded him, who saved the city from this imminent danger; and that not by money, for he had none; nor by arms, for the besiegers were far superior in strength; but merely by his wise counsels, contrivances, stratagems, and conduct, wherein he excelled the greatest warriors; and yet, O foul ingratitude! his citizens, who ought to have recorded his fame, and preserved it to all posterity, soon forgot their deliverer; and, because he was poor, regarded him, after this memorable service he had done them, no more than they had done before. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 16. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength;
nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.] Which, notwithstanding, ought not to discourage worthy men from serving their country; for wisdom, and counsel, from such examples as this, will be preferred by alljudicious and virtuous persons, as well as by me, before mere power and strength. Because ungoverned forces destroy themselves, when a little force, under skilful conduct, achieveth the greatest things; and therefore, it ought to be highly valued, in the most obscure person, though the senseless multitude (as if wisdom borrowed all its credit from him that possesseth it) despise the counsel of a poor man; and oft-times suffer this punishment of their folly and ingratitude, that, shutting their ears to his wholesome advice, they fall into many and great calamities. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 17. The words of wise men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools: An intolerable fault this is. For the most of the speeches of the meanest wise man, delivered gently, and without noise, are far more worthy to be heard, and if they meet with a patient ear, and a serene mind, free from the tumult of pride and passion, will be more regarded, and prove more efficacious, than the most clamorous and imperious language of a powerful fool; as appears by what the poor man pronounced for the saving of the city, which prevailed more in their distress, than the furious outrages of the greatest commander, swaggering among his troops of ignorant soldiers. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 18. Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good. I cannot, therefore, but again commend counsel and wise conduct, and prefer it before the greatest forces, and all manner of warlike preparation: for it sometimes saves whole armies, nay, countries, from destruction, which have been utterly ruined by the rash boldness and forwardness, or other error of some mighty man; who hath overthrown well-settled kingdoms and states, and brought them into many miseries; for it is a known thing, that many have been undone by the fault of one, as by one man's prudence, many have been delivered. See Annot. [b]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. Though Solomon had often and thoroughly considered that question mentioned in the argument of this chapter, yet he could come to no resolution about it, but this. That it ought not to shake our belief of God's love to virtuous men, (which is expressed in that phrase, "in the hand of God," wherein are included all the effects of his kindness and care); and that we must not judge men to be good or bad, by what befalls them in their outward estates. So these words are most naturally interpreted, "A man knoweth not love or hatred," &c.; which indeed refer unto men, not unto God, in this sense, "No man knows certainly what is best for him in this world;" and consequently cannot tell what he should desire, and what deprecate, of all the things that are before him. For those things which he hates and is adverse unto, may be as good for him as those which he loves, and wishes to enjoy." To this purpose Maldonate. Or thus, "No man knows whether that which he loves, or that which he hates, shall befall him:" but "all things are before them;" that is, are appointed how they shall be, antecedent to the will of men. Thus Eben-Ezra. And there are those who interpret that phrase, before them, in this manner: "They see the good and evil which befalls them, but cannot foresee it till it come upon them." And some join both together thus, "Neither the favour nor disfavour of men, neither their approving or opposing what we do, is any certain mark that we are good or bad."

But I have followed that sense which seemed to me most simple and most coherent with the rest of the words. As for that doctrine which many great writers in the Roman church have built upon this text, "that no man can be certain whether he be in the favour of God or no, while he is in this life;" Melanchthon truly calls it, Interpretatio Monachorum, the interpretation of the Monks, who distorted the words of Solomon, and wreathed them to their own dotages. For it is madness, saith he in another place, (in his treatise of good works), to say, that we know not whether murderers and adulterers are worthy of God's hatred.

[b] Ver. 2. For this next verse plainly shews, that he speaks of such notes of God's favour or hatred, as men are very desirous he would make, by putting a difference between good and bad men in external things. Which he is not pleased to do; but they are sick, or lose their goods, their children, or friends, all alike. Which is more particularly true in public calamities, as St. Cyprian excellently discourses, both in his book to Demetrius, and in his book De Mortalitate. In the former of which, he acknowledges, that good and bad men being in this world as in one and the same house, whatsoever befalls the house must necessarily befall the inhabitants; who cannot be well, when the common air, wherein they all breathe is infected; nor have a good crop, when there wants rain to make the earth fruitful. "Only herein, (saith he to the Pagans), we are not compared et equalis voibus, alike and undistinguished from you; that we do not grieve as you do in these common calamities; we are not so impatient, nor make such outeries and complaints; but also courageous and religious patience quiets our mind, and makes us thankful to God. Vgeist erupit nos spei robur, &c. the strength of faith is vigorous among us; and the firmness of hope, and a mind erect in the midst of the ruins of a decaying world; together with an immovable virtue, a constantly joyful patience, and a soul always secure of her God. So that she may say with the prophet, (Habakk. iii. 17. 18.) "Although the fig-tree should not blossom, neither should fruit be in the vine, &c. yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The
difference of the several expressions used here in this verse, for good men and bad, I have explained as well as I could in the paraphrase. And they that would see examples of the same event, to every one of the opposite persons, may look into the Hebrew commentators, or into Mercer, and there find them.

[c] Ver. 3. In this, and the following verses, he shews the ill use men make of the foregoing observation, and their folly therein. For, imagining God loves all men alike, because they find the same things happen to them all, they run into such an excess of wickedness with such a frantic liberty, as brings them speedily to their graves; whereby they lose what they would have kept, and what they desired and hoped still to get. Thus I have interpreted ver. 4, in which there is exceeded great difficulty; both because of the various reading of one word, which we translate joined to; and the uncertainty whether Solomon here delivers his own opinion, or the opinion of the Epicures, whom some think he here introduces, and making a speech which reaches to ver. 11; which is the sense of Greg. Thaumaturgus among the Greeks; and of several Latin writers, who herein follow some of the Hebrews; whose wise men say, (as we read in Maimonides his More Neveochim, part ii. cap. 28.), that some sought to smother the book of Ecclesiastes, because its words savour of heresy. From which imputation that they might free it, they took such words as they thought looked that way, to be the sayings of carnal men. But there is no need to have recourse to this way of exposition, (as St Hierom acknowledges); which I have not followed, because there seems to me to be an easy and plain sense of the words, in coherence with the foregoing. And in expressing of that sense, I have neglected neither the writing, nor the reading, as the Hebrew speak; but taken notice of the sense of the word we translate joined to, as it is in the text, and as it is in the margin of the Hebrew Bibles. There are many other ways of explaining it, and the whole verse; but I shall not trouble the reader with any of them, save only with Melancthon's, (which I do not find taken notice of by any of the latter interpreters), who translates the words thus: "What therefore is to be chosen? In one that is alive there is hope; and a living dog," &c. Impassion, saith he, to those who, being disturbed at the confusion of things, asked, "Must we then chase to labour, when we meet with no rewards?" Solomon replies, By all means follow your calling, and commend events to God: "There is hope while a man lives, that he may come to something; and although thou canst not be a lion, yet be content to be a meaker creature, though it be but a little dog. Thou art not able to be such a captain as Seipio, yet thou mayest be like to Fabius. Why do we seek for lions, such heroical captains and governors, as Gideon, Samson, and David? Let us use such as we have, who, though they be not like those lions, yet may be like small dogs. And let them do some-

thing in their places, and pray to God they may be vessels of mercy. In which consideration, saith he, Solomon stays long, saying, in the following verses, that the dead are gone from the government of this world; and therefore, we must use those that are present, follow our calling, rest in God by faith and a good conscience, whatsoever the events be."

As for those that fancy the wise man would here contradict himself in what he said, chap iv. 2. 3. unless we take these words for the opinion of other men, they may be easily answered; that both are true in different respects. There he speaks with respect to the troubles of life; and here with respect to the advantages of it; the chief of which is hope of bettering our condition, when it is never so miserable. Which may be extended to the minds, as well as our outward concerns; there is hope men may live to see their follies, correct their mistakes, amend their lives, and recover the favour of God; which is irrecoverably lost when they are gone from hence. In short, he seems to say the same that the heathen meant in the fable of Pandora's box; in which hope alone remained, after every thing else that was good was flown away. And there are the like sayings in Theocritus and Euripides; which may be found in Erasmus's Adages, chil. 2. cent. 4. adag. 12.

[d] There is little difficulty in the following verses, where there are several passages which shew, that Solomon is not representing the sense of those who believe nothing after this life, but hath respect only to the state of men here in this world, as he saith expressly in the conclusion of ver. 6. And in the 7th verse, plainly supposes the man to whom he directs his discourse to be religiously affected, and to govern himself in his pleasures with a regard to God, and the censure that he will pass upon his actions in another place; and thereupon advises him to a cheerful use of all manner of good things in this life.

[e] For I take white garments, not to denote a magnificent and splendid way of living, but only a neat, clean, and pleasant, (both white garments, and anointing the head, being opposite to the habits of mourners, which was sad and sordid), in which there can be no danger, if it do not hinder serious business; but rather a refreshment after it, and a preparation to renew it, as it follows, ver. 10. The Essence, (as Josephus tells, l. ii. 229., cap. 7.), went in white, though they would not use any ointments, which seemed to him too voluptuous. The pleasure of them indeed was great, (as I shall shew upon Cant. i. 2.), and was by many abused, and made too expensive and costly; but not therefore to be refrained altogether by sober people, who forbear them in times of mourning, (2 Sam. xiv. 2.), and fasting, (Matt. vi. 17.), but used them in feasts and in times of joy, Psal. xlv. 7. xcvii. 10. Luke, vii. 37. &c.

[f] Ver. 9. Here is a new proof, that this is not the speech of voluptuaries; for they love not to be confined to a wife, as Solomon here advises this happy
man to be; making her his partner in all the joys
and comforts he hath, as she will be in his grief
and sorrows. The Hebrew phrase, "see life," or
"lifea," in the plural number, is well translated by us
"live joyfully," (or very joyfully), for chajim includes
in it all the conveniences and pleasures of life, Psal.
xxxi. 13, and to see is to enjoy, as was noted before.

[g] Ver. 10.] Here Gregory Thaumaturgus ima-
gines the speech of the profane, atheistical crew
concludes, and glosses in this manner upon it. Tóóó
παθητικός, τούτις καὶ ἀληθινοὶ, εἰς τιάν, καὶ ccc. "Thus vain men talk, but
I say unto you," &c. (as it follows in the rest of
the chapter). Which is not at all agreeable, in my op-
inion, to the words of this verse; wherein there is a
very serious advice to be diligent in all that we
have to do in this world; which is not the way of
sensual men, who love not to think of work, con-
trivance, (or thought), knowledge, and wisdom.
The difference between which words I have ex-
pressed in the paraphrase, and shall only add, that
they seem to comprehend our whole business here
in this world. For action is employed in some
work or other, to which we must bend our thought,
and devise how to do it, and for that end learn
sciences, but especially study wisdom, (unto which
sciences are an entrance), that we may both accom-
plish what we design, and know how to use the
fruit of our labour.

[h] Ver. 11.] But after all that we can do, he ad-
vises to a faithful dependance upon God and his
good providence, and not upon our own strength
or wisdom. By which advice he reproves that old
saying, Faber quique fortuna sua: "Every man
makes his own fortune:" "Which (as the Lord
Bacon speaks in a discourse, Touching Helps to
the Intellectual Powers,) we ought to look upon as
an insolent and unlucky saying, except it be utter-
ed as an hortative or spur to correct sloth;" and (I
may add) to excite us to watchfulness, in laying
hold of all opportunities, and neglecting no occa-
sions of doing ourselves good. "For otherwise,
if it be believed as it sounds, and a man enters in
into an high imagination that he can compass and
fathom all accidents, and ascribes all successes to
his own drift and reaches, and the contrary to his
errors and sleepings, it is a profane speech, and
it is commonly seen that the evening fortune of that
man is not so prosperous, as of him that, without
slacking his industry, attributeth much to felicity
and providence above him."

Yet this is not the same doctrine with that neither,
which saith, Viam fortuna regit, non sapientia: "Fortu-
ne, not wisdom, governs the life of man." For,
as Melanchthon observes upon the conclusion of
this book, there is much difference between philosop-
ical and ecclesiastical sayings. The church, in
such sayings as this, confirms providence, and ad-
monishes us to have God in our thoughts, whether
events be answerable to our desires or not. But
profane writers, in such sayings as that now men-
tioned, leave out divine providence, and take no
notice of it, but only of a blind power, which
troubles all things that are wisely designed.

It is an impertinent inference which Corianus makes
from these words, That all the things which the
swift, the valiant, and the rest of the persons here
mentioned, seek, being the end, of which they
frequently miss, it is an argument that the happy-
ness of man consists not either in fame, or victory,
or eating and drinking, or riches, or the favour of
others, but in contentment with such things as we
have, and God shall think good for us in his wise
providence.

[i] Ver. 12.] Which hath given us many examples
of men, who, incited by false persuasions, and
foolish hopes, dreamed of good events, when in
the midst of their course they were oppressed with
great calamities. Thus Melancthon glosses upon
these words in ver. 12. and instances in Marius,
Pompeius, and Julius Caesar. Which he explains
more largely in his Review of the first chapter of
this Book, a little before he died. "Where he
observes how Cato and Marcellus were disappoint-
ed when they hoped for victory in a good cause;
and Brutus and Cassius, when they hoped, by the
treachurous slaughter of Caesar, to have restored
the form of the old republic; and Anthony, when
he thought, by opposing Augustus, to make him-
self monarch of the world. All which verifies
the old saying, which he remembers in his Notes
upon the Proverbs, M. 400. 20: [italics] Vain men
are abused by their own desires, which lead them to
make false accounts, and fill them with vain expecta-
tions. And it teaches us the truth of those divine sayings, "The way of
man is not in himself,—Except the Lord build the
house, they labour in vain that build it," &c. Ex-
amples of which we have in Saul, who hoped to
have left the kingdom to his posterity; and in Da-
vad himself, who thought once of having Absalom
for his successor. But Solomon here teaches us to
consider, how infinitely the wise providence of God
excels our greatest wit and cunning, and can more
easily overreach all our counsels, and overturn our
well-laid designs, than we can out-wit the silly
birds and fishes."

[k] Ver. 13. 14.] Which should not discourage wise
and regular proceedings, but only make us refer
ourselves unto God: who, as he thus disappoints
the most probable hopes, so at other times makes
men successful, when they have no hope at all.
As Solomon here shows in the following observa-
tion, ver. 13. 14. Upon which St Hierom glosses
in this manner: "It hath been often seen, that a
small city, and few inhabitants, being beset by an
army of innumerable enemies, and besieged so
strictly, that they were in danger, if not otherwise,
to perish by famine, were on a sudden, contrary
to all men's expectation, delivered by a mean per-
son, who having more wisdom than all the unwise-
ness, great, powerful, and proud citizens, thought of
a way to save them, when they gave themselves for

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lost; and effected that also, of which they utterly despairs. And yet, O that ungrateful forgetfulness of mankind! after the siege was raised, after the liberty of their country was restored, there was nobody thought of this poor man, nobody gave him thanks for their safety; but all honoured the rich, who in their danger could do them no service*

[1] Ver. 15. Which sets forth, as the Lord Bacon observes on this verse, (l. viii. de Aug. Scient. c. ii. paras. 32,) “the depraved and malignant nature of mankind who, in extremities and straits, commonly flee to men of wisdom and courage, whom before they despised; but so soon as the storm is over, they become unthankful wretches to their preservers. Machiavel, not without reason, propounds the question, Whether should be most grateful to well-deserving persons, the prince or the people? but in the mean time he taxed them both of ingratitude. Though this does not arise merely from the ingratitude of the prince or the people alone, but there is added too oft to this the envy of the nobility; who in secret repine at the event, though happy and prosperous, because it proceeded not from themselves. For which cause they extenuate the merit of the act, and depress the author.”

Thus Themistocles was served, (as Luther here observes,) who having performed great things for his country, was basely requited by them. Nay, David himself was soon forgotten; who had been the greatest benefactor to Israel; ten of whose tribes soon renounced all dependence on his house, and fell off quite from their subjectation to it. So that to do good to the world, saith he, is to throw away the benefits we bestow; or to cast gold into dung, and pearls before swine. And therefore it is best to enjoy what we have, and to mind our present business, casting away care for the future. For as Phaedria saith in Terence, “It is better my benefits should be lost, than I should be lost together with them.” And next to be moved from our duty by the world’s ingratitude, is an advice he often repeats, very profitable in this chapter; that we may be like our heavenly Father, who “doth good to the evil, and to the unthankful.”

[2] Ver. 16. The beginning of this verse may be illustrated out of Diess Prusens, (Orat. 2. de Regno,) who observes, that Agamemnon wished rather for ten such grave counsellors as Nestor, than so many valiant youths as Ajax and Achilles, ος Ίκμαν ου τελεα ελάροι της βασιλείας. Where he shews also how great the power of oratory is to subdue men’s minds.

[3] Ver. 17. Yet it must be added, that the best and safest counsellors cannot be so much as heard or regarded, though never so wise, till people’s straits have made them humble, sad, and serious; as Eben Ezra expounds this 27th verse: “The words of the wise are despised by the people when they are in prosperity, but when they are in distress, (al. most famished by such a siege as is before mentioned,) and silenced by fear and grief, then they listen greedily and diligently.” Which Melancthon expresses better: “The words of the wise are heard by the silent,” i.e. by such as do not rage with any desire, but seek the truth, and what is wholesome for them. This, and another obvious sense of the words, I have expressed in the paraphrase, but have taken little notice of this, which seems not so near the meaning; that “it is better to hearken to wise men, who persuade to peace, than to tumultuous spirits, who incite silly people unto war.” “He that rules among fools,” is an Hebraism for a great fool; or we may understand it of one whose authority sways much among fools, or of a foolish commander. And St Hierom expounds it of a bawling orator or preacher: “Whatsoever declamer,” saith he, “thou seest in the church, by the enticement and elegance of words exciting applause, moving laughter, or stirring up the people to affections of joy; know that it is a sign of folly, both in him that speaks, and in them that hear him; for the words of the wise are heard in quiet and moderate silence,” &c.

[4] Ver. 18. All authors furnish us with abundance of examples of the truth of the last clause of the last verse; but I shall only briefly mention a little of Melancthon’s gloss upon the place. There are vessels of wrath, and vessels of mercy: the vessels of wrath are unhappy men, who bring destruction upon themselves and others, though sometimes they be great and wise persons; according to that of Solon, “Commonwealths are overthrown by great and excellent wits.” Such were Ahaz, Zedekiah, Catiline, Anthony, and others. And in the church, Samosatenus, Arius, Manicheus, and many other pernicious doctors. Of all which Solomon says, “One sinner destroys much good,” Πλεκαν χερι τοις άλλοις και κακίας επιτρέπει. The vessels of mercy are such men, whose course is salutary to themselves and others: Such a poor man in the city was Jeremiah, by whose counsels, if they had been followed, Jerusalem might have been saved from destruction. Let us therefore pray to God, with continual groans, that we may be vessels of mercy, and that he would preserve us from being the pests and furies (άδραγχοι) of mankind, driving a violent course to our own and others ruin.

C H A P. X.

THE ARGUMENT.—The sum of this chapter is, That, as true wisdom and virtue is the only thing that can give us tranquillity; so that part of it which teaches us to govern our tongue, and to behave ourselves dutifully towards our governors, (though they do not manage things to our content, nor to the general good,) conduces more unto it, than men are willing to believe. For this is, in a manner, the scope of the whole chapter, to make every one
sensible of the great blessing of government, especially of good government; and that therefore they ought to bear with all manner of grievance, as a less mischief than the want of government, by rebellion against it. Which begins in undutiful discourse; the folly and danger of which he admirably represents, with many other things tending to our present peace and settlement.

Ver. 1. *Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.* And the wiser or better any man is, so much the more cautious ought he to be, in all his words and actions, if he mean to preserve that credit, esteem, and authority in the world, which give him great advantages of doing good. For as dead flies, though very small creatures, falling into a pot of ointment, and bursting there, corrupt that precious composition, which the apothecary hath made with excellent art, so that it turns the perfume into a stink; in like manner doth a small error or miscarriage blemish him, who was highly valued for his discretion and virtue; and the least sordid action destroys his reputation, who was honoured for his noble way of living. See *Anot. [a]*

Ver. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left.* It is hard, indeed, to be thus circumspect; but herein a truly wise man's worth is discovered, that his judgement never fails him in the greatest difficulties; wherein he not only resolves aright, and takes things by the right handle, but is ready also in the execution of what he designs, and manages his affairs with ease and with dexterity; whereas a fool both mistakes in his aim, and fumbles also in the easiest business, which he handles so awkwardly and untowardly, that it commonly miscarries. See *Anot. [b]*

Ver. 3. *Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh in the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that be is a fool.* And though he would dissemble his folly, and endeavour to seem wise, he is so far from his aim, that in every thing he doth, whether great or small, he openly betrays his want of judgement; nay, by his very gait and behaviour, as well as by his words and actions, he tells every body (as plainly as if he said it in so many words) that he is a fool; which appears in nothing more than in his holding all for fools, in comparison with himself. See *Anot. [c]*

Ver. 4. *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place, for yielding pacifieth great offences.* But a man's wisdom hath seldom a greater trial, than when his prince is angry with him; and perhaps treats him hardly, which incenses a fool, and makes him leave the court, if not grow factious and rebellious; but it is better and safer advice to keep in the station wherein thou art, and to do thy duty faithfully, with a patient, but yet pensive spirit; for nothing so appeases a prince's offended mind, as to give way to his fury by mild and gentle words, and by modest, humble, and submissive behaviour; whereby a man also prevents a world of sins, into which he throws himself, if he yield unto disloyal thoughts. *See Anot. [d]*

Ver. 5. *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler.* And there are worse evils than this, that a wise and good man must patiently bear with; particularly that great error, which princes, it must be acknowledged, either through ignorance, imprudence, surprise, carelessness, and being imposed upon by other men's false representations, subtleties, or ill affections, are too frequently guilty of; whereby they derive many mischiefs upon all their people, for which they must answer, as if they were committed by themselves. *See Anot. [e]*

Ver. 6. *Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low places.* In advancing, I mean, (which I have too often observed), the most witless, careless men, and of base condition, or suffering such who are noted for nothing but their folly, and their vices, to creep up to the most eminent dignities and offices, and in the mean time depressing noble persons, or making no account of them, though indowed with less with all excellent qualities, than with riches and honour. See *Anot. [f]*

Ver. 7. *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.* By the like senseless folly, I have observed mere slaves, that deserved not the meanest office in a private family, (being fitter to be kept under by every body, than to be intrusted with the smallest power,) appear in the greatest state, by reason of their high preferment; and men of great families, or of singular worth and merit, altogether slighted, nay, forced to wait upon them, as if they had been their lackeys. *See Anot. [g]*

Ver. 8. *He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it; and he that breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.* Which foul indignities, notwithstanding, a wise and virtuous person should choose rather to wink at, and patiently endure, than think of moving any public disturbance; for such counsels are extremely hazardous, and commonly end in the ruin of those that give them; according to that known proverb among us, which admonishes us how dangerous it is, to pursue our own desires and passions violently, (especially against kings and princes,) whereby men in heat, forgetting their own contrivances, have run themselves into that very ruin, as hounds do into the pit, which they prepared for others; and that other common saying, which warns us not to overbrow the well-settled laws and customs of church or state, for that is like the breaking down a hedge, wherein a serpent many times lurks, which gives him that attempts it a deadly bite; so they frequently draw upon themselves their own destruction, who pull down the ancient government. *See Anot. [h]*

Ver. 9. *Whoso removeth stones, shall be hurt thereby; and he that cleaveth a wood, shall be endangered thereby.* We abound with proverbs to this purpose, which teach us, that the giving public disturbance, by invading the rights of others, (especially of kings),
and endeavoured to change the form of government, is like removing the boundaries of lands, which raises great troubles; or like the taking much pains to pull down a building without judgement, some of the stones of which fall upon him that meddles with it, and crush him in pieces. Such is his folly, also, that, fancies, he can mend every thing that is amiss, and form and square the people exactly according to his rule; which proves just like an unskilful workman’s cutting a knotty piece of wood, who only makes clefts and chips, (as the other doth factions and tents,) and in the issue gives a grievous gash to himself. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 10. If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must be put more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct.] This is sufficient to show, how unprofitable all our endeavours are without true judgement. For as a rusty tool, though managed by the strongest man, is so far from effecting his desires, that it only tires his arm; unless he file and whet it, to recover its edge, so all the power in the world rather hurts than advantages him that hath it, unless it be guided and directed by wisdom and prudence, which can do far more than violence and force, to correct the errors of kings, and mend the faults of their governments. See Annot. [6]

Ver. 11. Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment, and a babbler is no better. But of all other men he is the most dangerous, who spits his venom secretly against his governors, slandering and traducing all their actions in his private discourses, and thereby enraging people’s minds against them, and giving them a more grievous wound than if they were stabbed with a weapon; for that may be prevented, or healed afterwards, but this like the biting of the most deadly serpent, which stopping its ear to all enchantments, poisons both inevitably and incurably. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 12. The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool shall swallow up himself.] See here, again, the wide difference between a wise man and a fool. The former of which, by his virtuous discourse, wins everyone’s (especially his prince’s) favour, and doth good to those with whom he converses; but the other, by his ill tongue, not only hurts his neighbour, but plunges himself into endless troubles, out of which he cannot deliver himself, nor can any body help him. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 13. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.] And the more he talks, in the greater danger he is; for, though he begin only with senseless and impertinent stuff, he heats himself before he is done into a rage, and then minds not how injurious his discourse is unto others, or how mischievous unto himself.

Ver. 14. A fool is full of words; a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him who can tell him?] No, though he be adorned of it, he cannot devise; for he abounds with words, and while he thinks to mend the matter, he makes it worse, adventuring to talk not only of things civil, but of things sacred; and not only of things present, but of things past also, nay, of things to come; in which wiser men than he hath little or no skill; and yet the less he knows, the more confident and bold he is, when he doth not so much as foresee the evil he is bringing upon himself by his foolish prating. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. The labour of the foolish weariseth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.] Which is the more intolerable, because he torments himself and others with fruitless pains about the abstrusest matter, when he knows not the most trivial, that are as plain as the high-way; for if he be engaged in any common business, he only tires himself with toil and labour, but is never the nearer; like a silly traveller, who, being ignorant of the road, goes about, if not through dangerous, yet through troublesome paths, and the farther he goes, perhaps is the farther off from the place he intends. See Annot. [o]

Ver. 16. Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.] What a miserable condition, then, is that poor country in, which abounds (as most places do) with a great many of these fools! and besides, hath the unhappiness to fall under the government of a child; whose tutors, counsellors, guardians, and protectors, who have the management of all affairs in his minority, are so given to their pleasure, that they can find no time to mind seriously the public business, nor take any care to infuse principles of wisdom and goodness into their young prince’s mind, but let him remain a child as long as he lives. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 17. Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness.] And, on the contrary, the happiness of that nation is inexpressible, whose king is not only of an illustrious family, descended from the most ancient nobility, but, having had an ingenious and liberal education, doth not degenerate from their heroic virtue; which teaches him to place such officers under him, in their several stations, as make-pleasure wait upon business, which they first dispatch, and then refresh themselves, not to excess, but to fit themselves to return to their business again. See Annot. [q]

Ver. 18. ¶ By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.] ¶ Being sensible, that as, through the negligence and gross carelessness of a master of a family, the house falls to decay, and, for want of timely reparation, the rain gets in and rots the roof, and then the supporters, and at last the very foundation of it; so by that laziness and sloth, which is the effect of luxury and riot, kingdoms themselves go to wreck, and reasonable remedies not being applied to public disorders, the whole government by degrees grows out of frame, and is in the end dissolved. See Annot. [r]

Ver. 19. ¶ A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry; but money answereth all things.] ¶ For these idle and dissolute persons, among other mischiefs, consume the public treasure, by their vast expenses in feasts, and all manner of merriment, which
serve indeed for their present pleasure, but waste that which should make it lasting, and is of most universal use to support the prince's crown and dignity; and therefore, when the exchequer is exhausted, these men are tempted to fill it by the most grievous oppressions; nay, law and justice, and every thing else, is sold, virtue itself is of no price, but money alone is valued, and bears all the sway, which is another way of bringing all to utter ruin. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 20. ¶ Curse not the king, no, nor in thy thoughts, and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter. ¶ But notwithstanding all this, as I advised thee before not to rise up in rebellion against thy sovereign, (ver. 8. &c.) so now let me add, that it is very foolish, as well as wicked, to be provoked by this ill management, so much as to speak an opprobrious word of him, or of his government, or ministers; nay, entertain not so much as a thought of it, though it may be done never so secretly, where none but thy wife, or most intimate friend, are admitted; for it is not safe to trust any body with so dangerous a secret, which it is most likely will not always be concealed, but, as it is certainly known to God, so will be carried, by some undiscovered means or other, with such swiftness to the prince's ear, as if the bird that sat in the window, or passed by when the words were spoken, had flown away immediately with the report of them. See Annot. [b]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1.] He seems in the first words of this chapter, to prosecute what he had said in the last clause of the foregoing, shewing how much good one fool may spoil, by the great miscalculation that ensue one foolish action; whereby a man, otherwise famed for wisdom, utterly loses his reputation. So most interpreters understand the latter part of the verse, which Melanchthon, following the Vulgar, interprets quite contrary, that a little folly, or rather, folly for a little while, is better than wisdom and glory; that is, seeming folly, like that of Fabius, who was condemned for his slow proceedings, and thought a cowardly fool, is better than wisdom which makes a glorious show, but doth not conduct things so safely as that captain did.

But this exposition agrees not at all with the similitude, whereby Solomon illustrates what he here saith concerning folly, which is that of dead, or rather, venomous flies, (for the Hebrew phrase, flies of death, may better be translated deadly, than dead flies,) which, though very little animals, yet falling into a pot of precious ointment, spoil it all when they putrify; and not only take away the delicate scent, but turn it into a filthy noisome stink. For a fly is observed to be both fedum and fetidum animalculum, especially some sort of them, which seem here to be particularly denoted by the word Xebubu; being not merely dead out of sight, and delighting to live in it, but leaving behind them such a stench as is very offensive to the smell, and kills those creatures into whom they thrust their stings. From whence the god of the Etrurians had his name of Baitkebab, (a Kings, i. 2.) which if it were given him by his worshippers, signified his power to destroy those venomous flies which infected the inhabitants of that country; if by the Israelites, expressed their contempt of him, as a mean, and a filthy, sordid idol. For therefore St Hierom thinks the prophet Isaiah compiles the Egyptians to a fly, vii. 18. not only because they were a weak people, but prophet sordes idolatria, by reason of the sordid filthiness of their idolatry; which was a great reproach to their famed wisdom, and made them vile, even in the opinion of Pagan people.

I cannot here omit the reflection which the Lord Bahath made upon these words, (I. viii. de Augment. Scient. c. i. Parab. 21.) "that the cause of men eminent for virtue is very hard and miserable, because their errors, though never so small, are by no means pardoned. But as in a pure diamond, of great lustre, the very least speck or smallest cloud strikes the eye, and affects it with a kind of trouble, which in a grosser stone would scarcely be observed; so in men of singular abilities, the least infirmities are presently espied, and become the matter of men's discourse, and are personified with a heavier censure, which in men of meaner parts or rank would either pass without notice, or easily procure pardon. Therefore a little folly in a very wise man, a small sin in a very honest man, and a slight indecency of manners in a man of courtly and elegant behaviour, much derogates from their fame and reputation. So that it would not be the worst course for excellent persons, if they would mingle some absurdities (so it may be done without guilt) with these actions; that they may maintain a kind of liberty to themselves, and confound the notes and characters of smaller defects."

[b] Ver. 2.] From hence Solomon takes occasion to represent more largely, how much men suffer by their folly, and what advantages wisdom gives them; and treats of both, with respect not only to men's private, but to their public good. And, first, he shews what a difference there is between a wise man and a fool, in the management of any business. So I have interpreted this verse, which may be also thus paraphrased: "A wise man always takes honest courses; but a fool turns into by-ways." Thus Greg. Thaumaturgus glosses: "A wise man is his own leader and conductor to the best things; but a fool inclines to the wrong side, nor will his folly ever lead him to any thing that is excellent." Which St Hierom expresses in this manner: "A wise man always thinks of the world to come, which leads to the right hand; but he that is a fool,
only of the present world, which lies on the left;" and quotes a famous passage of Lactantius, (which I find in his Institutions, l. iv. cap. 2. concerning the letter γ, unto which the Pythagoreans resembled the course of human life. In which there is a time, when a youth finds his way clear, as that letter is, into two parts or ways, and he stands doubting unto which he should incline. If he be so wise as to take the right-hand way, he is happy; if the other, he is miserable. Which sense Grotinus follows. "The right hand is the way of virtue; the left, the way of vice." Unto which we may reduce that of the Chaldee paraphrast, "The heart of the wise inclines to the law of God, which was given from God's right hand; the fool to silver and gold, which are the gifts of the left."

But if this had been the sense, it would have been more proper to have said, The wise man's heart is on the right hand, not on his right hand; which is much different, and therefore I have omitted this in the paraphrase, (though I thought good to mention it here), and taken no notice of many other glosses, particularly that of Melanchton's, which seems something nearer to the sense; "The wise man hath power over his affections" (the right hand being the strongest, and the instrument of action in most men), "and can moderate them, as occasion requires; but a fool is under the government of his passions, and is hurried that way which his anger, ambition, grief, and other blind affections, drive him."

I will add this, that the meaning may be, "A wise man hath his wisdom always at hand," to direct him what to do, in public or in private business, whether he have to do with friends or enemies, in adversity as well as in a prosperous estate, (his mind being just like the right hand, which we use readily, upon all occasions, for all manner of actions); "but a fool is to seek," and knows not which way to turn himself, &c. Which is much to the same purpose with what I have said in the paraphrase.

And agrees with what follows in this verse, the first words of which signify as much as moreover, a fool is so silly, that he cannot hide it. For though the rest of the diseases of the mind may be discovered by artificial discourse, as the blemishes of our bodies are with our garments, only folly cannot be dissembled, but will appear to all, in every motion of him whose weakness it is.

There is another sense of the last words of the verse, beside that in our translation, which I have not neglected, because the words will bear the sense of the Vulgar; viz. "He saith every body is a fool," Which St Hierom interprets thus, "He fancies himself the only wise man." The LXX. (as St Hierom observes) seem wide from the sense, who translate it thus; "All that he thinks is very vain." Maldonate understands it differently from them all, in this manner; "In that wherein he himself offends, he reproaches others."

And then Solomon proceeds to give a particular instance of this folly and wisdom, especially in the public state and government. Where it is great folly for a governor to carry himself haughtily and furiously; but if he do, it is no less folly in his people to oppose him with the like passions, and not rather to be patient and peaceable; which is the sense of ver. 4. Which some take for a counsel to governors, others to the subject. They that understand it as counsel to governors, translate it some of these ways: "If the spirit of a governor come upon thee," that is, if thou art fitted for government, and advanced unto dignity, behave thyself humbly, and administer all things with great lenity; for that is the best way to heal public distempers. Or thus, "If thou art made a prince, discharge this office diligently," and with vigilance; for if thou art remiss and careless, it will make thee fall into great errors. Or, as some will have it, in this manner, "Thou hast a desire to be in authority, suppress it, or if it be offered thee, accept not of it; a private life is better, and less subject to the occasions of sin and danger." And some translate it thus: "If thou art in singular favour with the governor, keep thy station notwithstanding, and be not ambitious of pre-ferment," &c. Which is counsel unto subjects, and by rach (spirit) of the ruler, most do not understand his favour, but his anger; and then also it may be taken in a different sense from that in our translation, (making it still an advice to him that is in authority), that if anger come upon him, he should reflect, and consider the station wherein he is, lest this passion make him act unbecomingly, and transport him into great sins.

But the greatest part of interpreters taking the verse to be counsel to a subject, in case he incur the displeasure of his prince, I have followed that sense, which is almost agreeable to the coherence. And I have interpreted that advice, "not to leave his place," as most do, for not quitting the duty of a subject; but have taken in also the most ingenious interpretation of the Lord Bacon: Who makes this a political advice to courtiers, not to relinquish their place and office, nor to retire from the execution of their charge, as many do when they see their prince angry with them. "Which arises partly out of an impatience of disgrace, partly lest they should make the wound bleed a-sorer, by coming into the presence, partly that their prince may see how sorrowful and humble they are; which makes them think fit to withdraw themselves from their employments, nay, to resign perhaps the offices and dignities themselves into the prince's hands."

But Solomon disallows this way of cure, as hurtful and prejudicial, and that upon very good grounds. For, first, this course doth too much publish the disgrace itself; from whence both enemies and envious grow more bold to hurt, and friends more timorous to help. Secondly, By this means it comes to pass, that the wrath of the prince, which, if it had not been
made public, would have died perhaps of itself, becomes now more fixed; and having begun to overthrow the man, is carried on to his utter ruin. And, lastly, this retiring savours something of a malignant humour, that is, fallen out with the times; which heaps the mischief of indignation upon the mischief of suspicion.

"The proper precepts, therefore, for a cure, are these, which he thinks are contained in the last words, "pleas demeanour pacifies great offences." First, Above all things, not to seem insensible, or not so affected as in duty he ought to be, by the prince's displeasure, either through stupidity, or a stubbornness and pride of spirit. That is, let his countenance be composed, not to a sullen and contumacious, but to a grave and modest pensiveness; and in all manner of employments, let him shew himself less pleasant and cheerful than he was wont to be. Which it may be expedient also that some friend or other should represent to the prince, and insinuate seasonably, with what sensible grief he is inwardly afflicted. Secondly, Let him carefully avoid all, even the least occasion, whereby either the thing itself, which was the first cause of the indignation, may be revived, or the prince apprehend a new occasion to be displeased with him again, or, upon any account whatsoever, to chide him before others. Thirdly, Let him with all diligence seek, on the other side, all manner of occasions wherein his service may be acceptable to his prince, that both he may shew a prompt and forward affection to redeem his forepast offence, and his prince may understand, what a good servant he is likely to lose, if he thus cast him off. Fourthly, Let him sagaciously either lay the fault upon others, or insinuate that it was committed with no ill intention in himself, or remonstrate their malice who accused him to the king, or aggravate his fault more than it deserved. To conclude, Let him be diligent and watchful in all things, and intent upon the cure.

There is another great man, of our own, who seems to take this for an admonition, not to be false-hearted, by flinching from our station, when mighty men frown upon us. In an upright course, (saith Bishop Sanderson, in his sermon upon 1 Cor. vii. 24. sect. 46.) "Fear not the face of man, neither leave thy place, though the spirit of a ruler rise up against thee: patience will conjure down again that spirit in time, only if thou keep thyself within thy circle." But, I look upon this, which agrees not with the latter part of the verse, as an accommodation only of these words to his present purpose, and not as intended for the proper sense of them.

But of all other follies, this is the most mischievous, of which princes themselves are sometimes guilty; in preferring: (as it follows, ver. 6. 7.) unworthy men (who are so unfit to govern others, that they cannot govern themselves) to the highest dignities, and perhaps trusts; and at the same time neglecting, if not depressing, men of worth and honour, of noble families, and sometimes of herculeal virtue. Which is more provoking, because more pernicious, than the personal displeasure (before mentioned, ver. 4.) which they express towards any private man. For it is an universal grievance, and as if the ruler himself should give order for all the mischief which they do, (as some expound that phrase as an error); and yet notwithstanding, it is the wisest course not to be exasperated by it, to make any tumults and seditions, but to be patient and quiet, ver. 8. 9. So I have expounded these verses, in connection one with another; for though there are those who, by ruler, here understand the devil, who thrusts the worst men into the best places, (as may be seen in St Hierom's Commentaries); and others understand God, who permits this; yet the whole discourse is still to the same purpose; that senseless persons get into power, being more acceptable many times at court, (as Melanchton gloses), than the wise and good. According to the ancient verses,

"Ο βίος μαλαινής τούς πονηρούς μελετά\nΠροτίθητι ὑπὲρ κελατός, εἰ καθεύθυνες ἡμῖν.

"The world takes the greatest pleasure in bad men; the flatterer fares best in the first place, and next him the sycophant and false accuser." In the Roman story there are many instances of men preferred merely for their vices, of others only for money; some of which are collected by Ioannes Fidesacius, l. viii. Selectorum, cap. 15.

[f] Ver. 6.] I mentioned vices in the foregoing annotations [e], because folly, in the holy language, comprehends that, as well as silliness, or incapacity to manage affairs, and mindlessness, negligence, and sloth; which are both denoted in the Hebrew word יָוָשָׁא in this place; where the abstract (as they speak) being put for the concrete, we are to understand idle, ignorant, and senseless men, and that in the highest degree; and, being opposed to the rich, they are also supposed to be men of mean extraction or condition. For which reason, the rich also are to be understood, not simply men of estates, or great birth, but of excellent education, noble endowments of mind, and attentive unto business, &c.

[g] Ver. 7.] The sense of this verse is not different from that of the former, but the same thing is set forth in both, by two illustrations; one taken from their place and dignity, the other from their equipage, (as we now speak), wherein they appear upon their advancement. For to ride belonged unto great persons; as to go on foot, unto inferiors. And to ride on horses in Solomon's time, was much more stately than to ride on mules, which were used by great men in David's time, (2 Sam. xiii. 29. 1 Kings, i. 33.), or on asses, in former ages, Judges, x. 4.

[h] Ver. 8.] Yet it is as senseless to be enraged, by this preferment of senseless and unworthy men, into rebellion, as the wise man here shews by several proverbial sayings. In the application of
which to this purpose, I have the approbation of
Melancthon; who expounds the last words of ver.
8. and the first of ver. 9. concerning the pun-
ishment of those who go about to change
the ancient
laws, and the form of government. And it is more
agreeable to the phrases of breaking hedges, and
removing land-marks, or such like things, than to
apply it unto the mischief that princes bring upon
themselves and their countries, by such imprudent
promotions as are before mentioned; though that be
ture also, that such disorders give great disgust, and
are the occasion of dangerous commotions.

Which commonly are most fatal, notwithstanding,
to those that are so foolish as to advise, contrive, and
excite them; who bring that mischief on them-
sew which they intended should wholly have fallen
upon others, as Solomon here shews by two si-
militudes. One taken from the pits digged for the
intrapping foxes, wolves, and such like creatures,or,
as others will have it, from those that under-
mine the walls of towns, and often perish in the
mines wherein they themselves have long wrought.
Agreeable to that old saying, which Aristotlee men-
tions, (in his third book of Rhetorics, cap. 9.),
out of Democritus Chius, εἰταν ἀκαπτόμενον αὐτός,
ἀκαπτομένον αὐτόν. The other from the breaker of
an hedge; or fence, or wall, (for so we translate
this word, Numb. xxi. 24.), or any partition, (so the
LXX. there translate it by the word πλακόσατος,)
whereby men's grounds were separated, and kept
in several; in which enterprise he meets with his
death's-wound from a serpent. Which were wont
to lurk in rocks, (Prov. xxx. 19.), and in holes of
the earth, (Isa. xi. 8.), as well as in the bottom of
hedges, or old-walls, (as the wise man here inti-
mates), and in other dry places, where there was no
water, Deut. viii. 15. There were water-serpents
also, Amos, ix. 3. of which men were in less dan-
ger.

[1] Ver. 9.] There is great variety of judgements
concerning the sense of this verse; but that which
I have given, I am sure, is not improper, which, in
short, is this; That they who, out of love with no-
vility, will not let things alone in their place, but be
altering and changing, though thereby they make
great rents and distractions, do not only give them-
selves a great deal of trouble, and disturb the quiet
of their own mind, but run the hazard of ruining
themselves, together with whole kingdoms and
churches. Therefore that saying of Pindar, quo-
ted by Melancthon, should always be in people's
minds: "It is easy to disturb a government, but
God alone can settle it again."
The phrases are sufficiently explained in the para-
phrase; only I think fit to note, that the word which,
following the LXX. we translate endangered, is by
Forsterus translated aaspergetur, that is, hurt by the
abusers of it.

[k] Ver. 10.] There is no less variety, but rather
greater, in the interpretation of this verse; where-
in he seems to return to the commendation of wis-

dom. And it may still refer to what went imme-
diately before; as I have applied it in the latter
end of my paraphrase. In which I have not var-
ied from our translation, if, after those words, "put
to more strength," these be understood, "but all in
vain," and so the words may be translated out of
the Hebrew, "If the iron be blunt, and he (that
cutteth with it) do not whet the edge, it will over-
come all the force he uses;" that is, will not cut
as he would have it. And so the meaning of the
verse is excellently expressed by the Lord Bacon,
in (his preface to the second book of the Advanc-
ment of Learning.) "These words (saith he) in-
sist upon, that a wise election of the means doth more
efficaciously conduce unto the accomplishment of
any enterprise, than any enforcement, or accumu-
lation of endeavours." For as the saying is, Claudius
in via, antenotis cursetum extra viam. "A lame
man in the way, will out-run a post out of the
way."

But though I take this to be the true sense, yet I shall
here mention some others, that the reader may chuse
which he thinks most congruous. Some take that
word obhjalis, which we translate strength, for
forces or armies, and make the sense this: "Where
an army is governed by wisdom, it prevails, though
it be defective in weapons; for wisdom doth more
to set things right," (i.e. doth more to make up
the want of arms,) "than arms can do to get the
victory alone." Others, who translate the former
part of the verse to the same sense that I have done,
translate the last part thus, "The excellence of in-
dustry is wisdom." That is, wisdom in this excels
all other tools; they are blunted by use, but it is
sharpened thereby. And therefore they, the more
they are used, give those that employ them the greater
labour; but this, the more it is exercised, gives us
the less. Thus Maldonate. Some in this manner;
"If iron be blunt, it must be sharpened," and so
must the sword of justice (when, by the negligence
of officers, it hath lost its edge, and the earth is fill-
ed with violence, with thefts and adulteries, &c.)
be resumed and whetted by the magistrates, to the
severe punishment of such wickedness.

Melancthon seems to express the sense of the Vulgar:
"As iron, being blunt, is not sharpened without
great labour; so the companion of great diligence,
is wisdom;" or wisdom cannot be attained without
great industry. Which others, that follow that
translation, express thus more largely: "As a
knife, or such like instrument, having lain long rus-
ty, cannot without much whetting be sharpened
again; so the mind that is grown dull by long sloth
and negligence, requires great labour, study, and
exercise, to restore it to its former vigour. Which
may be applied to government that is decayed, and
cannot, without a wonderful diligence and prudence
in those that have the management of things, be
recovered.

There are those who look upon it only as an admo-
nition what may be done by mere industry and
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pains-taking, though a man have not much wit, nor be much befriended by others, and yet gets up wonderfully in the world.

[1] Ver. 11.] In the exposition of this also, there is much variety, according to the Hebrew phrase, "master of the tongue," is expounded, either of a mere babbler, and loose talker, or of a backbiting slanderer. I have taken it in the latter sense, as St Hierom, in the Vulgar edition, doth. And the former part of the verse may either signify a serpent that is not intrenched, or that cannot be intrenched by any means. For some such sort of serpents there were, as Bochartus observes, (l. iii. de Sacr. Animal. c. 6. part ii.,) and as appears out of Jer. viii. 17. and other places of holy scripture. Unto which, I think, the backbiter and detractor may be best compared; for nothing will restrain his virulent humour, nor defend one from the mischief which he doth in secret. I have connected this verse also with the precedent matter, as it may be, though we should take the words in the common sense; which is this, "that as a serpent will bite, if he be not charmed; so will he do mischief that talks much, if he govern not his tongue with great wisdom." Or, as others interpret the latter part of the verse; "A man's words, though never so eloquent, (for so the word lachabeb is used, Isa. iii. 3.) will do no good to pacify a prince's mind, if he be not charmed at the very first, before he have fixed his anger."

Others take this verse separate from the rest, and understand no more by it than this, "that a calumniator is like a serpent, that bites secretly, without so much as giving warning by its hissing." So Melanchthon, who truly observes, that calumny is a most grievous pestilence, which rages and destroys whole countries. For it kindles dissensions, and thence arises confusion of religion, wars, and desolations. Or, according to our translation. "A babbler can no more refrain from blustering out his own or other secrets, than a serpent, if he be not charmed, can do from biting." Which may be referred also to the matter foregoing, in this manner; "He that gives himself a liberty of talking of every thing, blusters out even the secrets and the vices of princes; whereby he not only makes himself odious, but procures his own destruction."

[m] Ver. 12. 13.] The three following verses may be also referred to the same matter; and the latter part of this is capable of another sense, and that in our translation, which is this; "That a fool's lips subvert all that a wiser man hath said." So St Hierom expounds it. "There would be less harm in folly, (saith he,) if it would be content with its own rustic ignorance; but it affects to contradict the dictates of wisdom, and to affront prudent persons; nay, to supplant and overthrow them, whereby it becomes exceeding wicked."

[n] Ver. 14.] And it is in vain to hope to amend this; because, as Solomon here observes, a fool thinks himself in this very thing to be wise and learned, that he is able to multiply words, though they be never so confus'd, without head or foot, (as we speak,) and he saith the same thing over and over again, in a round; as the LXX. seem to understand the word boletote, madness, (in the foregoing verse,) which they translate waphanos, as if it were from the Hebrew word which signifies dares. Melanchthon understands these three verses, as if they expressed the difference between wise councillors, or teachers, and such as are foolish, but fancy themselves very wise; though they direct their counsels, and instructions, merely by their own or others blind affections. So Mardonius persuaded Xerxes unto his unhappy war, and Pompey had such-like instigators; but they were ignorant men, or considered not "what had been before." So he expounds this 14th verse; "They who by foolish counsel, or pernicious doctrine, endeavour themselves and others, regard not former examples, nor have any prospect of future judgment."

[p] Ver. 15.] He refers all in this verse, (where I have put two senses together,) unto the same thing. These perverse wise men, saith he, make a great bustle to no purpose, and, endeavouring to reform many things, bring lamentable events upon themselves and others; because they are ignorant of the sense of mankind, and consider not the weight of business, nor discern what is fit to be done. Which is comprehended in these words, "They know not the way to the city, or to the court;" but are like the shepherd, saith he, who, coming to the court, had a looking-glass bestowed on him, in which contemplating himself, he fell into admiration of his own beauty; and thereby grew so insolent, that he was not only thrown out with disgrace, but broke his neck.

[q] Ver. 16.] From hence Solomon takes occasion to admonish us, that the misery or welfare of a people depends very much upon the king that governs them. Who, if he be a child, must be governed by others; and if they prove bad, as commonly they are, all things go to rack. This seems to be the sense of this verse, where, by a child, I understand a prince to whom the sceptre falls in his minority; though it may be taken (as Jo. Forsterus expounds) for one that is rerum imperiis unskilful in business, (as in Jer. i. 6. 7. Isa. iii. 5.) and I have not omitted the common interpretation, which understands it of such a weak prince, as is wholly governed by his passions, and lets the worst of men govern him. Who, like children, think all is well, if they may but play, and follow their pleasure. Which they take so greedily, that they are drinking when they should be at council, dancing when they should be judging causes. So Jo. Drusius, I remember, expounds "eating in the morning," in his Annotations, on Numb. xvi. 5. where he applies that place of Jeremiah, xxv. 19. to illustrate this, and observes,
that the morning is the time of judgement and counsel, as the evening is for mirth or computations. According to that of Socrates, "In the morning counsel, in the evening conversation." And that of the Hebrews, Non judicant, in hora cibrittatis; they do not sit to judge in the hour of drinking, i.e. in the evening. Which is so prejudicial to government, that there was a law among the Carthagarians, that no magistrate whatsoever should drink any wine at all, sin her anemaria 66 wu a 3090, "that year in which they bear any office," &c. as we read in Plato, l. ii. de Legibus, p. 674. edit. Serrani. And he admirably represents what the mischief of it is, when a mere youth governs, who is not able to undergo so weighty a charge, in the next book, p. 691.

[5] Ver. 17.] And, on the other side, the felicity of a nation is unspeakable, when it is under the care of a gallant prince, whom he calls ben charim. Which may either signify his descent, or the excellent qualities of his own person, or rather both; one who inherits the virtue of his ancestors. Who though they should chance to leave him but a child, yet intrust him with such wise and faithful persons, that they infuse him into the spirit of his heroic predecessors; which makes the people willingly submit unto him. For, as Plato observes, that parents everywhere have the power of governing their children; so next to this it is consonant, γενεαν εισιν αξιωμα, that generous persons (who do not degenerate from the virtues of their noble ancestors) should govern those that are mean and base, l. iii. de Legibus, p. 690. Whence the Babylonian princes are called by this name, Isa. xxxvi. 12, where the Chaldee hath bane berin, the sons of ingenious and free men, or the sons of hercoidal persons. For hence comes the name of heroes; and thence Bacchus is called by the name of Liber, i.e. a prince or nobleman, as Bochartus rightly observes in his Canaan, l. i. c. 18. And so the LXX. translate ben charim in this place, ὄννειον διὸ, which word they elsewhere translate ἀξιωμα, nobles, Nehem. v. 7. vi. 17. and ἀξιωμα, Isa. xxxiv. 12. It is vulgarly derived from the white garments, or robes of fine linen, wherein such great persons appeared; but it is more likely to be of some foreign original, and may be best translated illustrious persons.

[1] Ver. 18.] I have referred this and the next verse unto the same matter. And this represents, how necessary it is to be very diligent and careful to make up the smallest breaches, and correct the beginning of disorders, by shewing what ruin attends upon supine sloth, remissness, and negligence. Which is expressed in two most significant words; the first (slothfulness) implying such a sluggish temper, that a man will move neither hand to any work; the other (idleness) such a remissness and listlessness, as there is in a man that is asleep, when his "hands hang down," (as the phrase is, Heb. xii. 13,) which seems to be the import of ἀνεβάλλειν, in this place, coming from a word that signifies humble and dejected.

[5] Ver. 19.] The next verse represents the vast power of money; which, therefore, a prince should be sure to have at command, because it commands all other things. As he finds when he is in want of it, and is thereby tempted to squeeze his people unjustly, or to set all things to sale, which is another way of expounding that phrase, "Money answers all things." I cannot omit here to note, that it would not be absurd, if this verse should be connected with ver. 17. to signify the happiness of a nation, whose prince takes care that his people want not provision, (bread and wine in the language of the Hebrews, signifying all that is necessary for human life;) but especially that the money of the nation, whereby all things are purchased, be not exported.

[1] Ver. 20.] But whatsoever negligence, or profusion, and waste, there be, it should not provoke any wise and good man to speak contemptuously of his sovereign, or of his ministers, if he consider merely how unsafe it is, to make such reflections on him. For there are no wars so faithful, no place so secret, as that they may be trusted with such words; "the ears of kings," according to the old saying, "being as long as their arms." That is, they can as easily discover crimes, as punish them; they have spies on purpose every where, or men, to investigate themselves, will turn accusers; or loyal persons may, some way or other, come by the knowledge of it, and think themselves bound to let their sovereign know who are his enemies.

Thus most interpreters, and the most learned, understand this verse; and therefore I have followed no other interpretation in my paraphrase. For thus that admirable person, S. Bochartus, glosses upon these words, (Epist. qua Respond. ad 3. quaest. p. 37.) The true mind of Solomon is, that kings do not want their separations et inveniunt, eminences and curious observers, by whom they learn what is most secret. Which was the reason that Mideas was represented by the poets with asses care, because he had those that listened and hearkened in all parts of his kingdom; and brought him news of every thing that was but whispered by his subjects.

And thus St Hierom, the simple came, That we take care we be not overcome by sages and fury, to speak evil of our prince, or distract from him; for he may some way or other hear it, contrary to our expectation, and make us suffer by one ungovernmented tongue. That is the meaning, with he, of the last part of the verse, which is an hyperbolic expression, like that in common speech, when we say, "The walls, that are conscious to what you speak, will discover it." Nay, this very proverbial hyspehole is used, in good authors, for a thing
very secret, "Unless some bird saw it." So Aristophanes, in his comedy which hath its name from birds:

Ouidis óben tón Enochán tò òkla, piñan ἅν τις ἄν ἔχεις.

"None ever set eye upon my treasure, unless perhaps some bird."

And Suidas cites this verse out of the same poet, (which more illustrates the sense I have given of this phrase in the paraphrase):

Ouidis μη ξαφνη πάλιν ἐπὶ περιπλανήσεις δει.

"None sees me, unless the bird that passeth by."

But I am not satisfied whether Solomon had not respect to something else, and intimated that some prophet might make the discovery; as Elisha did of many things spoken in the king's own bedchamber, 2 Kings, vi. 9. The Chaldee paraphrase, by "that which hath wings," understands the heavenly ministers: and so many of the Hebrews; about which, though they talk many fabulous things, yet the meaning may be, The angels shall, one way or other, bring it to light, and give occasion to the discovery. For, as a great man of our own observers, (Bish. Taylor, l. iii. Duet. Dub. ch.iii. rule 3. n. 3.), "the government of the other world reaches strangely even unto us; and we speak not a word in vain, but by the divine providence it is disposed to purposes that we understand not. And therefore it is not safe to speak evil of magistrates in our private houses, lest the angel that attends us order it so, that it pass into publications. But as for the king, (who is above the rich or mighty), call him not accursed in thy heart; which being a thing that can only be perceived by God, who is the searcher of the heart, it shews that as angels take care of the rich, the wise, the mighty, and noble, so kings are the peculiar care of God," &c.

And indeed, as the same Bochartus adds, it appears from hence that Solomon doth not deter us from this sin, by the mere fear of dangers, for he lays a restraint not only on our words, but on our thoughts, which are known only unto God. And if we may not in thought detract from him, how much less speak a reproachful word of him, or move rebellion against him.

I shall only add two things more, and conclude this chapter with a notable discourse of Martin Luther; First. That some of the Hebrews, who take the angels to be here meant, thereby understand the devil; as our Saviour, by the "fowls of the heaven," understands a swan, the evil one, Matth. xiii. 4: but especially night-birds, they say, (who may seem here to be meant, where he speaks of the bed-chamber), denote the devil and his angels. Whence that proverb among the Arabians, "Speak where there is no night-bird;" that is, where no creature hears.

Secondly, The last words of the verse are capable of this sense, (if we distinguish between "bird of the air," and "that which hath wings," taking the one for angels, and the other for men, who minister to kings as angels do to God). That the angels will report our blasphemy in heaven, and some or other will be found to reveal it, and carry the news of it to the king upon the earth. Gregory Neoconoeracensis suggests the former part of this; who thus expounds the words, "Swift and winged messengers carry all to the only rich and great King, discharging both a spiritual and rational ministry."

It will not be unuseful, much less unseasonable, in such an unruly age as this, to let the reader understand how deeply the first reformers of religion laid this precept to heart, by transcribing some of Luther's admonitions, in his annotations on this verse.

"The worse and the more malignant (saith he) the world is, the more studious and laborious Solomon teaches us to be in the doing our duty: Particularly, in honouring magistracy, because it is a divine ordinance, and the better part of the world; by which God manages all things under the sun. But the ungodly begin their wickedness, chiefly in the contempt of magistrates, when they hear how God blames and reproves them in the holy scriptures. But it belongs to the divine office to find fault with magistrates, and to rebuke them; and therefore, though thou hearest it, yet do not imitate it; for thou art not God, nor the ordained, no, nor the reformer and restorer of the divine ordinance. But as God reproves them, so, the also, in the holy scriptures, that thou mayest do thy duty; and not meddle with what belongs to them. Whereas thou, forgetting the beam in thy own eye, beginnest to spy the mote in another man's; correcting thy superiors, by whom thou rather art to be corrected; and if thou shouldst sustain their office, wouldst offend more than they do, and not do so much good as is performed by them. The meaning, therefore, of Solomon is this: I have spoken much of princes, how they undo the world; but do thou reverence them notwithstanding that, for they are not an human ordinance, but a divine. St Peter indeed calls the king an human creature, because he is assumed from among men, but his authority is divine; and though princes be bad, they are to be honoured because of this ordinance of God. Why, then, wilt thou speak evil of those who are vexed with so many and such great cares and labours for thy peace, if they be good? and if they be bad and foolish, their own iniquity is mischief enough to them, and brings them into sufficient danger. Bear with them, then, and compassionate them, rather than revile them, and revile them," &c.
chap. XI.

"Just as we see flies fall into a pot of excellent ointment, and there dying and corrupting, spoil it all; so when excellent counsel is given in the kingdom, in the senate, in war, behold there comes some mischievous knave or other, and utterly dashes it, so that it hath no effect. But as we are compelled to endure those poisonous flies, so we must be content to suffer these pestilent counsellors."

CHAP. XI.

The Argument.—As obedience to governors, and patience under ill government, are the means (he shows in the foregoing chapters) to preserve peace and quietness, which are the blessings of human life; so in peaceable, quiet, and easy times, nothing contributes more to our happy living, than the constant exercise of charity in works of mercy, which make us beloved of God and man. Upon which, therefore, the wise man here insists largely, in the six first verses of this chapter; and then presses men to it by the consideration, that there is no pleasure like this while they live, and that as they cannot keep what they have long, but death will rob them of all, so they must give an account of what they have enjoyed, and therefore had best make such an use of it as will stand them in stead at that time. This I take to be the sum of this chapter.

Ver. 1. CAST thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.] Now, having shown how thou oughtest to behave thyself towards those above thee, look down a little upon those below thee, and believe that nothing is more profitable, (though the world think otherwise), as well as obliging, than to be kind and charitable unto all men; but especially to the poor miserable people, though they be not so good perhaps as they ought to be, but will ungratefully forget all thy benefits, and never think of them more, or at least, are never likely to make thee any return, no more than if thou didst sow thy seed on the sand or in the sea; let not that discourage thee, for when thou thinknest not of it, God will requite thee either in this world or in the next; nay, there may come a time, when some of those who have been relieved by thee, may do thee service.

Ver. 2. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.] Give, therefore, unto others some part of the good things which God hath given thee, and give very liberally, and be not weary neither of well-doing; but though there be a great many suitors that solicit thy charity, extend thy bounty to them rather above than beneath thy ability; for thou knowest not how calamitous the times may shortly be, and then the good thou hast done will stand thee in greater stead than all the goods thou enjoyest; which perhaps may be taken from thee, and leave thee nothing to do good withal, but make thee an object of other men’s charity, which no person hath greater reason to expect than he who, when he had wherewithal, hath been kind to others in that condition. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.] Look up to the heavens, and imitate the clouds, which are not filled with moisture for themselves, but pour it down freely and plentifully upon the thirsty earth, even upon the barren as well as upon the fertile soil, without any difference; and look upon the earth, and learn from the trees to be fruitful in good works while thou art alive; for when thou art dead, none can raise thee up again to exercise that charity which now thou neglectest, no more than a tree can be made to bear when it is cut down, but which way soever it falls, whether to a cold or to a warmer quarter, there it remains for ever, without so much as leaves. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap.] And do not put off thy charity until another time, under a pretence that now the times are hard, or thou shalt be better able hereafter, or mayest find fitter objects for it, and do more good with it; for as he that will not sow till the wind blow from a favourable quarter, may let the seed-time pass over, and he that will not reap because he is afraid of every cloud that threatens rain, may lose his harvest; so that they will do no good till the times be just as they would have them, or till they find objects against whom there lies no exception, will never want reasons to excuse their duty, and defer it till they have no opportunity for it. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.] Trust God for all such things as those, and do not rely upon thine own understanding, which comprehends very little of what is before thee: for instance, whence the wind comes; what makes it blow and cease; how the soul comes into the body, and departs out of it; how the body itself is formed in the womb; by what power, and how it goes to work, hardening some part of the matter into bones, and softening others into flesh, &c. And therefore much less art thou able to comprehend the providence of God, who disposeth all things, and know, for instance, whether it will be a dear year or a cheap; whether thou or thy heirs shall live or die, lose or keep an estate; particularly what strange ways God hath to blast or to bless thy designs, making thy estate dwindle by saving, and grow wonderfully by giving away bountifully; which seems to diminish, but, by means as secret as the growth of a child in the womb, increases and enlarges it. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening with-bolt not thy hand: for thou knowest not
Whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall be both alike good.] Let nothing, therefore, discourage thee from taking all opportunities to give thy soul incessantly, early and late; when thou art young, and when thou art old; when thy soul smiles upon thee, and though art in a declining condition; for thou knowest not which will hit to do the most good unto others, and to bring the greatest blessing back upon thyself, or whether all may prove alike beneficial unto both. See Annot. [F]

Ver. 7. ¶ Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.] ¶ Let not love of thy own pleasure make thee regardless of what becomes of other men; for though it is true, life is full of delight when we are in our prosperous estate, and we are entertained with a great variety of pleasure, when we look about us, and behold all the good things the sun shows the bounty of heaven hath provided for us; yet, believe it, there is no satisfaction comparable to that of having done abundance of good with that which he bestows upon us. See Annot. [G]

Ver. 8. But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity. [1] If God, therefore, should bless a man with a healthful body and a very long life, I do not forbid him to take the comfort of it, but advise him rather, (as I have often done,) with a mind free from solicitude and carelessness, to enjoy all the innocent pleasures it can afford him; only let them be tempered with these two reflections: First, That as the fairest sun that ever shone will set, and the night follow it, so the most merry life will have an end, and then we must lie down in our graves longer than we have lived, without the least glimpse of these joys. Secondly, That while we live, nothing which we expect hereafter can give us more contentment than what we enjoy at present; and will slide away also as fast, and leave us altogether unsatisfied, unless we have done some good with it. See Annot. [H]

Ver. 9. ¶ Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement.] ¶ And there is one thing, above all other, which if the most childish youth would consider, and always carry in mind, I might give him full liberty to be as jovial and merry as his frolic age inclines him; to banish melancholy thoughts, and, while he hath the briskest taste of them, to invent all manner of pleasures for his entertainment, denying himself nothing that he desires, and gratifying all his senses: It is this, that he must give a strict account of all his actions unto God; who will deal well with him, if he hath kept himself within his bounds, and enjoyed only lawful pleasures, with thankful acknowledgements unto him; but will punish him for all his extravagancies and forgetfulness of him, with torments infinitely greater than all his sinful delights.

And this, be it known to thee, whosoever thou art that readest this, is a certain truth. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. Therefore remove sorrow from thine heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for childhood and youth are vanity.] And therefore, by the thoughts of this, I advise thee also to suppress and banish that fierceness, rage, sadness, fretting, and vexation, with all such like perturbations of mind, unto which, in the heat of thy blood, thou art subject when any thing crosses thee, (suppose when thou art only reproved for thy faults); and let no filthy desires, which thou art strong, and would plunge thee in all wickedness, stay with thee: For if such care as this be not taken to lay restraints upon him, there is nothing more senselessly foolish, rash, insconstant, and froward, to ruin itself, than man in his childish youth; when he is in the dawning, as we call it, of his days, and comes first acquainted with the pleasures of this world. See Annot. [k]

Annotations.

[a] Ver. 1.] Charity being the subject of his discourse in the first six verses of this chapter, (as was observed in the argument), he begins with the proper object of it; those who, as our Saviour speaks, Luke, xiv. 14. are not likely to recom pense us again. Thus this first verse, (about which there are various concerns), I think, may be most naturally expounded. And it is a very ancient position, as appears from the words of Gregory Thaumaturgus, which are these in English: “It is just to communicate unto others, &c.; for, though for the present it may seem to be lost, (and thrown away, as we speak), like the bread that is cast upon the water; yet, in process of time, thy love to mankind will appear not to be unprofitable and without fruit.” And after the same manner, Greg. Nazianzen, in after-times, (orat. ix. page 298.), speaking of the liberality of his father to the poor, saith, He proceeded upon this maxim, that it is much better, for the sake of those who may be worthy, to give to those who are unworthy, than for fear of bestowing our charity upon the unworthy, let worthy people want it. To which that seems (saith he,) to belong, which we read in Solomon, “Cast thy bread upon the waters: “Which is not thrown away and quite lost, in the account of him that justly estimates things, but is sent thither where all that we do is laid up, and shall in due season meet us again, though we think not of it.”

And to strengthen this, it is observed by some, that waters in scripture signify great affliction and misery, Psal. xviii. 17. lxvi. 12. And therefore the sense of the proverb is not of sowing in a fertile ground by the rivers, or in a soil well watered, from whence men naturally expect a fruitful crop, (as some expound it), but of sowing (i.e. giving alms) there, from whence we expect no fruit, no more than if
we threw the seed in a rapid river, in which it is
carried away nobody knows whither, and seems
lost.

And so it may be applied also to ungrateful people,
as I have touched in the paraphrase; and I shall
not trouble the reader with other expositions, which
may be found in most commentators, only naming
this of Maldonate, (which agrees well enough with
that which I have followed), “Give to the poor,
whose miseries are so great that their faces are all
wet and besmeared with tears.” And though there
be many of them, be not sparing, if thou art able
to receive them, for waters signify sometimes a mul-
titude of people in the scripture-language. But
that is the sense of the next verse; and therefore
upon the “face of the waters,” is as much as up-
on those “who will be gone presently,” like the
waters of a river, and never bring any thing back
to us to reward us; if they do, it is more than
could be expected.

As for the word bread, it signifies any benefit where-
by the poor may be supported; especially all sorts
of food, (1 Sam. xiv. 24, where it comprehends
manna, and every thing that was edible), more par-
ticularly that food which is made of corn, Gen. iii.
19. and from thence signifies corn itself, of which
bread is made, Isa. xxviii. 18. And so St Hierom
here expounds it, agreeable to what I said above
of sowing seed in the water.

[b] Ver. 2.] And as in the first verse he has respect
to the quality of the persons unto whom we are to
give, so here to the number of them, and the
quantity of our alms, which is expected perhaps
by a great multitude. Yet let not that damp it,
(sayth he), out of a fancy that it will undo us to
relieve them all; but if we be able, let us help
them; and though more still come, when we have
extended our charity according to our utmost abili-
ty, let us rather go beyond it, (as the apostle saith
the Macedonian Christians did, 2 Cor. viii. 3.),
than let miserable creatures perish. Thus Greg.
Nazianzen seems to understand these words; seven,
yea, eight. Seven is a complete number; eight add-
ed to it denotes something above that which we
account perfection. His words are these, that “his
father gave not only seven, but seven,” out of his super-
fluities; but seven, not exceeding, out of his necessaries,
according to the prescription of Solomon, gave a
portion not only so seven, but if an eighth came, he
was not here sparing, but much more ready to
give than others are to get.” In short, he means
give most liberally, liberae, as Greg. Thaumaturgus
here expresses it, not sparingly, but profusely. I omit
other glosses upon this verse; and the criticism which
some make upon the word poris, which they think
alludes to what was sent from Jesse unto the poor,
or those that were absent; of which there is no
certainty. I will only note, that here again Solo-
man contradicts the vulgar principle upon which
covetous men set: move; and directs the quite con-
trary. They think all is lost that is given away
in charity: No such matter, saith the preacher,
(ver. 1.), the fruit of it will be found hereafter
beyond what can be imagined. O! saith the
covetous man again, I know not what may be
hereafter; now I have enough, but in the latter
end of my life I may want, and therefore it is best
to save whilst I may. No, saith the preacher, for
that very reason give, for thou knowest not what
may be hereafter, when that may be taken away
from thee, which now thou wilt not bestow upon
needy people, &c.

[c] Ver. 3.] In this verse, he illustrates both the duty
and the reason of it. The former, by the clouds,
which are a fit emblem of charity; the second, by
the trees, which can bring forth fruit no longer
than they continue joined to their root; from which
being separated, they bear no more, nor can be
fixed to their root, as the clouds may be filled with
water again. So I have interpreted the latter part
of this verse; which Grotius understands as if it
meant no more than the foregoing: “Do good to
men without distinction, like him who, when he
cuts down a tree, regards not which way it falls.”
I omit other interpretations, and shall only men-
tion Maldonate’s gloss upon this verse, which is
ingenious enough. He urges us, saith he, to do
good, while we live, by two reasons. First,
from the profit of it, because we shall receive more
than we give, like the clouds, which receive from
the earth but a thin vapour, which they return to
it in most copious showers. The second, from the
impossibility of being in a capacity to do good
when we are dead; for then, like a tree, we must con-
tinue as we are when death seizes us, and never
be restored to our former condition again. Cora-
minus alone (as far as I can find) expounds the latter
part thus, in his Annotations: “A tree, in what
place soever it is planted, there abides, and brings
forth fruit; and so ought we to help others by all
manner of means; in whatsoever place or time
we live.” And he takes north and south, for all
parts of the world. If any think fit to apply this
unto the unsalterable condition wherein we must re-
main in the other world, (like a tree cut down,
which, if it fall toward the north, cannot change its
posture, and turn to the south), they cannot fol-
low a fitter gloss upon the words than this of Lu-
ther’s: “If the Lord send thee in the south, that
is, fruitful and rich in good works, it will be well;
but if in the north, that is, barren of good works,
it will be ill with thee. Howsoever thou art found,
so shall thou be judged, and so thou shalt likewise
receive.”

[d] Ver. 4.] And then follows here an admonition
to take the first opportunity of doing good, and
got to defer it, because now it may seem unsean-
table, and we fancy it may do better another time.
Which the Lord Bacon extends unto all other
things as well as alms. “There is no greater,” or
more frequent impediment of action, (saith he, in
the conclusion of the first chapter of the eighth

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book of Advancement of Learning), than an over-curious observation of decency, and of that other ceremony attending on it, which is too scrupulous election of time and opportunity. For Solomon saith excellently, He that observeth the wind, &c. We must make opportunity oftener than we find it."

And thus that great prince, Xerxes, (otherwise not very prudent, speaks very discreetly in Herodotus, l. vii.), "Be not fearful of all things, nor consider every thing minutely; for, if in the consideration of business, thou wilt weigh every thing alike, thou shalt never be able to do any thing." And thus Melanchthon understands this place, "As events are not in our power, (which he takes to be the meaning of ver. 3.), so he that will have certain and circumscribed events (that is, such and such things come to pass) before he act, will never attempt any thing."

And so a great divine of our own expounds it: "If we will suspend our resolution, till we can bethink ourselves of something free from all inconveniences, in most of our deliberations we shall never resolve upon any thing at all; God having so tempered things, that every commodity hath its incommodiousness, every conveniency some inconvenience attending it; which many times all the wit and industry of man is not able to serve." Bishop Sanderson's Sermon upon 1 Corinth. x. 24. p. 245.

St Hierom also elegantly accommodates these words to negligent pastors, who will not preach, but when the people are very desirous to hear, and there is a fair gale breathing to favour their design. And gives this advice to us, Do not say, "this is a fit time, that is unprofitable; for we are ignorant, what is the way, and what is the will of the Spirit, which dispensest all things."

Ver. 5.] In this verse he seems to pursue the same metaphor of the wind, which blows uncertainly, and nobody knows whence, nor from what causes. And therefore from our ignorance of that, and indeed of all other things, which we are here conversant withal, of our own soul, for instance, (which our translators understand by the word ruach, spirit), and of our own body, or of that us forma-trix, how it goes about its work, to make this body of ours in the womb, which may possibly be meant by spirit, (Job, xxxiii. 4. Psal. civ. 30.). Solomon persuades us not to presume to know how God intends to order the course of this world, in his over-ruling providence, and therefore to do our duty, and leave events to him.

Ver. 6.] Imitating the husbandman, (with which metaphor he began this discourse, and now concludes it), who, not knowing which will prosper, sows both early corn and late. So Symmachus understands this verse to be an allusion to those that sow some very forward seed, which perhaps may hit, when that which is sown at the ordinary time doth not; or perhaps both may succeed, and bring forth fruit, to their great enriching. Others take morning and evening only to signify all times.

Ver. 7.] I have continued this verse with the foregoing, and supposed (what all interpreters do in the 3d and 4th verses) that the comparison is imperfect; there being only the ἄγνωρος, (as Hermogenes speaks), the proposition of the sentence, and the authores, (that which answers unto it), left to be made by the reader; which I have supplied from the sense of the whole foregoing discourse in this chapter.

Others think a new discourse here begins, for the conclusion of the whole book, and that after all he had said of happiness, he advises every one to think of another life, and not expect to find it in this.

Or, as some understand him, his meaning is, "Now you have seen wherein happiness doth not, and wherein it doth consist; therefore do not either imagine there is none at all here in this world, or that it is greater than really it is; but take a middle course, which I have shewn you, and look upon this life as having pleasure in it, but not absolutely perfect, yet such as our condition will permit; begun here, and to be completed in another world."

Ver. 8.] The beginning of this verse I have expounded according to the Hebrew, where the words run thus, as St Hierom himself translates them: "If a man live many years, let him rejoice in all these things," &c. And the latter part of the verse, I have supposed, contains two motives to moderation in our present enjoyments, and to make us think of doing some good with them, as the highest pleasure of all. Because they will have an end, when we can no longer enjoy them; and because, while we have them, they run away, as all that follows will do; and leave us empty and dissatisfied, unless we have made a good use of them, upon which we may reflect, when they are gone, with some pleasure.

Ver. 9.] To those motives, he here adds the most considerable thing of all; which is expounded two ways by interpreters: Some taking these words as a permission, under such restraints as he mentions in the end of the verse; others, as ironically and sarcastically (as the Greek phrase is) spoken, by way of mockage and bitter scoff. The two first phrases ("rejoice," and "let thy heart cheer thee") incline to the former way, being commonly used in a good sense; the two last, ("walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thy eyes"), unto the other way, being commonly used in a bad. Therefore the scope of the place, and the coherence must determine it. And as the LXX. and St Hierom go the first way, so it agrees best, in my opinion, with what went before, and therefore so I have paraphrased it. And considering that they are two different words in the beginning of the verse, which we translate as if they were the same, (viz. young man, and youth),
I have not done amiss, I think, but expressed them more significantly, by these words, childish youth. And so they are distinguished in the last verse; where that word which here we translate youth, we more truly translate childhood, which yet goes before youth.

[k] Ver. 10. Here I have followed the judgment of St Hierom, who under anger (or grief) comprehends all the perturbations of the mind; and under evil of the flesh, all the hurtful pleasures of the body. And accordingly I have expounded the whole verse, with respect to the danger youth is in, by the fiery motions of both sorts; the former of which incline men to imitate the wild beasts; the other sink them into the condition of the dullest brutes.

The word we here translate youth, signifies the deep of day,—in our language, the appearing of the morning; and therefore is to be understood of our entrance upon the most pleasant time of our life. Which, as well as childhood, is but vanity, that is, presently vanishes, (as some will have it), and will be soon gone; or rather, childhood and youth signifying all that is done in that age of our life, the meaning is, it is an age of great levity, folly, and indiscretion, &c.

And therefore, as Luther observes, the great care of mankind should be to season youth with right opinions and a good sense of things; and then it is not to be denied all pleasures, of which it is very desirous, much less shut up from the very sight of them, for it abhors solitude. And this is to begin at the wrong end of education, which must be applied first to the mind, not to the body; and when the mind is well tinted, the body will be easily governed. That is, neither follow filthy pleasures, nor be carried away with furious passions, &c. the benefit of which will be unspeakable, for they that live pleasantly and quietly in youth, are likely to arrive at, and enjoy a comfortable old age.

Some begin the 14th chapter at this verse, and others begin it with the foregoing; but I have followed our translation, and the most interpreters.

CHAP. XII.

The Argument.—He continues his advice to young men, (begun in the two last verses of the foregoing chapter), wishing them to season their minds with such an early sense of God, and of their obligations to him, that it might govern them in all their ways, and be a comfort to them in old age; which (by a long description of it) he shews will be a melancholy time at best. After which discourse, he concludes the book with a brief sum of the scope and design of it; inserting something concerning the author, which might dispose the reader to attend the more heedfully unto the conclusion of the whole matter.

VER. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.] The best counsel, therefore, that I can give every man, is this, That he would awaken, and preserve in mind perpetually, an awful sense of God, unto whom he is so deeply indebted, that he received his very being from him; and therefore let him apply himself faithfully and affectionately to his service, in his most vigorous age, as soon as ever he can consider that he is not his own, but God's, who formed him in his mother's womb, took him thence, and brought him up to be a man. Do not defer this weighty business till thou art sick, or all thy faculties so broken by the infirmities of old age, that though it last several years, yet they shall prove flat and dull, irksome and tedious to thee; and no pleasure at all left in them, but only the remembrance of a well-spent life; without which, instead of thanking God, thou wilt be apt to do nothing but complain, or groan under the weight of one evil or other that falls upon thee. See Annot. [a]

VER. 2. While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.] For what joy can a man have, or what misery can he be without, (and therefore what folly is it not to think of God before that time), when the natural heat and vigour is quite spent, and all the powers and faculties of soul and body in such a languishing condition, that he is altogether unfit for the offices of piety, particularly for the acknowledgement of God's benefits, the very remembrance of which is slipt out of his mind, or he hath but a dull perception of them; being no more sensible of the benefit of the sun itself, when it gives the brightest light, than he is of the moon or stars; but the day is as sad, and as full of pains and heaviness to him, as the night; and there is no end of them, no intermission, but they succeed one another, as the clouds do in a rainy season, when one is no sooner emptied, but another is gathered, and ready to discharge itself in showers. See Annot. [b]

VER. 3. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. Is this a proper time to be allotted to the service of God, when a man cannot serve himself? his hands being struck with a palsy, and made unable either to feed or defend his body; his feet bending under the weight of it, having lost their power to support him; his teeth likewise so rotten, or worn away, or fallen out, that they cannot chew his meat; and the sight of his eyes, which were wont to shew him things at a great distance, now so failing him, that he cannot know one man from another, though they stand hard by him. See Annot. [c]

VER. 4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low; and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of men—
Ver. 5. Also, when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. For joy and all such pleasant passions being fled away, melancholy fear alone remains, which makes him scarce dare to tread in the high-way, much less, (his head is so giddy), to go up a pair of stairs; nay, he thinks himself unsafe in the strongest fortress: Such is the feebleness of old age, which looks venerably by its grey hairs, but they are an early sign of approaching death, and are made contemptible by his crumpled shoulders, hips, and back; which as they are of themselves a sufficient load, so are relieved and supported by no bodily pleasures, the very desires of which now fail him; for there is but a very short step between him and his grave, unto which if he be carried with the usual solemnities, it is all his friends can do for him.

Ver. 6. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Remember therefore thy Creator, while the noble faculties of sense and motion remain entire, and strong, and lively; for the time will come (and that will be very unit for this, or indeed any other business) when they will be totally disabled; the nerves, for instance, will shrink up and be dispirited, the brain itself, and all those precious vessels wherein it is contained, be of no use at all unto thee; for the very fountain of life, the heart, will fail, and the veins and arteries no longer carry the blood round the body, but the motion will cease, by the decay of that power which now thrusts it forward in a continual circulation.

Ver. 7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. And then, what remains but that, the soul and body being parted, they go to their several original? The body, though now so fair a fabric, to the earth out of which it was taken, (according to that ancient doom passed upon it, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return"), but the soul unto God, to be judged by him, according to what it hath done in the body, since he sent it thither.

Ver. 8. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity. And if this be the conclusion of all our labours, I have reason to conclude this book as I began it, and listen, I beseech you again, to him who proclaims nothing to you but what he hath proved in this discourse, that there is no solid satisfaction to be found in any thing here below, where all things are both full of care and trouble, as well as uncertain and perishing; and therefore it is the height of folly, to take great thoughts for this present life, and to lay up nothing for the life to come. See Amos. [f]

Ver. 9. And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he had taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. Perhaps you may still think otherwise, and therefore I have this now to add, (and so shall sum up all I have said), that I am as likely to judge right as another man, being ended with wisdom from above, by an extraordinary gift of God, (1 Kings, iii. 12. iv. 30. &c.), whose goodness also I have imitated, in communicating my knowledge freely unto others: Nay, (knowing that by sloth or envy the greatest wisdom may be lost), the more I understood, the more diligent I was in informing others; nor did divine illuminations make me either neglect my own studies, or other men's inventions, but I listened unto all from whom I might hope to learn any thing, and both weighed what they said, and also made an exact search into things myself; of which, that not only the present age, but posterity also, might reap the benefit, I have gathered together, and aptly disposed and fitted to all capacities, abundance of excellent pithy sentences, for instruction in wisdom and virtue, (1 Kings, iv. 32.). See Amos. [f]

Ver. 10. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. Thus I, that preach these things, have employed my pains, in seeking, (with no less diligence than covetous men do for money), both the most pleasant, and the most useful, and most certain knowledge; and having found what I sought, I may safely affirm, that nothing is said by me, but what ought to be most acceptable, being apt to give the greatest contentment and delight; nothing written by me, but what I found in the divine writings, or is so exactly agreeable thereunto, that it is a straight and faithful rule of life; there is nothing frivolous or doubtful in them, but they contain the most solid wisdom, as sure and true as truth itself. See Amos. [k]

Ver. 11. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. And there is the same power in them (as there is wont to be in all the acute sayings of those that are wise and good) to excite and stir up the minds of slothful men to the practice of virtue, that there is in a goad to prick the dull ox forward to draw the plough; nor do they only sting and move the mind for the present, but are apt to stick as fast in the memory, as nails do when they are driven into a board; and to collect also the thoughts, affections,
and resolutions into one certain end; especially when they are fastened by the skilful hand of those who rule the assemblies of God's people, and are ruled themselves by one and the same supreme Governor, whose Holy Spirit directs them all. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 13. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.] Therefore, my son, (or whatsoever thou art that shall read these things, whose happiness I wish as my own), be advised by me, and not only believe these things, but rest contented with such useful knowledge, and do not trouble thyself either in composing or reading many books; for all that is needful to instruct men how to be happy, may be comprised in a few wise precepts; and if thou extendest thy desires beyond this, thou mayest turn over infinite volumes, which are increasing continually, and serve only to distract thy mind, and tire thy spirits, and impair thy health, but yield little profit, after the expense of a great deal of pains and time. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 14. ¶ Let us bear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.] ¶ Let us draw up all, then, that can be said in this matter, into as small a compass as is possible; if thou wouldst be happy, preserve in thy mind such an awful seriose of God, as to have a greater regard to him, both as thy Creator and Governor, and as thy Judge, than to any thing in this world, and, dreading his displeasure, not only worship him religiously, but observe all his commandments; for, as unto this all men are bound, so in this consists all their duty, and their whole happiness, and therefore they ought to make this their main business, and employ their best endeavours in it. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.] As they would with all seriousness, did they but believe and remember, what is most certainly true, that though now the wicked and the good sometimes fare alike, yet there will be a notorious distinction one day made between them, when God (whose knowledge nothing can escape, and out of whose memory nothing can slip) will pass an exact sentence upon every thing we do here in this world, though never so secret, and known to none but himself; and then no evil thing, though only designed and never actually committed, shall go unpunished; and no good thing, though only heartily intended for want of power to accomplish it, shall be unrewarded. See Annot. [o]

ANNOTATIONS:

[n] Ver. 13. From the consideration of what he had said in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, "that youth is attended with folly, and folly attended with destruction," (as Greg. Thaumaturgus excellently explains those words), he begins this with the most weighty lesson; which ought to be perpetually inculcated, and beaten into the mind

Ver. 14. More places, like to this, are observed by Buchartus, (L. ii. de Animal. Sacr. c. 34. p. 1.), in whom the learned reader may find many such Latin words, that are only of the plural, and not singular. And I will only mention one remarkable, (which he might have added, 1 Sam. xxviii. 9.), where the woman says, she saw gods ascending out of the earth; and Saul thereupon asks her, "What form is he of?" understanding she saw a single person.

Ver. 15. But whatever becomes of this, we Christians (to whom this mystery is now plainly revealed) ought, when we read such places as these, to think of the obligations we have unto God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, into whose name we are baptised. And not only to consider such things as are above mentioned, but to be moved and affected with them (for that is here included in the word remember) according unto their weight and importance.

And to do this betimes, the first thing we do; because the days of our youth are our best and choicest days, (as the word in the Hebrew signifies); whence in 2 Sam. vi. 8. where David is said to gather all the chosen men, the LXX. hath number, the young men in Israel, in which we are apt to take the greatest delight in ourselves, or in any thing truly delightful; our spirits being then most fresh, lively, and vigorous. So that the measure of our delight, whether in ourselves or in any thing without us, being then truly taken, it would constrain us unto an equal delight in him who is the author of both, and unto a correspondent gratitude for them. Whereas, if we defer this remembrance till old age come upon us, when life grows a burden, and the
wanted delights of the are either irksome or ingrigid, (unpleasant, or without all taste or relish, our thankfulness for them will be but faint, our gratulation worthless, our devotion cold and lumberish; as Dr. Jackson excellently glosses upon these words, b. xii. upon the Creed, c. 33. Which he had expressed long before, more briefly, in his Treatise of Faith, chap. viii. p. 125, thus: "The inventory of what we have received from God in our creation, should be taken in those days wherein we most delight, because then the characters of his blessings bestowed upon us, and their true worth, are most fresh and sensible in all our faculties; well knowing, that if we defer the survey till old age, in which life itself becomes a burden, our return of thanks for fruition of it, and the unpleasant appetencies, will be but wearyish." And plainer still, in his 2d book upon God's attributes, ch. xi. p. 95. "Then the prints of God's creative power are most fresh in our nature, and might transmit a fairer copy and truer estimate of the Creator's goodness unto old age, than old age can take any," &c. Which I have repeated the oftener, in several forms of speech, in hope that one or other of them may touch the heart of young men, and excite them, by frequent reflection upon the present comforts of health and strength, upon the activity of their body, the quickness of their sense and spirit, to ingross them deeply in their memory, before the evil days come.

So Solomon calls our decrepit old age, both because they are void of all pleasure, as he saith in the following words, and because they are attended likewise with so many inconveniences and miseries, that it is hard to number them. But he gives us some account of them, in his admirable description of decrepit age, ver. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. which abundantly confirms that speech of Cicero, in his book De Senectute, that old age proves so odious unto most men, ut nos se Etam geramus dicant suittere, that they complain of a load that lies heavier than Mount Etam upon them.

[b] Ver. 2.] These infirmities he demonstrates to be very great, because decrepit age consists in the universal decay of the whole frame of nature; which I take to be the meaning of the sun, the light, the moon and stars, being darkened. For as in a body-politic, the extinction or falling down of these signifies, in the prophetic language, the subversion of that frame of government, (as, to omit abundance of other places, may be seen in what Isaiah saith concerning Babylon, xiii. 10. and Ezekiel, concerning Egypt, xxxii. 7. 8.) so the darkening of these in the natural body of man, signifies, in my judgement, its total decay and nearness to a dissolution; the tumbling (as we speak) of an old man into his grave, like a ruinous old house which can stand no longer; for so the metaphor is carried on, ver. 3.

And then the return of clouds after the rain, refers to the dismal condition a man is in at that time; when one trouble treads upon the heels of another; which is no sooner gone, but the like, or a new one, comes in its room. And so the words may be translated, "The clouds return, and after them the rains;" that is, there is a succession of grievous, of grief, pain, or weakness, drawing on one another.

There are some who apply the darkening of sun, moon, and stars, to the mind of man, (as one would think, indeed, he should say something of that, and all the following description belonging wholly to the body, we must find it here or not, at all,) but still I conceive that he intends only in general, to signify the failing of the mind in all its faculties and powers, without a respect to some particular distinct faculty in each of these words. But they who think the inward powers are here intended, are not content to rest in such a general meaning, but will have something in particular signified by every one of them. And then they do not guess, but which gives me the liberty to interpose my conjecture also, that by the sun may be meant the soul itself; by the light, its understanding; by the moon, the will; by the stars, all the notions of the mind and memory, with all the affections and passions in the will; just as sun, moon, and stars, in Joseph's dream, signified his father, and mother, and brethren. And so the sense of this verse is. The mind of man grows feeble in all its powers, the understanding dimmed, the memory forgetful, the reason weak and childish, (giving such a feeble light, that it can neither direct ourselves nor others,) the will listless in all its desires, dull about our greatest concerns, wavering and inconsistent in all its resolutions, &c.

But I judge it more reasonable, as I said, to rest in the interpretation first mentioned, (which I am sure is agreeable to the holy language in other places,) that hereby is only represented in general, the universal decay of the faculties of the upper part of man, his soul. Which sense I have comprehended, together with the other, in my paraphrase; and not neglected this, in which others acquiesce, that these words signify, "the miseries an old man feels both night and day." As for those who hereby understand the dimness of the eyes, it being expressed afterward, ver. 3. I have taken notice of their sense; but another there is, which is worth mentioning. For the meaning may be, "There is nothing but darkness;" i.e. a most uncomfortable condition, like that, when the heavens are clouded day and night, (as they were in St. Paul's voyage, Acts, xxvii. 20.) and when one cloud hath spent itself, in the tempest, another immediately succeeds it.

[c] Ver. 3.] As in the foregoing verse, he gave a general description of the decay of the whole body, (and of the internal faculties of the mind, together therewith,) so here, he enters into the particulars. And conceiving the body to be like an house, or tabernacle, (unto which it is frequently compared, not only in the scripture, but all other authors,) he resembles the shoulders, arms, and hands, to the keepers of the house; because by them we defend ourselves from dangers, administer both food, and physic, exercise all manner of arts and manufac-
tures, (as we call them), as long as they have any strength remaining in them. Which old age takes away, the nerves, tendons, and ligaments, so flagging, that these keepers quiver and shake, (tremble we render it), and grow so useless, that we can no way help ourselves or others with them. And then he compares the thighs, legs, and feet, to strong men; they being the supports and pillars, as it were, of the whole fabric, which hold it up, till old age quite disables them from this office, and makes the knees bend under the burden of the body alone.

The reason of which follows, in that the "grinders fall," &c. in which metaphor he compares the teeth in the jaws, above and below, to the upper and nether mill-stone. For they, by cutting, breaking, and chewing of the meat, prepare it to be dissolved in the stomach, and turned into nourishment, (as the corn is ground between those stones into meal, and so prepared for making bread, and other such like uses), but in time drop out of their sockets, or are broken, so that they can grind no longer.

And the like decay we find in the sight of the eyes, which he means by "those that look out of the windows." All those costs, humours, and nerves, that make up the eyes; which are set in two holes, (as the word is), or hollow places in the forehead, (like the windows in the house), and have a round hole also in the midst of them, called the pupil of the eye, (like a casement), through which all things are transmitted to the inward sense of seeing; until the skins, and the humours also, grow too thick; and the very figure of the eye, as some have observed, be changed, by the dryness of the crystalline humour; and then the house is darkened. Aristotle, in his Problems, (sect. 31. quest. 14.), expresses it thus, in short, "οἱ προφωνοῦσιν εἰς ένώθεν, καὶ γὰρ οὖν κάθεται συναθροίζοντα, &c. when men grow into years, their sight grows dull, because, "in the eyes of old men, the skin is both hard, and also rugged, so that their sight is obscured."

[d] Ver. 4.] This verse hath a greater difficulty in it, especially in the beginning, "and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low." But the LXX. suggests an unexceptionable sense of this passage, in my opinion, which is, that "they are shut out of all public meetings, because of the lowness of their voice, which formerly was as loud as a mill." And there is little reason to doubt, but by doors are meant the lips, (it being a frequent expression in scripture), and by the "lowness of the sound of grinding," the lowness of the voice, from the loss of teeth, or the weakness of respiration; in short, from the defect there is in the organs of speech.

Nor do I see why Malden's translation may not be allowed, which is still more simple, (and therefore I have taken notice of it in my paraphrase), "as the lips are shut without," (so may be translated fortis, estrinsicus), that is, they sink, and are compressed, "when the voice grows weak and tremulous, because of those that grind," that is, by the falling of the teeth. Thus he. But it may more exactly be translated thus, by the falling low of the voice, of which the teeth are the principal instruments. And the whole, I have sometimes thought, may not incongruously be translated in this manner: "His lips are shut in his mouth," (for the mouth is the street or highway into this house, of which Solomon is speaking), "by the falling down of the voice of grinding;" i.e. the voice that is made by grinding the air, as it were, between the teeth and the roof of the mouth, &c.

It might be referred to the eating meat seldom, because of his bad digestion, (the meat being ground in the stomach, as in a mill), if the word voice or sound would agree to this. Which renders Dr Smith's interpretation very difficult, in my judgement; who by doors understands all the inlets and outlets of the body; and by streets, the open ways and passages in the body; in which the matter of nourishment is conveyed, and passeth, without let or molestation; and by shutting these doors, the ceasing from their use; and by grinding, the digestions and concoctions in the stomach, bowels, mesentery, glandules, &c. (all which is well enough, though perhaps too philosophical); and by the voice of these concoctions, the natural symptoms significative of digestions; all those indications, which demonstrate the work of nature is to proceed right. Which seems to me very far-fetched, and too great a straining of the word voice or sound; however, I have here mentioned it, that they who are pleased with it, may follow that interpretation, which is very ingenious.

The next passage in this verse is easier, though it is uncertain whether he mean, that the chirping of the least birds wakes him; or that he wakes early, when the birds do. For twitter signifies all kind of birds, great and small; and may be interpreted of the cock, as well as any other; and the meaning be, "He gets up at the cock-crowing." This last seems most probable, because, being thick of hearing, (as the next passage signifies), it cannot be supposed that the least noise disturbs him. Though I confess the meaning may be, that a small noise wakes him sooner than thunder would have done in his young days.

The daughters of music, if it refer to the parts of the body, I take not to be those organs of it, which make music; but which receive it, being made. For the Hebrews call that the son of a thing, which is fitted or designed for that of which it is said to be the son. Thus an arrow is called the son of the bow; or quiver, Isa. xii. 19. Lament. iii. 13. and wheat called the son of the threshing-floor, Isa. xxii. 8. and so the daughters of music may be those parts where music is entertained. Yet there is one objection against this, which lies in the word all, which cannot properly be applied to the ears, because there are but two of them; and we never say all the ears, but both the
Which makes some think, that hereby we are rather to understand all sorts of music, which are made either by instruments or voice. But to these it may be answered, that the word all refers to the several parts of the ear, in which the sound is formed; both the winding channels in the outward part, and the tympanum, and the three cavities, and as many little bones in the inward part, together with the auditory nerve itself. All which are manifestly contrived on purpose to receive sounds; which are born here, and so may be called their daughters; which in youth are brisk and sprightly, but are humbled (as the LXX. translate it) and flat in old age.

There is no necessity, I acknowledge, of interpreting this passage thus, (though it seem most agreeable to the rest of the description), because it may be translated, "the daughters of a song," that is, singing-women are not valued at all by old men; they account them nothing worth, and would not give, as we say, a farthing for them. Old Barzillai confesses this imperfection, 2 Sam. xix. 35. Which place, St Hierom thinks, may very well explain this.

[5 Ver. 5.] And it is attended with a greater, which is the passion of fear; unto which old age is very subject, from defect of spirit, weakness of imagination, as well as of bodily organs, which are unable to resist any dangers, which old men also are apt to apprehend greater than they really are. For as their heads turn giddy, if they ascend to any high place, or they tremble, in the plain way, for fear of a stone, a clod, an hole, any unevenness, by the rising or depression of the earth, (for so Grotius thinks the words may be expounded), though the ancient interpreters do not favour it: He is afraid to stumble at the rising or falling of the earth, or he fears he may be pushed down by others, if he do not fall of himself; in a word, he knows not what he may meet withal, and therefore fears.

Or it may be expounded, as Maldonate takes it, He never thinks himself safe, though he be in an high fortress, or dreads an high wall, though never so firm, lest it should fall upon him. These are some that expound the first words of this verse thus, He is afraid of spirits, and separate souls; of those excellent beings which dwell in the regions above.

That is, he is superstitious; which I look upon as fasted.

The next part of this description, which we translate almond-tree flowers, most interpreters take for his head growing boars, or white, like the blossoms of the almond-tree. Which though it make an old man look venerable, yet brings the tiding of approaching death; and as certain an indication of it, as the almond-tree blossoming is of the spring; or (as others will have it) of its speedy production of fruit; for it flowered, they say, in February, and showed its fruit in March, and thence, had the name of shabar in Hebrew, from its forward blooming, and hasty ripening into fruit. And, to strengthen this interpretation, some have observed, that an almond was anciently called by the Greeks καρύα, that is, the kernel; from some resemblance which that fruit had to it. What that resemblance should be, I do not understand, unless it be in the figure of the brain; which, the skull being removed, appears like the shell of the almond, when the husk, where it is inclosed, is peeled away. For hence, Herodidius of Alexandria, (as I find in Athenaeus, ii. cap. 12.), derives the common Greek word Αμπελος for an almond; because next to the green mind, diaphoepos αμπελος, it hath, as it were, a great many clets, and looks as if it were scarificed.

I see no aper interpretation than this, unless it be that which I shall mention below, (when I have explained the rest of this verse), or we understand it as St Hierom saith some did, of the burka-bone; which, by the wasting away of the flesh of the buttocks, appears, nay, thrusts out itself, and makes them very sitting or lying down uneasy to them. And I find an Arabic word of this sound, which signifies a kind of beat, and may possibly be the original of the Latin word scapha.

And this would agree well with the next words, the grasshopper shall be a burden: which seems to be a description of his stooping under the burden of old age; his shoulders, hips, and back, all bunching out, which is a load great enough for him, without any other. In short, he can scarce bear himself, as Melanchthon expounds it; which, Aventius thinks, is a literal translation of the words, the "grasshopper or locust shall burden itself," that is, saith he, his gibbons back. Which is better than their glosa, who made it to signify, he can scarce bear the weight of a grasshopper or locust. The LXX. translate it, the locusts shall be made fat; i.e., swell, bunch out, or be burdensome; which aptly denotes the knotting of the joints, (like those of the locusts), and the rising up of the venter, (or any such thing in the body of man), which make his back resemble that of a locust. And so Jos. Forster excellently translates it, ut in carso incidat domo, sine scanda, that he goes crooked in the back, like a grasshopper. Luther also had this in his mind, though he did not fully explain it, when he thus glossed upon these words: Such an old man is like a burka, for his bones stick out, and his body is shrunken up; so that he is a mere image of death.

And then the next signifies no more then this, that the greatest bodily pleasures fail; and the member that serves these pleasures is relaxed, and flags. For the word λυσσομενος, (which we translate desire), signifies either the fruit of a tree, which the LXX. take to be a pome, (though it signifies the berries of luscious, Smyrniae, and indeed of all the lesser sort of trees), or that desire which it is supposed (according to Aviceclus) for luxuria; or that knob in use, which something resembles that fruit.

There is one interpretation of these last verses, which seems to me not at all constrained, but apt
enough, (only it doth not make them all relate to
the parts of the body, as the rest do); which
is that of De Dieu, from whom Junius before
him did not much differ. It is this, "Though
the almond-tree flourish, and the locust be laden
with fat, (i.e. though the pleasures of the spring
appear and come on space, making all things else
to swell with joy), it doth not invigorate his blood,
nor make it rise, to stir up his desire," &c.
The reason is, he is just upon the point of leaving
all things here, and going to his long home.
Which signifies either the place to which all men
go, (damus seculi, the house of the whole world,
whither all mankind have ever gone, and must
go), or the place from whence he came, as Forsterus
expounds damnum seculi sui, his old house, out
of which he first came forth, (thus we translate
the word slam, Jer. vi. 16.), or that where they must
long abide, even till the resurrection of the dead.
For their friends there leave them, and can do
nothing more but mourn for them; as it follows
here, "The mourners go about the streets:" that
is, are preparing for the funeral, ready to accom-
pany the herse; or they already bewail him, as
a dead corpse rather than a living man; or when he
is dead, can only give him a solemn funeral, and
openly bewail him, not only at home, but in the
streets. For which purpose they sometimes hired
mourning men and women, who are the minstrels
we read of, Matth. ix. 23. For Josephus saith,
(1. iii. c. 15. of the Wars of the Jews), that when
Joppa was taken, and he reported to be slain,
when in morbos morbidum, &c. "there were many
minstrels hired at Jerusalem," who began to make
lamentations in a doleful tone. But Gierus, in his
treatise of the Mourning of the Hebrews, (p. 320.),
thinks Solomon doth not here mean the mourning
of those that accompanied the corpse to the grave,
nor their walking about in mourning-apparel, but
the sad lamentations which their grief sometimes
moved them to make in the very streets; when
they were weary with mourning at home, or put
thereby into an extravagant passion, like that which
the Jews supposed Mary the sister of Lazarus
to fall into, when she rose up hastily, and went out
of the house, John, xi. 31.

[F] Ver. 6.] Now we are come to the most difficult
verse of all, in which the wise man describes this
house as falling down; that is, enumerates the evils,
which immediately forego death; of which he
would have us think frequently, while the house is
in good condition; for those words, "Remember
thy Creator," St Hierom thinks, are here again to
be repeated, or ever, that is, before death seize on
thee, and pull down this earthly tabernacle, and
lay it in the dust.

First. By loosening the silver cord.] Which some
fancy signifies all the humours of the body; which
are, as it were, the thread of life; which the desti-
nies were said to spin out for a certain time, and
then cut off; others understand it, the string of
the tongue; and Gasper Sanctius, (upon Cant. vii.
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5.), the urine, whose stream, he fancies, resembles
a silver thread, which is then broken, when it dis-
fruits by drops, as it frequently doth in old men.
But the best of the Hebrew writers by this cord
understand the spinal marrow, (that is, the pith of
the back-bone), others the nerves, others the out-
ward coats of the nerves, &c. And there is little
reason to doubt, but the marrow down the back,
continued from the brain, as it were, in a string or
cord, unto the very bottom of it, together with the
nerves arising from it, and the filaments, fibres,
and tendons that proceed from them, are the thing
here intended. Which Melanchton saw long ago:
"The nerves (saith he) and ligaments are here
means," which have literally the power of cords,
to unite and tie together, and also draw. But no-
body, that I know of, hath explained this so well
as our Dr Smith, (in his Opera quae beantur), who
hath also solved that doubt, why they are expressed
in the singular number; because, though there
be many of them, yet they are the continuation of
one and the same thing, (the fibres being noth-
ing else but the nerves divided and dispersed;
and the nerves nothing else but the marrow in like
manner separated, as so many arms and branches
of the same tree), they are all one in their original,
the brain; they are all one in their continuation;
for a long space in the spine; all one in their use,
to convey the animal spirits, and to be the instru-
ments of motion.

This cord is called silver, because of its colour,
being not only white, but also shining bright and resplend-
ent, and that when it is taken out of the body,
after death. I omit other reasons.

It is loosened, (shrunk up, or contracted, or removed,
as others translate it), when it is no longer full of
spirits; and so the body becomes void of sense and
motion, either in part or in whole.

The second step to a dissolution, is by breaking the
golden bowl; and as the former related to the rivu-
lets, as one may say, of sense and motion, so
this to the fountain, viz. the head, and all contain-
ed in it; the membranes, for instance, especially
that which the ancients, from the great esteem and
reverence they had for it, called pia mater. Which
is that part which, deeply insinuating itself into all
the anfractuous passages of the brain, (as Doctor
Smith speaks), and being firmly annexed there-
to, keeps every part thereof in its proper place,
and due texture; so that whatsoever is performed
within the whole compass of the brain, (whether
the making animal spirits, their exercise therein,
or distribution therefrom), is principally done by
the help of this membrane. Which, therefore,
may be called gallath, that part of the head which
is the spring of all the motion that comes from thence.
And so we translate the plural of this word, Josh.
xxv. 19. and both Forsterus and Avenarius understand
the singular here.

And it is called golden bowl, (like that Zach. iv. 2.
3. from whence the oil was conveyed by pipes unto
the lamps), for such reasons as gave the other the
name of silver cord. For instance, in respect of the colour, not only because that most precious and deep-coloured liquor of life is abundantly contained in the vessels of this membrane, but chiefly because the membrane itself is somewhat of a yellowish colour, and tends more towards that of gold, than any other part whatsoever doth. But especially, in respect of its excellency and universal use; for it being the instrument that doth depurate the best of blood, clarifies and exalts the vital spirits, and so prepares them for animality, (as they speak), to what should it be likened, but to that most perfect, best concocted, and most exalted mineral of gold?

Now, the breaking of this bowl is its losing its use, not being able to retain its liquors, (as a bowl is useless when it is broken); or, as Dr Smith explains it, in the extremity of extreme old age, it can no longer continue its continuity; but by reason either of its natural dryness, shrivelling into itself, or of preternatural moisture, imbidding excrementitious humours, till it be over-full, it oft-times snaps asunder, and so recurs (i.e. runs back, as the Hebrew word signifies) into itself, from whence the brain must necessarily subside, and all the parts serving unto animal motion, be suddenly and irrecoverably dashed in pieces. So Avenarius judiciously translates this passage, "That yellow membrane which contains the brain, be trodden down."

The third step is, the "breaking of the pitcher at the fountain." Which is variously interpreted; some understanding hereby, the inability of the bladder to retain the urine; others by fountain understand the liver, and by the pitcher the bladder of gall, or the veins, which is the most common opinion. But Dr Smith rather takes it for the heart; which is indeed the fountain of life, and hath two distinct cavities, the right and the left; out of which proceed those veins and those arteries, which carry the blood through the whole body, and bring it back again to the heart, in a perpetual circulation.

And if by pitcher we understand the veins, which are the receptacle of the blood, (and the Hebrew word signifies any containing vessel, particularly the widow's barrel in which was her meal, 1 Kings, xvii. 14. 16. as well as a barrel of water in the next chapter, xviii. 33.), then by the fountain must be peculiarly understood the right ventricle of the heart, which is the original from whence the veins have their rise. For so the Hebrew word signifies not only a fountain, but a spring, from which waters bubble up and burst forth (as we translate it, Isa. xxxv. 7. xlii. 10.) in a running stream; and therefore is so to be translated here, the spring or original, viz. of the veins, which proceed from thence. Which induced commentators to take the fountain here for the liver; which they would not have done, had they understood, as we do now, that the veins do not arise from thence as their first original, but from the right ventricle of the heart. And they are spoken of in the singular number, "as the nerves were before", because they are all of one and the same nature, original, and use.

Now, the breaking of this pitcher into shivers, (as the Hebrew word signifies), is the utter falling of the veins, their ceasing quite from their natural action and use: When they can no longer carry back, nor conveniently convey unto the heart, that liquor which they properly contain, but the little blood which remains in the cold body of man, near his end, is congealed, and stagnates in his veins.

And so I proceed to the last thing, "the wheel broken at the cistern." Where by the wheel some understand the lungs, which, by their continual motion, do thrust out the breath from them, and draw it in again to them; resembling the wheel of a well, now drawing up the bucket to itself, anon letting it down again into the well. Melaconthus, by cistern understanding the stomach, (the word signifying, saith he, a profound cavity), takes the wheel for the guts adjoining thereunto; which are wrap about one another, in a kind of circular form, and make the mesentery look like a wheel. Which Grotius seems also to have had in his mind. But, taking it for granted that a wheel, being an instrument of circulation, is the hieroglyphic of something that goes, and makes a round in us, I think Dr Smith's conjecture is most probable, that hereby is meant the great artery, with all its branches; which is the great instrument of rotation or circulation in the body of man, and so evidently thrusts the blood forward, that we perceive its pulses, forcing the blood along its cavity, in the wrists, the temples, and other parts of the body. Without which instrument to compel it, the blood that naturally tends home to the heart, would go no farther.

And then the cistern from whence this wheel forces the liquor, and conveys it through all the parts, is the left ventricle of the heart; to which this great artery is annexed, and from whence it ariseth. For a cistern is a vessel made on purpose to receive a due proportion of water, and to keep it till the time of use, and then conveniently to pass it into vessels that are prepared to receive it from thence. And such is the left ventricle of the heart; which in its distill, as they call it, receives the blood that is brought into it from the lungs; and then, keeping it there a little, doth in its "spile" pass due proportions thereof into the great arteries to be dispensed, as was said before. And, at this end, there are little valves or falling doors placed at the entrance and at the out-going of this spile, which are like cocks to let in and let out by their opening or shutting, give ebb and flow, age or stoppage to the liquor, which continually runs that way.

And so the breaking or shutting up spile (as translates the word) of this wheel, is the ceasing of the pulse; so he in another place translates,
den down; i.e. suppressed by the decay of the instruments of pulsation, which can no longer perform that work. Which, being absolutely necessary for the preservation of life, the ceasing of it is death.

[7] Ver. 7. And so the body, made of a moulder- ing substance, being no longer a fit habitation for the spirit, (and therefore deserted by it), which held the parts of it together, shall crumble again into the earth out of which it originally came, according to that sentence passed upon Adam in the beginning, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," Gen. iii. 19. This body was no better in its first principles; and though now we are very fond of it, as if it were some goodly thing, yet when the spirit leaves it, it will appear to be indeed but dust.

But the spirit, the nobler part of man, being of an higher original, shall return to God who sent it into the body, to be disposed of by him, according to the sentence that he should pass upon it. For the Chaldee Paraphrase's explication of the latter part of this verse is very apposite, "It shall return, that it may stand in judgement before God." For Ebdim (the word here for God) in the Hebrew language signifies a judge, as in the place above-mentioned, 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. There is a sentence not much unlike this, I have observed in Plutarch's Consolatory Discourse to Apollonius upon the death of his son, where he alludes, amongst a great many others, this saying of Epicharmus, Συναιτήσαι καὶ τίμησαι, καὶ οὐκ ἔλθῃ ὁ ὁδὸς πάθει, γάρ με ἄν ἐτέρας, προδέσεις ὑμῖν. [8]

Ver. 8. And now, having thus demonstrated his first proposition, he elegantly repeats the exordium or entrance of his book, as is here observed by St Hierom; whose words are so significant, that I cannot but translate them, as an excellent gloss upon this verse: "For since all the labour of mortal man (of which Solomon hath disputed in his whole book) amounts to this, that the dust returns to its earth, and the soul returns thither from whence it was taken; it is an excess of vanity to labour for this world, and to gather nothing for the future," where he is to live for ever, and to be judged according to his behaviour here.

This-only may be added, that here he enters upon the conclusion of his discourse, and divides it into two parts, as he had done the foregoing book. First, He sums up what he had said in the six first chapters concerning the false ways men take to happiness, in this verse, which he backs by several serious considerations in those that follow, unto verse 13. Where, secondly, He sums up what he had said in chap. vii. to this place, concerning the true way to happiness, which lies only in a due regard to God and his commandments.

Ver. 9. The first word of this verse is variously translated; and the whole verse applied by interpreters, either to confirm what was said before concerning the false methods men take to happiness, (as if he had said, I have done, when I have told you, that you may believe me, who am sufficiently able to inform you, and not think to meet with better information from other men's writings, or from your own experience), or as an introduction to what he intends to say, ver. 13, 14, concerning the right method to be happy. Which he prepares the reader to attend unto, and receive into his mind: first, by asserting his own great authority in this verse, (who the wiser he was, the more desirous he was both to teach and to learn); and then, the weighty doctrine which he taught, ver. 10. And the great usefulness of it, ver. 11. The like to which they would add no where else, ver. 12. It is not very material which of these ways we take, but I have had respect to both in my paraphrase; where I have expressed the sense so fully, that I cannot think fit to enlarge any farther upon this verse; but only note, that Luther, and he alone, I think, expounds the first words thus, (not absurdly, nor disagreeing with the Hebrew text); "There remained nothing to the preacher, but that he was wise," &c. He understood and taught aright, and took a great deal of pains, which was a great satisfaction to himself; but he saw little or no success of it in others, who would not be governed by his advice, &c.

Ver. 10. This verse runs thus, word for word, in the Hebrew: "The preacher carefully sought to meet with desirable words, and the writing of uprightness, and the words of truth." Where writing may refer both to what he read in others, whether divine or human authors, and to what he wrote himself, (and so I have expounded it in the paraphrase); which he commends from three heads, pleasure, or delight, usefulness, and certainty.

Some fancy that Solomon wrote a book called Catub Jascher, (the writing of uprightness), or Jascher dibre emeth, (the upright words of truth); of which as there is no certainty, so I see no probable grounds to assert it. Only we know he wrote a great many more books than we have, 1 Kings, iv. 31. 32, 2 Chron. xxxv. 4. And see Josephus, l. viii. Antiq. c. 2.

Ver. 11. Some connect this with the foregoing verse, in this manner: "The Preacher sought to find out the words of the wise," &c. And so the words run exactly in the Hebrew. But we may take this verse by itself, supplying the word are, as we do in our translation, and look upon it as a commendation of these wise words, which doth not in the least alter the sense. I have had respect to both, and comprehended also in my paraphrase two of the interpretations which one difficult phrase is capable of, viz. matters of the assembly.

Which may be translated divers ways more literally out of the Hebrew than we do, who add the word by before them, which is not in the original. For the last words, which we translate masters of assem- bly, may be attributed to nails, in this manner: "As nails fastened, whereby things are joined together," (nails being the instruments of gathering
or bringing those things together which were separate; or thus, retaining the words of our translation, the masters of assemblies are as fixed nails, or the masters of collections, such judicious authors as make excellent collections of apophthegms and smart sayings, stick in the mind as nails do in planks. Or the principal, the choice collections, viz. of wise men (mentioned in the beginning of the verse) are as, &c.; or it may, in the same sense, be connected (not with nails, but) with the words following; the "masters or authors that collect wise and pithy sayings, have their gifts from one and the same shepherd."

So ungrounded is the fancy of Grotius, who from hence conjectures, that there were several persons appointed by Zerobabel (whom he takes from this one pastor) to collect the sentences of this book, and put them out under the name of Solomon. Who himself may rather be thought to be this one pastor or king, who employed (if we interpret the words this way) many persons to make collections, of which he afterwards made use as he saw cause.

This seems to be certain, that he here gives the reason of this concise and sententious way of writing, because such acute sayings not only stir up and quicken slothful minds for the present, (as a good stimulates the dull ox to labour), but penetrate deep, and stick fast in the memory; collecting also the thoughts, affections, and resolutions, to one certain point or scope, and gathering together a great deal of sense into a few words. As these words, haec at suppositae, masters of assemblies, or authors of collections, may, I have sometimes thought, be understood. Such a collector was that great man Julius Caesar, who gathered a book of Apophthegms, and shewed by that, he thought it more honourable unto him, if he changed himself, as it were, into tables and codicils, in which the prudent and grave sayings of others were registered, than to have his own words hallowed like oracles, as some vain princes, corrupted by flattery, have affected. Though divers of his own speeches, as the Lord Bacon observes, (I. i. de Augm. Scient. c. 7.) are truly such as those which Solomon here describes, full of vigour and efficacy; insomuch, that by one word alone he appeased a mutiny in his army.

But, after all that may be said on this subject, since I find not only the Vulgar, but the LXX., making out the sense by adding the word per and sump (as we do the word by in our translation) before masters of assemblies, I have, in the paraphrase, followed that interpretation also.

[m] Ver. 12.] And in this verse have adhered to the same translation, which understands the first words as if he had said, Beyond these things do not trouble thyself. For so they may be translated exactly, "and what is above, or more than them, (that is, the words of the wise before-mentioned), my son, be warned, or be enlightened;" observe these well, and trouble thyself no further. Be content with a few good precepts of the wise, and do not involve thyself in many books. For what is necessary may be learnt without much labour, out of a short book; if men will be wiser than they need, they will but trouble themselves to no purpose. There being no certainty of most things; no satisfaction when we go beyond the known or acknowledged principle and precepts of virtue; but what one man asserts, another confutes; and when we think we have written excellently, another writer starts up, and discovers abundance of errors; and so volumes are multiplied without end; and we are led into long disquisitions, without any satisfaction to the mind, but with much weariness to the body, and great loss of precious time, which had better been spent in digesting and practising such short, useful, and necessary instructions as these.

He does not absolutely condemn many books, for there are not a few of the divine writings, and about the same thing; but books about needless things, and that dilate too much upon things necessary, rather tiring, than instructing. And he condemns the levity of those that are always reading, but never meditating; running over such a book as this presently, and then going to another not so profitable, and never returning to this again.

So I take it in short, "Content thyself with this book, and such like, and do not turn over many authors, to learn how to be happy." For goodness and truth are included in certain bounds, but wickedness and lies, sine fine sunt, are without end, as St. Hierem here notes. Who observes also, that perhaps he advises us to study brevity, and to mind the sense more than the words; directly contrary to the philosophers and doctors of the world, who, to assert their false opinions, used abundance and great variety of words; but the divine scripture, brevis circulo concinnata est, is confined to a small circle, and as much contracted in words, as it is dilated in sense.

The Hebrew word habog, which we translate study, Aben-Ezra says, in the neighbouring languages, signifies reading; and so we translate it in the margin.

[6] Ver. 13.] To teach us to contract our labours into as small a compass as we can, he sums up in a few words, the sense of his whole discourse in this book; which he calls "the conclusion or end of the matter," of all that can be said on this subject, the whole sense of the sermon, succinctly delivered; unto which, therefore, every one should confine his endeavours. It is this, to work his soul unto such a due regard of the Divine Majesty, (standing in awe of him as his Lord, Overseer, and Judge), that he take care to observe all his commandments: Without which, all religion is vain and fruitless.

And these two things, (the fear of God, or devotion and obedience), he commends from two arguments: The first of which is in this verse, That they are things which concern all mankind, one as well as
another; of which if they be careful, they have done enough to make themselves immortally hap-
py.
For those words, "this is the whole, or the all of man," may be expounded four several ways; either, this is all the duty of man, or the duty of all men, or the whole happiness of all men, or their whole business; unto which, therefore, they should devote their whole selves; that is, all their strength. For, according as St Hierom understands it, "to this man was born; that he, understanding God is his Creator, should worship him with fear, and honour, and observance of his commands."
And the fear of God being implanted in our minds, we shall not fail to worship him, and call upon him, and expect all good things from him, and give him thanks for them; and, as the best expression of our thankfulness, keep his commandments, and be obedient to all his precepts; both in subduing our sinful appetites and passions, and in exercising charity towards our neighbours. Which will make us true in word and deed, faithful in all our contracts, liberal to the poor, observant of our governors; in short, make us observe all the directions of this book, in order to our happiness.

Here is the second argument, why we should seriously intend these things; because the Lord and Judge of the world will one day call us to an account for what we do here, and pass an impartial sentence upon every action of our life, even against every secret, (as some expound these words, al col alam), or upon all secret as well as open actions. Which are all known to him, though now he seem to take no notice of them, and shall then not only be brought to light, but with an apparent distinction between good and evil; the difference of which shall be certainly and notoriously mani-
ifested, by the severe punishment of the one, and the bountiful remuneration of the other.
I will imitate therefore, (saith Melancthon), the example of Solomon, and, in the conclusion, recite the sum of this book. "He intended to assert divine pro-
vidence, and to refute the objections against it; which are these, There are great confusions in hu-
man life; a vast multitude of ungodly men, and but few that acknowledge and fear God; and, which is worse, the wicked flourish in honour and riches; but the pious are afflicted, and oft-times killed by the worst of men, &c.; therefore, all things seem to be carried by chance. Unto which Solo-
mon answers: Though, for the most part, such be the confusion of things, yet be thou ruled by God's word, and hold the opinion of his providence with a firm faith. Do not fall from God, because of these scandals, nor cast away his fear, or thy confi-
dence in him, nor desert thy vocation; but oppose these two things to these confusions: There will come a judgement, when God will take away these confusions, and make an exact distinction; for the wicked shall be thrown into everlasting punishment; but it shall be well for ever with the righteous. And in this life also, God moderates these confusions; for he punishes heinous wicked-
ness, supports government, preserves governors, and order, and politics in the world; nay, this is a testimony of God's presence, that when the infirmity of human nature is so great, and so many are no better than mad and furious, yet God preserves his church." And, I may add, we have such good books as these, for our direction into truth, and encour-
agement in piety.

END OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.
A

PARAPHRASE

ON THE

SONG OF SOLOMON.
THE

PREFACE.

I. THAT this book was composed by Solomon, is no more doubted, than that he was the author of the two foregoing.

And that it was always looked upon as an holy book, treating of some spiritual and divine matter, appears from its being placed among the rest of that kind. Nor hath it been doubted of by any considerable number of men, either among Jews or Christians, but only by a few singular persons; who ought (as Theodoret speaks in his preface to this book) to have looked upon those blessed Fathers, who, placing this Song among the divine writings, took it to be fit for the use of the church, as men of greater judgement, and more spiritual than themselves. And they ought likewise to have considered, (as he adds), that we have in effect the testimony of the Holy Ghost itself for its divine authority; Ezra, a man excelling in virtue, and full of the Holy Spirit, having thought this worthy of a room among those sacred volumes, which he gathered together after the return from their captivity of Babylon.

And accordingly, a great many holy men have illustrated it (as he farther notes) with their commentaries and interpretations, or have adorned their writings with its sentences; such as Eusebius, Origen, Cyprian, (who wore the crown of Martyrdom), οἱ τῶν παλαιότεροι οἱ τῶν Ἀποστόλων παλαιότεροι, and others that were more ancient than these, and nearer to the times of the apostles.

It is unnecessary to mention those that followed after in future times, who all took this for a spiritual book; let us only consider, whether, if these things being so, it be reasonable for us to despise so many and such great persons, nay, the Holy Spirit itself, and to follow our own private opinions, nor hearkening to him that said, "The thoughts of mortal man are vain, and our devices are but uncertain," Wisd. ix. 14.; or rather of St Paul, Rom. i. 21. "They became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened."

II. Nor doth it seem hard, either to find out what that spiritual matter is, of which the wise man here treats, (especially since all Christian writers have from the beginning applied this Song to Christ and the church), or to give an account of the rise and original of such sublime contemplations, which I take to be this:

The great prophet David having plainly foretold, that a far more glorious King than his son Solomon should one day arise, (as we read in the song he made at his marriage, Psal. xlv.)), and likewise more expressly prophesied of his Divinity, Royal Majesty, Priesthood, &c. (Psal cx.), and again resumed this argument, just before his death, when he caused his son Solomon to be crowned, and sit upon his throne, (Psal lxxii.), it stirred up the longing desires of Solomon after the coming of this most illustrious Prince, and made him study to have at least as clear a sight of him as was possible to be attained afar off. And that he might stir up the same desire of the whole nation, after his appearing, he cast his meditations on this subject into a song, in the form of pastoral eclogue; in which several persons being introduced, who speak their parts, it may be called a dramatic poem. And so it is styled by St Greg. Nazianzen, in his 31st oration, where

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he quotes a passage, ἵνα προφήτευ&talpha;ν τι &νόμ τι στραμματικ, (as his words are *), "out of this bridal-interlude and song." For a drama, as the Greeks teach us, consists in the change of persons, some of which enter, others come to them, others withdraw, till the whole work be completed by this shifting and alteration of the persons.

Now, the persons which compose this song, are the bridegroom, the bride, the virgins attending on her, and the youths attending on him, to whom some add the sister of the spouse, mentioned chap. viii. and the watchmen and daughters of Jerusalem, who are introduced in their turns. For example, first the bride and her companions comes in, and saith, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," &c. Then the bridegroom appears, and saith, ver. 8. "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest," &c. After which he seems to withdraw himself, leaving the bride and her companions alone upon the stage, (while he sits at his repast, ver. 12.), who thus speak to her: "We will make thee borders of gold," &c. And then she speaks again, ver. 13. and he returns and speaks, ver. 15.

How many parts there are in this drama, is not agreed. Some make ten, others make but seven colloquies, or interlocutory passages in this sacred dialogue, as they call it. About which I do not think fit to dispute, but shall take notice of as many as I can observe, in the argument or annotations upon each chapter.

As for the phrase, it is wholly allegorical, in expressions borrowed chiefly from the fields, and woods, and gardens, as I shall show in their proper places when we meet with them. And such were the fittest that could be found, supposing he would use poetical words to set forth the ardent desire he had, and would excite in others, (as I said before), to have a sight of that great Shepherd of the sheep, who would make all the world happy.

III. And none need wonder that he speaks wholly of this glorious King; for so doth his father David in the 110th psalm, which can be applied to no other person whatsoever; and so doth the prophet Isaiah in after times, in his 58th chapter. Which though some have endeavoured to accommodate first to another person, yet they have failed in their attempt, and never could find any in whom it was so literally fulfilled as in our blessed Saviour; who alone was there intended, as he seems to me to be here also in the present Song of Solomon's.

Where it need not seem strange neither to any one, that he is compared to a bridegroom, and the church to a bride, who doth but reflect upon the 45th psalm, and observe how Solomon doth only follow the metaphor wherein his father David had represented this mystery; and observe withal, that it is the common language of the prophets, who compare Jerusalem and Zion (under which name is comprehended the whole church of the Jews) to a virgin, called frequently "the virgin-daughter of Zion," &c. whom God had espoused unto himself.

IV. But for the fuller explication of this, it may be fit to note, that the profoundest of the Hebrew divines, whom they now call Cabbalists, having such a notion as this among them, that "sensible things are but an imitation of things above," conceived from thence that there was (for instance) an original pattern of that love and union which is between a man and his wife here in this world. This they expressed by the kindness of Tipheret to Malcuth, which are the names they give unto the invisible bridegroom and bride in the upper world. And this Tipheret (i. e. beauty or ornament) they also call by the name of Adam on high, and the Great Adam, in opposition to the terrestrial or little Adam here below. As Malcuth (i. e. kingdom) they call also by the name of Cheneseth Israel, i. e. congregation of Israel, who is united, they say, to that Celestial Adam, as Eve was to the terrestrial. Which heavenly Adam, or Tipheret, they call likewise the sun, and Malcuth the moon; and make the former an active principle, the latter a passive; or as their phrase is, Tipheret is but the masculine power which influences Malcuth, who is but the recipient of those influences. So that, in sum, they seem to say the same that the apostle St Paul doth, when he tells us, that "marriage is a great mystery; but he speaks concerning Christ and his church," Eph. v. 32. For the marriage of Tipheret and Malcuth (or Cheneseth Israel) is the marriage of Christ the Lord from heaven, with his spouse the church, which is the whole
congregation of Christian people. Which was represented in the conjunction of Adam and Eve, and of all other men and women descended from them, when they are joined together in holy matrimony, inasmuch that those divines, called Cabballists, have formed this maxim about this matter, That "wheresoever in the holy scriptures we read the love of man and wife, there is mysteriously designed the conjunction of Tipheret and Ceneneth Israel.

Now, this notion (of which the learned Dr Cudworth hath long ago wrote a peculiar discourse) was so ancient among those doctors, that they had it before the times of Christ. It gives the plainest account why John the Baptist uses the words Christ, and Bridegroom, as if they were in a manner synonymous, and of the same import, John, iii. 28. 29. and why Christ himself compares the whole business of his heavenly kingdom (called by the people in St Mark, xi. 10. "the kingdom of our father David") to a marriage, or marriage-feast, which a king made for his son, Matth. xxii. 2. &c.

V. And this is one argument of its being a very ancient notion among them, that idolatry and false worship in the church, is constantly expressed in the scriptures under the name of spiritual fornication, and going a-whoring from God; whom, therefore, the church was to look upon as her husband. And so he taught the children of Israel to do, by using this form of speech throughout the whole prophetic writings, Isa. liv. 5. lxii. 4. 5. Jer. iii. 4. 20. xxxi. 32. Hos. ii. 2. 7. and many other places. Nay, the very words of the apostle to the Ephesians, seem to suppose some such mystical sense, which was current in that nation, of those words of Adam the first man, Gen. ii. 23. 24. "This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, &c.; therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and, they shall be one flesh." Which the apostle takes as if they had spoken of Christ, and his love to his church, as one may see that will read Ephes. v. 29. 30. 31. 32. For these are not in the account of the Cabballists two distinct senses, but one and the same sense, different only as the matter and the form of the same thing; which form, say they, lies latent under the matter, whereby we are led unto it, as the main thing comprehended in it.

Thus Archangelus Burgonovensis speaks, in his Preface to the explication of some select aphorisms of those divines, gathered by Mirandula, who observes also, (p. 91. of his book), that as immediately after the fabric of the world was reared, matrimony followed, as the emblem of God's great love to those that should believe on him, so this world shall end in the sacrament of marriage; St John shutting up all the mysteries of the holy scripture in the Revelation, with these words, "Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," Rev. xix. 7. Which, if it be the voice of the heavenly host, agrees with what the Hebrew doctors say, (in Perke Elieser, cap. 12.), of the marriage of Adam and Eve; that the "angels rejoiced at it, and with music and dancing attended upon the wedding."

VI. All which things put together, show how naturally the thoughts of David were led, at Solomon's marriage, to sing concerning Christ and his church; and the thoughts of Solomon afterward to sing more largely of the wonderful love of the same heavenly Bridegroom, in this Song of Songs, that is, most excellent song. For so it may be truly called, both in regard of its subject-matter, and in regard of the manner of its composure; this parabolical way of writing, by figures and similitudes, being in many respects the fore-named Cabballistical doctors discourse the best of all others. First, Because it is taken from things sensible, by which both learned men and ignorant can be instructed. Secondly, Because such narrations very easily impress themselves on the mind; a parable (say they) being instead of an artificial memory. And, thirdly, Because all our knowledge hath its rise from sense, and therefore symbolizes much with sensible parables. And, fourthly, It is very delightful to contemplate how the parable agrees with the spiritual things which are thereby figured. Unto which (saith that Archangelus before mentioned) the doctrine of St Paul is conformable, when he saith, "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are seen by those that are made." And; lastly, What is there more evident, than that all visible things declare God to be love? whose praise Solomon celebrates in this song. For by love. (as the same author discourses out of Boehtius and others) the
heavens are joined together, and the elements agree in composition, animals cohabit, cities are preserved, and all kingdoms supported and replenished. Which made Pherecydes Syrus say, that God was transformed into love before he made the world. And because God created all things in love, he also embraces all things with the same love, and would have us to love; which is the sum of all that he exacts of us; that being knit together by mutual love, we may in conclusion be united with him in love, that so all things may be one, as they were in the beginning.

Of this love, Solomon, say they, treats throughout this whole song; nay, it is the subject of all the book of God. According to that of David, Psal. lxxii. 11, 12. “God hath spoken once,” viz. to the whole people of Israel, when he gave the law at Mount Sinai; “yea, twice have I heard this,” from the prophets, that is, who say the same with the law, “that power belongeth to God; also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work.” Which they expound in this manner, Thou canst send good or evil influences upon us; by the union of Tipharet and Malcuth, a good influence; by their separation, a bad. For when Israel doth well, then it receives good influences from above, that is, from Tipharet; for “such is the order (says one of their aphorisms) which is constituted in the archetypal world, that all good influences proceed from Tipharet.” And then these two principles are animated, when we observe God’s precepts; but when we transgress the law, the one is separated from the other; that is, Tipharet doth not send influences upon Malcuth for our good; but another principle interposes, and sends anxiety and trouble. Now, love is the union of these two principles; the love of man and wife signifying in scripture the union of Israel and Tipharet; which union Hosea speaks of when he saith, ch. ii. 19, 20. “I will betrothe thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.”

Thus that sort of divines discourse, very agreeably to the sense of this book. Which represents the heavenly Bridegroom, appearing in the greatest beauty; and sometimes in most familiar communication with his spouse the church; but at other times withdrawing his glorious presence, and absenting himself from her. Who is represented, therefore, after the same manner, like to the moon, (unto which they compare Malcuth), sometimes full of his heavenly light, sometimes illuminated only in part, and sometimes obscure and dark. Which will appear more at large, in the explication of the several parts of this book.

VII. The time of whose writing cannot certainly be known; but it is very probable, that it was not long after Solomon was seated on his throne, and had both the prophecy of his father David fresh in his mind, and was also strongly affected with the wonderful love of God to himself. He being filled then likewise with incomparable wisdom from above; such wisdom that brought the queen of Sheba to discourse with him, having “heard the fame of Solomon, because of the name of the Lord,” 1 Kings, x. 1. that is, as some of the Hebrews expound it, Because she understood that the wisdom which was in him was not merely natural, like that of the philosophers and eastern sages, but divine and heavenly, by a special inspiration from above, whereby he was enabled to answer the hardest questions.

At that time, when these celestial gifts were newly poured into him, (which the Cabbalists call the Unction of the Holy Ghost; or the sacred name, of which Solomon speaks, say they, when he says, in the beginning of this song, “Thy name is as an ointment poured out”), we may well conceive his mind shined in its greatest purity and cleanness; and enjoying the sweetest and most perfect peace and tranquillity, was the fitter for such divine meditations as those which are the subject of this holy book. The sense of which seems to be expressed in 2 Cor. xi. 2, where St Paul (who was not “rude in knowledge,” ver. 6, but mightily versed, as that word knowledge signifies, in the mysteries of the Old Testament) pues the church of Corinth in mind of his solicitous concern for them, in these words: “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ.” For of that one husband alone, and of that pure virgin, and no other, and of their espousals, love and union, is this incomparable Song of Solomon’s to be understood and expounded.
A PARAPHRASE ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

CHAP. I.

The Argument.—There are four principal parts of this chapter; first, the bride comes in, expressing the desire of all Israel, nay, of all nations, to see the Messiah. Who, next of all, is brought in (ver. 8.) testifying his love to all those that seek after him. And then (all her attendants, with one voice, made a noble resolution, not to be unworthy of such love, ver. 11.) she speaks again, and declares her marvellous satisfaction in the knowledge and love of him, ver. 12.; which is the third part. And, lastly, they both conclude with mutual gratulations and praises, ver. 15., 16. and, accompanied with the symphony of all their attendants, ver. 17. commend the excellency of their habitation.

Ver. 1. THE Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.] The most excellent of all the songs that Solomon (or any other person) ever composed; representing the ardent desire which was in him, and which he endeavoured to excite in all the people, to enjoy that great blessing of the Messiah. See Annot. [a]

Spouse.

Ver. 2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine.] With the thoughts of whom his mind being wholly possessed, he burst forth into this most passionate strain of affection to him, saying, in the name of them all, O that he would come and speak to us by himself, and not merely by his prophets, who have told us so much of him, that I cannot but wish to converse familiarly with him, and receive the words of his own mouth, (those words of grace, Psal. xlv. 2. which will ravish all men's hearts), and all other expressions of his incomparable love, which is to be pre-

ferred infinitely before the most delicious pleasures that this good land wherein we live affords; yea, before the very sacrifices and the wine that is poured out upon the altar unto God. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee.] By whom thou art so highly exalted, far above all other kings and prophets; and the fame which is already spread of thee, (Psal. xlv. 8. 9.), and of the knowledge which thou shalt impart unto the world, is so sweet, so grateful and delicious, that for this cause all truly pious and holy souls (Psal. xlv. 14.) are in love with thee, and long to see thee. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. Draw me, we will run after thee. The king bath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.] Appear, then, in thy power, majesty, and glory, and by thy mighty grace and love attract me and all my people to thee; which will make the world most readily and cheerfully devote themselves unto thy service. And, methinks I behold this King in his royal splendour, as if he were already come; nay, he hath made me understand the secret mysteries of his kingdom, which give me a taste of that great joy, wherewith we have been told (Psal. xlv. 15.) all mankind shall enter into thy society; and it is but reason that we should all resolve with the highest satisfaction of mind to rejoice and triumph in thee, and never to think of thy love, and the blessings we expect from thence, but with a pleasure beyond all other; and the better judgement any men have, and the more upright-hearted they are, the more perfectly will they love thee and thy unsotted righteousness. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of
And do not take offence, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, at his kind reception of all nations into his kingdom; but hear this answer to you, when you upbraid them with idolatry, and all manner of impurity, which is the same evil with that of a lovely shepherdess, when tamed by lying much abroad in the fields;—My complexion, indeed, is dark and swarthy, but my features and proportions are comely and beautiful; though I seem as rustic as the skins of the tents, wherein the wild Arabs dwell, yet I am as amiable as the fine linen which makes the curtains of the apartment of king Solomon. See Annot. [e]

Vers. 6. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun both looked upon me; my mother's children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Do not despise me, therefore, by considering only my outward hue, though it be exceeding black, since it is not naturally so, but contracted by being exposed to the sun; for my brethren and sisters, who should have been more kind, did me the greatest injury, and made me a slave to the meanest employments, in which I could not preserve my beauty, because I was like one that, being set to keep other men's vineyards, could not look after his own.

(Which is a lively emblem of the Gentiles, who are descended from the same parents with yourselves; and though, by worshipping the sun, and by other idolatries, they are become odiously polluted, yet shall be cleansed by becoming subjects of Christ, who will pity them, as seduced by false teachers, and neglected by you, which made them embrace any religion rather than the true.) See Annot. [f]

Vers. 7. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? But let us all join together, professing our most hearty affection to him, and beseech him with one voice, saying, O thou whom I love above all things, instruct me in thy heavenly doctrine, and make me to understand, not only where we may learn thy will, but also enjoy thy true religion in quiet peace; for we are weary of wandering uncertainly after those who pretend to thy spirit, but mislead such as are guided by them. See Annot. [g]

Bridegroom.

Vers. 8. If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed the kids beside the shepherds tents. If Unto which his answer is, Thy desire of true knowledge hath already made thee most amiable in my eyes, (Psal. xlvi. 11.), and therefore what thou understandest not I will teach thee. Forsee those vain religions (Psal. xlv. 10.) by which thou hast been deluded, and enter into the holy assemblies of these pious souls that worship me; and bring thy young converts, to be instructed by those pastors whom I will authorise in my church. See Annot. [h]

Vers. 9. I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of Pharaoh's horses in chariots. Where they shall grow in strength, and increase in number; and under the conduct of those great men, who shall guide and lead them, speedily subdue all mankind unto my obedience, (Psal. xlv. 4.), for I have likened thee, whom I love, to those victorious armies of a mighty king, which trample all opposition triumphantly under their feet. See Annot. [i]

Vers. 10. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. And then will the very outward face of the church look most beautiful, by those various orders of spiritual gifts, wherewith I will enrich her; which shall make her appear like a lovely bride, when she is decked with all her jewels and ornaments that add lustre to her beauty. See Annot. [k]

Chorus of Virgins.

Vers. 11. We will make thee borders of gold, with studs of silver. Unto which all her members shall contribute, by their unanimous resolution to lead such a life as may adorn their religion, and make the church shine in such splendour and glory, that she shall not come short of royal majesty, Ps. xlv. 13. See Annot. [l]

Spouse.

Vers. 12. While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. Whereby she shall become fit for the affections of her great Lord, when he sits upon the throne of his glory, acknowledging his bounty in all the benefits and ornaments he hath bestowed upon her, (Philip. iv. 18.), and making manifest the sweet and fragrant odour of his knowledge in every place, (2 Cor. ii. 14. compared with Psal. xlv. 8.). See Annot. [m]

Vers. 13. A bundle of myrrh is my well belov'd unto me, be shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. From which knowledge every pious soul shall derive the greatest refreshment, comfort, and strength; and therefore love him above all things, and resolve never to let him slip out of their minds; but to preserve the remembrance of him most carefully, night and day, in their very hearts, as the most precious cordial, in all conditions, unto their spirits. See Annot. [n]

Vers. 14. My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. And indeed there is nothing of such price, nothing so delicious among us for our bodily pleasure, but ought to put us in mind how much more estimable that knowledge is, which thou, O Lord, who dost preserve all our love, vouchsafest for the comfort and satisfaction of our souls. See Annot. [o]

Bridegroom.

Vers. 15. Be bold, thou art fair, my love, be bold, thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes. Such shall be the language of those who are acquainted with his worth, which shall increase their mutual affection unto each other; and move him to give his church more sensible testimonies of his love, and repeated assurances how amiable her purity and modesty, her innocence and simplicity, as well as her decent order and comely government, is in his sight. See Annot. [p]

Spouse.

Vers. 16. Be bold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant; also our bed is green. And what can be
this love of his produce, but new admiration in her of him, and of his love, bursting forth into such expressions as these; yea, rather thou art most amiable and lovely, (Psal. xlv. 2.), not I, whose beauty, and goodness, is but a weak reflection of thy incomparable perfection, which move thee to communicate thyself in the most delectable graces, unto all those that love thee; who making one body with thee, may say, We feast together most sumptuously, and are entertained every day with those delights, which grow there only where thou vouchsafest thy gracious presence. See Annot. [q]

Ver. 17. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.] Who hast promised to dwell with us, in the several churches of thy saints; which are so many living temples dedicated to thy service; and being protected and defended by thee, shall remain so stable and firm, that they shall last for ever. See Annot. [r]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1. Song of Songs,] every one knows is an Hebraism for the most excellent song, as Holy of holies is the most holy; and King of kings the greatest king. And though the most natural meaning seems to be, that this is the most excellent of all the songs that Solomon made, (which were very many, 1 Kings, iv. 32.), both in its structure and composition, and in regard of the subject whereof it treats, yet since the Chaldee paraphrase, and abundance of Christian writers, think it called the most excellent song, with respect likewise to all the songs that had been formerly made by any prophetic person, as those, Exod. xv. Judg. v. 1 Sam. ii. &c. (because they celebrated only some particular benefits, this the immense love of God, not only toward that nation, but towards all mankind), I have not neglected that in my paraphrase.

 Which is Solomon’s.] The Hebrew words are so contrived, that they may either signify concerning Solomon, (i.e. Christ), or of which Solomon was the author. Which, I doubt not, is the first and literal meaning; because so the LXX. expound it, and so the same phrase is understood by all, in the titles of those psalms which are called psalms of David. But it may be observed farther, that here are none of his usual titles added, as there are in the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, where he is called “Son of David King of Israel, and King in Jerusalem.” Of which, if any reason is to be assigned, this seems the most probable, that those titles, which have respect only to his temporal estate, greatness, and dignity, he wholly forgot, when he was rapt in contemplation of that celestial Prince, the Prince of peace; in comparison with whom, all others are not worth the naming; and whose character was best expressed by the name of Solomon alone; he being the great peace-maker, and reconciler of God and man.

[b] Ver. 2. Let him kiss me.] Solomon speaks this, in the person of the virgin-daughter of Zion, that is, the church. Whom he here introduces in the most passionate strain, wishing for some token of love, which is expressed under the metaphor of a kiss. But there is no mention at all made of the name, condition, or beauty of the person whose love is desired; nor any account given of the beginning or progress of this desire; but he makes her burst out on a sudden, and abruptly, into these words, “Let him kiss me,” &c, that he might the more artificially describe the nature and force of divine love; which, when it possesses the mind, snatches it so from itself, that it is wholly in him that it loves. It thinks of nothing else, seeks nothing, wishes nothing, speaks of nothing but this alone; and imagines that every body else thinks of the same, and knows of whom it speaks.

It is just such a beginning as that of the 87th Psalm, where the Psalmist enters upon the description of the loveliness of Mount Zion, and Mount Moriah, in this manner, “His foundation is in the holy mountains.”

Kisses of his mouth.] As a kiss given to another was a token of love and kindness, friendship and familiarity, in those countries, (it being their manner to salute their guests, whom they invited to their house, Luke, vii. 45.), so many kisses were a token of abundant love, and excessive affection, as appears from what is there said by our Saviour, of the woman, who had “not ceased to kiss his very feet.” And therefore, the beginning of this verse may be thus paraphrased: “Let him declare his love unto me, in the most familiar and most ample manner.”

Of which matter, I have noted something elsewhere*, and therefore shall only add here, that in the mystical divinity of the Caballists, these are the words of Malchuth the spouse, speaking to her Tipheret the bridgroom; beseeching him to influence her with the gift of the Holy Ghost, or with Binab, as they speak; that is, understanding, and intelligence, which is called by them the mouth of the Sephirot, or emanations of light.

Better than wine.] Wine was the highest entertainment for those guests before mentioned; and therefore used by the Hebrews to express the greatest pleasure. There was a portion of it also to be poured out on the altar, in their offerings to God; and so may comprehend their sacrifices, which were the principal part of their religion. Unto both which I have had respect in the paraphrase.

[c] Ver. 3. Saviour of thy good ointments.] Ointments also were not wanting at all their entertainments; with which some were wont to anoint their whole heads, or at least their nostrils; which they looked upon as conducing much to health, as well as pleasure. According to those famous words of Alexis the poet, in Athenaeus his Diepnosophists, l. ii. cap. 7.

* Menta Mystica.
Of which ointments there were exceeding great variety: four he mentions in that place, which were in common use; but a vast number more in his 13th book, chap. ii. out of Apollonius Hierophilus; who shows, in a book on purpose about it, that several countries afforded unguents, that were most excellent in their kind. As the best of roses was made at Phaselis, and some other places; the best of crocus came from Soli in Cilicia; that of spikenard from Tarsus, &c. u  
Syria anciently (though so in his time) afforded excellent of all sorts, especially of one, which he there names.

Now, to this use of ointments, some think Solomon here alludes; but I rather think he hath respect to his father's words, Psal. xlv. 8. and intended hereby to signify the glorious offices of the Messiah, whose very name (signifying anointed) carried in it all that could be desired; he being anointed by God to be the great deliverer and saviour of his people. And these first words of the verse, the LXX. seem to me to have most rightly understood, (whom I have therefore followed,) who translate them thus: "The smell of thy ointments is above all spices," taking  
for the best of ointments. Therefore do the virgins love thee. The attractive power of sweet ointments (to which Solomon here alludes) is notably declared in that which Basil (Epist. ad Julitam) relates of the manner of catching doves. Which was by breeding up one tane, and then, μικρ  
moos  
i  

The king bath brought me, &c.] Here now he seems on a sudden to have had a glance of the Messiah, the great King of Israel; and in the spirit of prophecy to have beheld a glimpse of those things,
SONG OF SOLOMON.

(Gen. xli. 45; nay, Moses himself, that great deliverer and lawgiver, married an Ethiopian (or Arabian) woman, (Numb. xii. 1), and, notwithstanding the anger of his brother and sister at this marriage, would not be divorced from her. Nathan also, a great man of the house of Judah, married Rahab of Jericho, and had by her Booz, who took Ruth the Moabitess to wife, by whom he had Obed the grandfather of David. And, indeed, the very first institution of marriage having (as I have proved in the Preface) a mystical intention in it, which St Paul unfolds in Eph. v. these marriages may well be looked upon as emblems of the uniting all sorts of people with Christ, in one body of the church.

[f] Ver. 6.] Here they seem to give an account how they came to degenerate, and lose their original beauty, by false prophets, and prophetesses in the Gentile world, who led them to idolatry; particularly to the worship of the sun, which was the most ancient of all other, (Deut. iv. 19. Job, xxxi. 26.), and spread itself as far as the sun shineth. For it was the sun whom one country worshipped under the name of Baal; another under the name of Moloch; another of Chemosh; and others of Mitraus and Osiris. Which last was the name given to it by the Egyptians; among whom the sun was worshipped in the famous city of Helipolis, (which took its name from thence), not far from the hand of Rameses, where the children of Israel dwell while they lived there, Gen. xlvii. 11. and so were more easily infected with that idolatry.

[g] Ver. 7.] This verse I take to be the voice of the whole church, longing to be acquainted with his doctrine, which is compared to food, as his disciples are to sheep, whom shepherds were wont in those countries to lead into cool shades at noon, that they might not suffer by the heat. Unto which Solomon here alludes, representing all pious souls as afraid also of wandering from the true Shepherd, and falling, like sheep that go astray, into the hands of strangers. All which metaphors are largely pursued by our blessed Saviour, in one of his parables, (John x.), as comparisons familiarly known to his disciples, who found them here first used in this holy book.

[h] Ver. 8.] To the foregoing petition, he here returns this answer. Which needs no other explanation than what I have given of it in the paraphrase; unless we observe a difference between flocks and kids. The latter of which signifies the goats' young ones; and so may represent the new converts of the Gentiles, who formerly lay under an ill character, and did make olera, as they speak, smell rank of many foul superstitions. But I am not willing to meddle with such niceties.

[i] Ver. 9. Company of horses, &c.] This comparison may convince us, that Solomon doth not aim at any single person in this song, (either Pharaoh's daughter, or a beautiful Shunamite, or any other woman or virgin, who would very absurdly be compared to a troop of horses), but as a great many united in a body; i.e. the whole company of believers in the Messiah, who may very fitly be resembled to the horses in the chariots of Pharaoh; whose kingdom in those days abounded with the most excellent horses, which were famous for their strength, and fineness for service; as may be seen by the provision of them Solomon made for himself from thence, 1 Kings, x. 28. 29. and the great number which came from thence against Jerusalem, in his son's days, 2 Chron. xii. 3. Long after which, we read of their great force, Isa. xxxi. 1. Jer. xlvii. 4. 9. and consequently, the body of Christian people, that is, the church, being compared to a company of them, is set forth thereby as very powerful, and prevailing over all opposers.

[k] Ver. 10.] The means of which is here represented to be the power of the Spirit, wherewith Christ hath endowed his church. For the manner of bridegrooms being to present their future bride with jewels, or some other rich gifts, (suitable to their quality and ability), Solomon alludes to them, as I take it, in this verse; and points at the gifts which his father foretold, (Psalm lxviii. 18.), Christ would dispense, when he ascended up on high to his throne of glory; whereby several orders of admirable men were constituted in the church, 1 Cor. xiii. 28. \\

[l] Ver. 11.] And the design of all those gifts, was to make men truly virtuous, which seems to be intended in this verse, (for love and good works are compared to gold in the language of Christ himself, Rev. iii. 18.), which is the voice of all those that attended upon the bride.

[m] Ver. 12.] That which makes the greatest difficulty in this book, is the frequent change of the persons that speak; and it is doubted here, whose language this is. I take it to be the bride herself, that here again gratefully acknowledges his benefits, and endeavours to make all the world sensible of them.

Sitting at his table.] The king sitting at his table, signifying his rest and joy after all his labours, I have therefore expounded it of the throne of his glory, unto which our blessed Saviour being advanced, he received power to prefer others; whose honour and dignity is expressed by these two things, “eating at his table,” and “sitting by him upon thrones;” which was the same thing in our Saviour’s own language, Matth. xix. 28. compared with Luke, xxii. 29. 30.

Spicewear.] It is observed by Pliny, that the most fragrant Nard comes from the spikes of a very small contemptible iubrub; which may well be looked upon as an emblem of the sweet odour of the gospel, wherewith such mean and despicable persons as the apostles were of themselves, filled all the world by their preaching; together with the extraordinary holiness of their lives, which recommended their preaching very much to all observing men. So the Cabalists expound this fragrancy in
the ancient book Zobar. Where R. Juda saith, "When good works are multiplied in the world, then the Chosen of Israel, i.e. the congregation of Israel, the same with Malechath, in their language), exhales rich in tosin, good odours, i.e. most sweet and fragrant odours, being blessed by the holy King," &c. Which words the Scholiast expounds thus: "She exhales sweet odours to her husband Tiphereth, and is most acceptable to him;" the lower world (as his words are) being by this means married to the higher.

[n] Ver. 13. A bundle of myrrh, &c.] The church deriving the greatest comfort and satisfaction from his sitting on the throne of his glory, resolves here to keep him perpetually in mind, and in her most hearty affections; which is expressed by myrrh tied up in a little bag, and put into the bosom, as the manner was in those countries, to corroboreate the heart, and exhilarate the spirits.

The bosom of all chaste women is inaccessible to any hand but that of their husband; and therefore here signifies the careful preservation of his memory, and of the doctrine he hath deposited in his church.

[o] Ver. 14. Cluster of Canphire.] Nothing more puzzles interpreters, than those words which we translate cluster of campibre. For our camphire was unknown to the ancients, and doth not grow in clusters, but is the resinous substance of a tree in Borneo, and in China; and therefore is far better translated in the margin of our Bibles, cypress. But by cypress is not to be understood the tree which bears that name among us; but a far more aromatic plant in the East, which was a kind of Ligustrum or Alchemora, called by Pliny, Cyperus, and sometimes Cyprus; which produced a most sweet bush of flowers, and also berries, not much different from the fragrance of spikenard. Whence it is likely the famous island Cyprus took its name; because here (as at Ascalon in Judaea, and on the banks of Nile) the best, that is, the most odoriferous Cyprus grows. Thus both Stephanus and Eustathius: the island Cyprus hath its name, and the qepon Ἰονᾶς Κόρον, from the flower of Cyprus growing there; as Bochart shews in his Canaan, i. i. c. 3. Of which flowers, or of the seed, was made that ointment, which Pliny calls the unguent royal.

But there is one that thinks these words may be translated, precious cluster, or cluster of great value, to be bought at any rate; because copber denotes the price of any thing that is purchased or redeemed. Such was the balsam that came from these shrubs; which grew at Engedi, (in the plains of Jericho), after the manner of vines; and therefore called, as Bochartus hath shewn, the "vineyards of Engedi." And thus the ancient Hebrew doctors, by dividing the first word ָּבַּשָׁ have found out the mystery of the Messiah in these words. Which they understand as if he had said, "My beloved is unto me ָּבַּשָׁ the man that propitiates all things."

[p] Ver. 15. Bebold.] This and the following verse contain the mutual expressions of their love. First, of Christ to his church, in this verse; and that not only in regard of her inward purity, but of her external order, both which were remarkable; and therefore the word bebold is repeated.

Doves eyes.] The eyes shew more than any part else the inward affections of the mind; and doves eyes are the emblems of simplicity, candour, sincerity, and purity.

[q] Ver. 16.] Here follows the expression of the church's love to Christ; whom she acknowledgeth to be the fountain of all that is in her.

Our bed is green.] By bed I understand their table; about which they sat on beds strewed with flowers, or such fragrant greens as were in season.

[r] Ver. 17. Our house, &c.] This last verse I take for a description of particular churches; by the roof or covering of which I understand their protection. And it being made of cedar and fir, there seems to be an allusion to the temple, in the fabric of which these were employed, as most durable and incorruptible. Others take that word we translate fir to signify Cypress; which is still nearer to the sense I have given of this verse. Which sense will not seem at all forced unto those who consider, that not only the whole body of the faithful, which is the church universal, but the parts of it, or single churches, such as that at Ephesus, are represented by the apostle as an holy temple, an habitation or dwelling-place of God; which is built upon Christ, and with him makes up one house of God, (Eph. ii. 20. 21. 22.) Nay, every particular faithful person is not only a living stone, as St Peter speaks, in that building, but is called also a temple of God, who dwells in holy minds by his Spirit, 1 Cor. iii. 16. 17. vi. 19. So that the bride and the chorus of virgins might well, both with respect to Christ and to one another, use the style of our house, in this description of his dwelling-place.

C H A P. II.

THE ARGUMENT.—Here begins a new colloquy, which hath two principal parts. In the first of which the bridegroom owns the praises to belong unto him, which had been bestowed upon him in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, ver. 1. 2.; and the bride again declares her high admiration of him, and satisfaction in his love, as infinitely surpassing all other enjoyments, and greater love to him than could be expressed, (ver. 3. 4. &c.) With which ecstasy of love he declaring himself to be highly pleased, ver. 7. then follows the second part, wherein she sets forth the wonderful power of divine love to enlighten their mind, and to obtain the favour of illuminations from above. For now she speaks (ver. 8. 9. &c.) as if she saw him, and heard his voice inviting her to partake of the blessings which his appearance brought to mankind. The secure possession
of which she also hears him promising to her, ver. 14. 15: and thereupon promises him most faithful obedience, ver. 16. 17.

Bridegroom.

Ver. 1. I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. I am indeed the fountain of all true delight and pleasure; the rose of Sharon being not more grateful to the smell, nor the lily of the valleys to the sight, than the knowledge of me is to the mind of those who are acquainted with me. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters. Whereby thou, my dearly beloved, art become not unlike to me, appearing in such lustre and beauty among the nations of the world, as the lily doth among the thorns that grow in desert places. See Annot. [b]

Spouse.

Ver. 3. As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. And thou appearest far greater and more lovely in my eyes than the greatest prince of this world, who are no more to be compared with thee, than the wild trees that bring forth nothing but leaves, or only harsh or insipid trash, with the goodly apple-tree, when it is laden with its beautiful and pleasant fruit. Who can express the satisfaction which his protection affords! under which I have constantly enjoyed a sweet repose, pleasing myself in the delightful thoughts of the blessed fruits of his coming among us, and of what he hath purchased for us. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. Which administers the highest joys to those who taste of them, and hath entertained or rather feasted me with such delicious hopes, that I cannot but glory in this, that I am listed under his banner, whose motto is love; whereby he hath overcome, shall I say, or overpowered my heart, to submit myself wholly unto his wonderful love. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love. Under the weight of which who can support himself when it sensibly touches his heart? I faint, I languish, I die, when I am deeply affected with that love, which overwhelms my spirit, and makes me call for a greater power than my own to enable me to bear the thoughts of his mighty love. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. And whence should I have that power but from himself? who then communicates most of the grace of his Holy Spirit to us, (which is the greatest token of his love,) when he sees our hearts fullest of love to him. See Annot. [f]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 7. I charge you, ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till I please. In which he would have us take an uninterrupted pleasure, saying, I beseech, I charge you, (all you that are her companions,) I conjure you by all that is dear to you, not to discompose or give the least disturbance to that love; but let it enjoy its satisfaction to the height of its desires. See Annot. [g]

Spouse.

Ver. 8. ¶ The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. ¶ Which words of grace can come from none but him, who is worthy of all our love; whom, behold, I see, though he be afar off; I see with what delight he comes, surmounting all difficulties and discouragements, to do the will of God, Psal. xl. 7. 18. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himself through the lattice. The swiftness of the roes and wild goats is but a weak emblem of his readiness to come down to us. And though he do not yet actually show himself among us, I see notwithstanding something of him, and behold him approaching nearer and nearer to us; like one that, resolving to be our guest, doth not presently enter, but first stands behind the wall of our house, then looks in at the window, and through the lattices or grates, whereby he is still more fully discovered. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. And I hear his voice, (who is worthy of all our love,) calling unto us to meet him with our most forward desires, saying, Awake thou, who art most dear unto me, thou who art most beautiful in my eyes; arise, and stay no longer here, but come away from these dark representations of me.

Ver. 11. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. For now that dismal time is past, whereunto ignorance, error, and wickedness overflowed the world, as floods do the earth in the winter-season; those cloudy and uncomfortable days are over, whereunto one couldst see and enjoy but little of me. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 12. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. All tokens of a new world appear, and invite thee to come and partake of those joys and pleasures which the nearer approaches of the Sun of Righteousness produce; who makes all manner of blessings spring up in such abundance, that it causes the heavenly host to sing for joy, and therefore cannot but fill all mankind with joyful hymns unto him. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 13. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. And for this especially, that their dead hopes are revived, and they receive the earnest and beginnings of that future bliss; the expectation of which is our greatest comfort in this life, and the consummation of it our
highest happiness in the next; and therefore I say again, Awake, and stir up thy desires, thou who art most dear unto me, thou who art most lovely in my eyes; arise, and go and take possession of those inestimable benefits. See Annot. [m]

Bridegroom.

Ver. 14. ¶ O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.] ¶ And be not afraid of those who, seeking to destroy thee, force thee to flee like an innocent dove, to hide thyself and seek for safety in holes of the earth, in caves, and dens, and secret places; but from hence look up unto me, and call upon me with praises and thanksgivings, and I will save and deliver thee; for I love thee inseparably, who art most amiable in my eyes, whose prayers and praises I delight to hear, and to behold my own image that is formed in thee. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.] And therefore I require all those that act by authority from me, and to whom I have committed the care of my church, to use their early diligence also to discover and confute the sophistry of deceivers, who craftily insinuate their false doctrines into weak and incautious souls, and thereby seduce those who are newly converted, or but in form in the faith. See Annot. [o]

Spouse.

Ver. 16. ¶ My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies.] ¶ Unto which I hear the church reply, I will preserve my fidelity to him, who is my only Beloved, as I am his: I will have nothing to do with those seducing spirits, but adhere to him alone; whose dwelling is not among subtle and crafty, but with simple and candid souls. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 17. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved; and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Betheer.] Only let him be pleased to vouchsafe his gracious presence with me, and to enlighten me more and more, till we have a full knowledge of him and of his will, (Rom. xiii. 11. 12.), and the light of it scatter all the shadows of the law: let my beloved also make haste to succour and relieve me in all difficulties and distresses, and show the same readiness for my preservation, that he did (ver. 9.) for my first salvation. See Annot. [q]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1.] There is so little ground to apply the several parts of this song to the several ages of the church, till the end of all things, that I cannot think fit to follow such interpretations. But shall pursue the method I have begun, and observe, that the Messiah is here introduced as owning the praises which the church had bestowed upon him in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter. And that in such phrases as are becoming a pastoral, borrowed from flowers and trees, (under which shepherds delight to sit and eat the fruit), and from such creatures as frequent the fields and woods, &c.

I am the rose.] And in this verse he first compares himself to a rose, which is still one of the goodliest things to which a great prince can be likened in those eastern countries. As appears from a letter, written by the great Mogul, in the Persian tongue, to K. James, sent by Sir Thomas Roe, wherein he thus compliments his Majesty of Great Britain: "As upon a rose in a garden, so are my eyes fixed upon you: God maintain your estate, that your monarchy may prosper," &c. But it was chiefly prized by shepherds and shepherdesses, and accounted by them ἥ βατράχια, as Philostratus speaks, the plant of love. Insomuch, saith he, that if the great king have the diadem on his head, the soldier his helmet, as the greatest ornament, beautiful youths should have chaplets of roses, καὶ τὰ βατράχια τὰ διακοσμήματα, καὶ τὰ τέλη τῶν τῶν σχοιλῶν, as near of kin to them both in sweetness and rudeness. And Achilles Tatius (l. i. τάραχος. &c.) thus commends this lovely flower: "If Jupiter would set a king over the flowers, it would be the rose that should reign over them, being the ornament of the earth, the splendour of plants, the eye of flowers, the blushing beauty of the field, or refulgent brightness," &c.

Of Saron.] i. e. the most excellent rose; for such were the roses of Saron, as may be gathered from hence: That the rose, according to Pliny's observation, delights in dry places, and will not thrive in fat and unctuous soils, in rich clays, or grounds well watered, but in those that are lean, full of rubbish, &c. Now, such was the soil about Saron, as we learn from the Mishneh, in the title Sota, chap. viii. where they that built a brick house in Saron are said to have been deprived of the benefit of that law.

Deut. xx. 5. Upon which passage R. Solomon glosses, that the earth thersabout was unfit for making bricks, being so dry and crumbling that the houses that were built of them, had need to be repaired twice in seven years. Insomuch, that the Jerusalem-Falmud saith, "This high-priest prayed by name for the Saronites, upon the day of expiation, that their houses might not be converted into their graves."

Lily of the valleys.] By the lily we are not to understand such as we call tilium convallium, or May-lily; but some more noble and fragrant flower, being joined here with roses; as it is in several poetical fragments (quoted by Athenæus, l. xv. c. 8. 9.) with violets, marjoram, and divers other sweet flowers. Insomuch that he saith the Corinthians called the lily by the name of ambrosia; and he tells us, out of Nicander, that it was esteemed
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xagp 'Apphira, "the joy and delight of Venus," because of its beautiful colour; and smell also, I suppose, for in the 12th chapter of the same book, he quotes a passage out of Theophratus, who, treating of sweet ointments made of flowers, mentions aex in vía regia, that of lilies, as well as that of roses.

But notwithstanding all this, the lily being vulgarly celebrated only for its beautiful colour, I have taken notice of that alone in the paraphrase.

[b] Ver. 2. As the lily, &c.] They that believe in Christ partaking of his excellencies, he here compares the church to a lily, (i. e. to himself), as much excelling all other people who were not believers, (for daughters signify people in the Hebrew language), as the lilies do thorns, which grow in desolate places. For the word we translate thorns, is wont to be joined together with those which signify nettles and brambles, Isa. xxxiv. 13. Hos. ix. 6.

c] Ver. 3. As the apple-tree, &c.] To this the church here replies, and expresses her reciprocal affection, in such words as may be applied to signify his pre-eminence over all other gods, whom they were wont to worship under trees, as we read in Deut. xii. 2. I Kings, xiv. 23. Isa. lvii. 5. and many other places.

I sat down under, &c.] In the latter part of this verse, and in those that follow, she turns her speech to her companions and attendants, relating the satisfaction and joy she took in his love.

d] Ver. 4. He brought me, &c.] Which is set forth by a banquet, whereby (it is well known) the Hebrews were wont to represent the joys even of the other world. And what greater joy have we here, than to think of the stupendous love of God our Saviour towards us? which cannot but subdue our hearts to love him entirely. So I have paraphrased the latter part of the verse, ("his banner over me was love"), taking in two senses of the words which are capable. The most obvious is, that Love was the inscription on his banner; the other, that He conquers only by love; a banner displayed supposing an armed force marching under it. Delarue, in his Electa, i. iii. c. 9. hath not unfairly glossed upon the words, thus: "The banner of our Lord is his love, which he hath publicly declared to us, that he might draw us to himself; by which also, when we are come to him, he retains us with him, and strengthens us by the same, when we fight with our spiritual enemies. And that we may always look upon it, and never quail, he carries it over us, that is, renders his love most familiar to us. He that knows not this banner, can be none of his soldiers; and he that deserts it is undone, unless he presently return to it. So that, as the Roman legions had several names, (one of which was called the Pious, another the Faithful, another the Thundering, another the Victorious, &c.), in like manner the Christian band may be called amoris legio, the legion of love.

e] Ver. 5. Stay me with flagons, &c.] This verse is a description of one falling into a swoon, by the abundance of her love; in which case cordial spirits are wont to be called for, to revive such persons, and keep them from fainting quite away. Comfortable smells also are wont to be administered to the nose, which is the meaning of calling here for fragrant apples, oranges, citrons, &c. (as well as wine), which are all comprehended under the name of appuach in the Hebrew; which is a word that, in its very original imports an exhalation, or odour-breathe, from that which is so called. By all which the church is represented to be so marvellously affected with the love of Christ, as to be even oppressed under the weight of divine benefits, and at a perfect loss what to think of them, having little or nothing to return for such infinite obligations.

[f] Ver. 6. His left hand, &c.] This is a representation of the tenderest affection of an husband to his wife, when he sees her in danger to faint: and being applied to Christ and his church, sets forth his readiness to succour us, in all our needs, by the power of his Spirit. I go not about to divine what is distinctly meant by the left hand, and what by the right, (which I look upon as too great a curiosity in interpreters), but take them both to express one and the same thing. And the "hand of the Lord," signifying oft-times in scripture, the power of the Spirit, I have applied them to that.

g] Ver. 7. I charge you, &c.] It is dubious whether this verse be the voice of Christ, or of the church. I take it to be his, who is the good Shepherd, represented in this pastoral song. Which, suitable to its nature, is still full of rural similitudes, taken from the roes and hinds; which are most amiable creatures, (as hath been observed upon Prov. vi.), with which not only shepherds, but the greatest persons in the world, have delighted themselves. And that word, which we well translate I charge you, I take to be only a solemn form of earnest beseeching and intreaty, (which all persons are wont to make by those things that are dearest to them), not an adjuration, which is not lawful for any to make, but only by God. I have contented myself, therefore, with this simple paraphrase of that passage, and sought for no mystical interpretation, as the matter is, which, may be found in most interpreters, who, among other things, by roes and hinds understand the angelical powers; to which the Cabalists apply these words, and would have them to signify as much as, "I adjure you by the tribunal of Justice, whence the wicked are punished."

[h] Ver. 8. He cometh leaping, &c.] To the same sort of creatures, and to young wild kids, he alludes in this verse. For they are numbered among those creatures, which are most nimble, in running, jumping, and leaping, even to the tops of mountains; as Bochart hath largely shewn, demonstrating that what we translate "young hart," ver. 9. is the
young wild goat. I seek, therefore, for no mystery here neither; but take the words to be a description only of the Lord's alacrity and cheerfulness to come down from the heavens, (which may be meant by mountains), to dwell among us, who dwell here below upon the earth. Yet I shall note, that they seem to be most ingenious, who hereby understand his passing by angels, (for so some translate the words, "skipping over the mountains"), and leaping, as it were, over their heads, to take upon him the nature of man.

[i] Ver. 9. In like manner, it is a very ingenious conjecture, that his "standing behind the wall," in this verse, may be applied to his shewing himself in those days only in the law of Moses, (which was the wall of partition between the Jews and us), and his "looking through the window," or "in at the window," &c. to his shewing himself then in figures and prophecies, which they had of him, by which he was known but obscurely to them. But I have not meddled with this in the paraphrase.

[k] Ver. 10, 11. Lo, the winter is past, &c.] In these verses Solomon represents his voice speaking to them by the prophet, (though he himself was not come), and calling them to him, as if he was just appearing. For by the winter, and the rain, I understand, with Theodoret, τα χειματια και τα νεφελεια, "the time before his coming;" when the Gentile world was buried in dismal darkness, and the Jews themselves saw things only through clouds; and neither of them had much of the warmth of the divine law.

[l] Ver. 12. The flowers appear, &c.] And then here follows a description of the spring; which is set forth by three things, the "appearing of the flowers," which had lain as if they had been dead, the "singing of birds," and the "voice of the turtle." Which, as Aristotle observes, (I. viii. Histor. Nat. c. 3.); disappears in winter, and comes forth again when the spring is a little advanced; and therefore is here very properly mentioned in the last place, among the notes of the spring. Which being the time of all others most welcome to shepherds, for the feeding of their flocks, and for all manner of pleasures, represents, as the same Theodoret conceives, τα παρθενικα, "the joyful time after our Saviour's coming." When a new world appeared, and there was a greater abundance of divine blessings, especially of the Spirit, poured forth; which the Chaldee paraphrast takes to be meant by the "voice of the turtle." Which is a kind of dove, in the form of which the Holy Ghost descended at our Saviour's baptism. And then the singing of birds may be applied to the songs of the heavenly host at his birth. Others will have this turtle to have been the figure of John the Baptist: which is also pat enough; but I have only touched upon such things, and do not think fit here to enlarge upon them; but conclude this note with this observation, that Benjamin Tudeleensis, in the conclusion of his Itinerarium, expressly applies these words to the coming of the Messiah; saying, that "they cannot be gathered to their own land, till that time of the singing of birds come, and the voice of the turtle, and till they come who preach glad tidings, saying always, The Lord be praised." R. Alschach also applies the voice of the turtle to Elias, glossing thus: "The voice of the turtle also, hath it not been heard in our land, by the means of the prophet? according to that which is said, Behold, I will send to you Elias the prophet," Mal. iv. 5.

[n] Ver. 13. The fig-tree putteth forth, &c.] After the spring-time, here follows a description of the entrance of summer; of which the putting forth green figs, and the blowing of the vines, may, the knotting of the grapes, were a sign. In the end of which the harvest coming, hereby is denoted, saith the same Father, (Theodoret), την τετρανομενη σημεραν, "the world which we expect hereafter," unto which I have applied this verse. Where it may be observed, that fig-tree and vines are fully joined, for which they are wont to be planted together, Luke, xiii. 6. 7.

[n] Ver. 14. O my dove, that art in the coverts, &c.] Some of the Hebrew writers, whose sense the Chaldee Paraphrast expresses, refers this to the people of Israel flying from Pharaoh, like a dove before the hawk that is ready to seize her; but may be better referred to the church of Christ, in danger to be torn in pieces by her pagan persecutors, and by the Jews themselves, as it was in the beginning of our religion. Which forced Christians to hold their assemblies under ground, in obscure places, (where they sung hymns to our blessed Lord before the break of day), and made the church perfectly like a dove, who, being in fear of ravenous birds, flies into clefts of rocks, and to secret holes in steep places, to preserve herself.

The church is so often compared by Christ to a dove in this book, that it is fit to give some account of it. And Bochartus, de Sacr. Animal. p. xi. 1. i. c. 4. takes this to be the principal, if not the only reason of it; to signify her to be his only beloved, and that he alone, also is most dear to her. For in doves there is a wonderful love (observed by many authors) between those that are once paired; who never part, but keep faithful the one to the other. And so are a fit emblem of the church, whom the apostle saith he had espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, 2 Cor. xi. 2.

Let me see thy countenance.] That word which we translate countenance, or aspect, may be rendered shape or fashion, denoting all the comely proportions of the church, by her likeness to her Lord Christ.

[o] Ver. 15. Take us the vineyards.] Poes attacking in Judea, and are observed, by abundance of authors, to love grapes, and to make great devastations in vineyards. Insomuch that Aristophanes, in his Equities, compares soldiers to foxes, spoiling whole countries, as they do vineyards. Now, the prophet
Ezekiel comparing false prophets to foxes, xiii. 4. it hath led all interpreters (in a manner) to understand by foxes in this place, Heretics; who appeared very early in the church, and therefore are compared to young foxes, in regard of their known craft and subtility, windings and turnings, shifts and evasions, whereby the more simple sort especially, and such as were newly converted, (compared here to tender grapes, as the church itself is to a vine), were in danger to be undone; unless a timely care was taken to prevent it. And therefore this verse seems to be an answer to the church's prayers, flying to her Lord for refuge. Who seeing her danger not to be greater from tyranny, than from false teachers, calls upon his companions, that is, the apostles, bishops, and pastors of the church, to look after them, and to take them in their craftiness. And that whilst they were young, in the beginning, that is, their appearance in the world; because their "vain babblings were apt to increase to more ungodliness, and their words did eat as a gangrene," &c. 2 Tim. ii. 16. 17. Especially when the church was but newly planted, and those seducers applied themselves chiefly to such as had but newly received the faith, or to weak and unsettled people, who were easily caught by them, unless great care were taken to discover their frauds, and to confute their sophistry.

Which was the taking of these foxes, as Theodoret expounds it; and St Bernard also, who observes that he saith, Take to us the foxes; that is, sibi et sponsa, to himself and to his spouse. As much as to say, If it be possible, let them be reconciled to the Catholic church, and brought back to the true faith. If that could not be, then other methods succeeded, and the apostles delivered up such dangerous deceivers unto Satan, which was a punishment that included in it bodily affliction, that they might learn not to blaspheme, 1 Tim. i. 6f.

[p] Ver. 16.] My beloved is mine, &c. As the former verse was his answer to the church's prayers, so this is the church's acknowledgement to him for his care; together with a profession of such firm adherence to him, as suits with the name of a dove, which he had bestowed on her, ver. 14.

He feedeth.] To feed, viz. his flock, is to have his abode among them. See vi. 2.

[9] Ver. 17.] Unto the day break, &c. All that she desires farther, is only his gracious presence with her, which she begs, in this verse, he would vouchsafe her upon the mountains, that is, those steep places mentioned before, ver. 14. (where the church was fain to worship him in great secret, because of the present danger); especially while any disputes and controversies remained about the Jewish ceremonies, which were a great disturbance to the church, as well as the afflictions and persecutions she endured, which are compared to the night and darkness, as the other to shadows.

Turn, my beloved.] The word turn doth not suppose him absent, but only that he did not immediately attend, or shew the regard he had to her prayers in distresses.

Like a rose. See chap. viii. 5. ult.

Mountains of Bethel. Bethel is the same with Beithel, these two letters, 7 and 4, being easily and often changed, as Bochartus hath observed (in his Geography, Sacra, Part ii. 1. c. 33.) in many instances. As for example, an island in the Persian gulf, is indifferently called Tyrus and Tylus; and Tautila in Spain is the same with Tabira; and Carolis in Sardinia, the same with Calariz, &c. In another work, indeed, of his, de Sacris Animal. he takes mountains of Bethel for mountains full of clefts. Which would agree well with what went before, ver. 14. and might be handsomely applied to the state of the church, when there were many breaches and rents in it; but the other is plainer and more literal.

C H A P. III.

THE ARGUMENT.—Here begins the third of those interlocutory discourses, which compose this famous song; part of which only is contained in this chapter. In which the bride and her companions speak all but one verse, which seems to be spoken by the bridegroom. For whose coming she still longs, and is introduced full of solicitude about it. Which proved not in vain, but was gratified with so much satisfaction in the hope of it, that, as he takes care it should not be disturbed, so all her companions rejoice exceedingly in it. For those are the two parts also of this chapter. In the first of which she testifies her earnest desire to find him, who filled her with joy, when she had got a sight of him, (in the four first verses); in the second, they that attended on her after he had renewed his former charge, (ver. 5.), are transported with joy, to behold the multitude of his followers, and the greatness of his royal glory. Which is the sense of the rest of the chapter.

SPouse.

Ver. 1. By night on my bed I sought him; whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not.] Many have been my thoughts about him, who (by what the prophets have foretold of him) is become the beloved of my soul. But though I have sought him in the greatest retirements, and when my mind was most composed, and that one night after another, though with a diligent search I have sought him in all the holy books, yet I can find no more than predictions and shadows of him, which assure me he will come, but cannot bring me to the sight and clear knowledge of him. See Amos. [a]

Ver. 2. I will rise now, and go about the city; in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek him; whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not. Whereupon I resolved to leave these private studies, and to go abroad and consult with others; and there is no place which I have not frequented, where I thought

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I might learn any thing of him. For I have fetched a compass round the whole city of Jerusalem, (which is the holy city, the joy of the whole earth;) and there is not one street, not any place of public resort, but I have gone into it, and inquired after him, both in the lesser and greater assemblies; I inquired of all the holy men I could meet withal, but could meet with no more tidings of him, whom my soul longs to see, because I love him above all things. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? But in the midst of these anxious thoughts there was some satisfaction presented to me, from some of those great ministers of God, who watch for the good of others, and employ themselves every where to direct his people; of whom I made the same inquiry, if they could tell me any thing of him, who had engaged my affections so much, that I could not often enough profess my love unto him. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. For I received such illuminations from them, that I had not long left their company, before I saw this beloved of my soul, as if he had been actually present with me; which transported me with such joy, that I could not think of parting with such a sight, but took fast hold of him, to keep him with me, till I had shewn unto all that wait for him, what I had been so happy as to find myself. See Annot. [d]

BRIDEGROOM.

Ver. 5. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love. And here again I heard him graciously renew the charge he had given before (ii. 7.) to all my companions, saying, I conjure you by all that is dear to you, not to discompost, or give the least disturbance to this love; but let it enjoy its satisfaction, to the height of its desires. See Annot. [e]

COMPANIONS.

Ver. 6. Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh, and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? And now, what is this that we see? Who is this goodly person, or rather this crowd of people, coming up out of desolate places in one body, to Mount Zion, and appear like pillars of smoke which arise from the altar of burnt-offering, and no less acceptable to God, than the sweet odours that ascend from the altar of incense in the holy place? See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. Behold the love which the great King hath to her, having prepared all things for her reception into society with himself; of whose royal person and happiness Solomon himself, in all his glory, is but a figure. Who is magnificently attended, indeed, and strongly guarded in his palace, by a number of valiant persons that encompass him night and day, in his bed and in his throne; but are not comparable to the power, and force, and multitude of that heavenly host, which secure the church in her enjoyments, and take care of her continual safety. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. They all hold swords, being expert in war; every man bath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.] Who are all unamissently bent, and in a constant readiness, (like that guard of valiant men about Solomon, with their swords drawn in their hands,) being not less skilful than able to succour and defend his people, from all the assaults of their invisible enemies, who seek to destroy them, by raising terrible persecutions against them. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.] But all in vain; for, as king Solomon hath caused a chariot of the choicest cedar to be made for him, and for his royal spouse, to appear in public, when he makes his progress through the kingdom, so doth this fair greater King ride on prosperously, (Psal. xiv. 4.), by the means of such instruments as he himself hath formed, and enlarges the body of his church by the preaching of his everlasting gospel. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.] Unto which the magnificence and riches of that chariot is not worthy to be compared, though the pillars of it being of silver, the back, the sides, and the seat being of cloth of gold, the curtains and covering of it being of the brightest purple, the carpet also under the feet being curiously wrought with the most lovely figures, by the daughters of Jerusalem, they make it very inviting to all spectators; for what is this to the wonderful love of God, and to the riches of his grace, in his great and precious promises, (far dearer to all good souls than thousands of gold and silver), which the gospel calls us not only to behold, but to enjoy? See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.] Make this, then, a festival-day, and let no domestic cares hinder you from bearing a part in the public joy; but as all the daughters of Jerusalem went out to behold the glory wherein king Solomon shone, when he appeared in state, with that royal crown, which his mother put upon his head, on his marriage-day, that day which completed all his joys, (Psal. xiv. 15.), so let all the people of God every where admire and extol the surpassing glory of that great King, who shall appear to be crowned with glory, honour, and joy, by God himself, on that happy day, when he shall publicly own his church, and give her the highest testimony of his endless love, Rev. xix. 6. 7. 12. See Annot. [l]
ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 1.] The beginning of this chapter might be connected with the foregoing, and applied to the state of the church under affliction, if the following words would suit with that exposition, which they do not, in my opinion; for he had desired to "hear her voice," ver. 14, of the second chapter, and now she cannot find him. Therefore I incline to think, that the very same thing is again represented in other words, (after the manner of the prophets, particularly of Isaiah, who over and over again, in several schemes of speech, foretells their restoration from the captivity of Babylon, and, under that shadow, their greater salvation by Christ,) viz. the earnest desire of the church for the coming of Christ; which Solomon expresses by his passionate longings he found himself in to see the blessed day.

By night.] And so, by night may be understood that dark time which was before his appearing; when good men sought for him, and had many dreams and visions about him, but could meet only with the shadows and images of him, which signified him to come, but did not exhibit his true presence to them. Of which neither the temple, nor the sacrifices, nor the sacred books, could discover any thing clearly; but was represented here to Solomon in a vision he had of him, and of the church which was espoused to him, after he had sought a long time, and groped every where after him, in that dark night wherein they lived. 'So, as I said, the night may be expounded; for such a dismal condition were they in, just when he appeared, Matth. iv. 18. Luke, i. 79.

On my bed.] This is expounded with strange variety by interpreters; some understanding hereby the bed of affliction, others the bed of ease and pleasure, others of weakness and infirmity, &c. But I have taken both bed and night, in the most simple sense, to signify the time and place for most composed thoughts; according to the meaning of Psal. iv. 4.

[b] Ver. 2.] I will rise now.] To rise up, signifies more active diligence than before had been used.

Go about the city.] By the city may be understood Jerusalem, that is, the whole church of the Jews, whereof it was the head, and therefore the figure of the church of Christ in future times, Isa. xxii. 5. 6. 7. Heb. xii. 22.

In the streets, &c.] Schewoshim, which we translate streets, are the lesser thorough-fares in the city, or the streets of lesser cities, as Recoboath are the greater, wider streets, or rather the streets of the royal capital city; signifying here his search both in the lesser and greater assemblies of God's people.

[c] Ver. 3. The watchmen that go about, &c.] By watchmen I understand the prophets, and such like excellent persons who instructed the people, (Ezek. liii. 17. xxxiii. 6. 7.), of whom he asks if they saw him whom he sought after. From which word I gather, that he speaks of such as were anciently called seers; of whom, he saith, he was found, that is, they shewed him something of the Messiah.

[d] Ver. 4.] For so it follows here in this verse, that not long after his discourse with them, he "found him whom his soul loved," i.e. came to the knowledge, or had a sight and enjoyment of him. In which vision (looking upon him as actually come) he endeavours to retain him, and to bring him into the temple, there to shew him to all the pious worshippers of the Divine Majesty. For that is literally the house of my mother, as ceder corabi, (the chamber of her that conceived me), I take to be the inward part of that house, or the most holy place.

[e] Ver. 5.] And here he expresses his affection to him (that is, to the church, whose passionate desires Solomon here represents in the foregoing verses) in the same words as he had done before in the foregoing chapter, ver. 7, where this verse is already explained.

[f] Ver. 6. Who is this, &c.] Here begins a new vision which he had of multitudes of people gathering unto Christ, like a cloud of smoke, which fills his companions with great admiration. For it is their voice which we read in this verse, where the word zath may be translated either what or who; and by the wilderness may be understood the forlorn condition wherein men were before, not only in Gentilism, but even in the Jewish estate. Which made it more wonderful, that the church should come thus richly adorned, (expressed here by the perfumes of her garments), to be brought in state and pomp to the king's palace, there to be espoused to him. But all that gave up themselves to him, becoming thereby an holy people, were highly esteemed by him, and therefore there compared to the pillars of smoke (as I take it) that went up every day from the altar of burnt-offering, at the temple before mentioned, and ascended in a straight line, like a firm pillar, that was not in the least moved from its uprightness, though the wind blew never so boisterously. So the Jews report in Pirke Avoth, c. 5. and in other books, where these are reckoned among the ten miracles which were seen in the temple, that "the greatest rain never put out the fire, and the most vehement winds never dispersed, or in the least bent the smoke," but it went steadily up to heaven. And how acceptable such persons were to Christ, is farther represented by the sweet perfumes which were burnt upon the altar of incense. For Solomon, I conceive, here alludes (in the last clause of the verse) to that composition which God ordered to be made of sweet spices for his own service at the tabernacle, which none might presume to imitate or make use of in other places, Exod. xxx. 34. 35. &c.

[g] Ver. 7. Bebold bis bed, &c.] And here is farther represented in the same vision, the happy con-
dition of the church (signified by the bed of Solomon) in society and fellowship with Christ, of whom Solomon was a type, both in his royal person, and state, and marriage, (as appears from Psal. xlv.), whose bed or throne (for the thrones of the eastern kings were in the form of a bed or couch, wherein more persons than one might sit, Rev. iii. 21.) was secured by the most valiant men in the kingdom, who are said to be three score, a determinate number being named (as the manner is) for an undeterminate. Though some conceive that Solomon doubled the number of that band of mighty men which was in David's time, which consisted of thirty, 2 Sam. xxiii. 13. 23. In the end of which chapter, ver. 39. we read also of thirty and seven persons who were of great note for their valour. To whom if we add the eleven princes mentioned in 1 Kings, iv. beginning, and the twelve great officers which had the care of making provision for his household in the several provinces, ver. 7. they make just the number of sixty. And may be looked upon as a figure of that strong guard which is about the prosperity and happiness of the church, which is defended by angels, who are mighty ones indeed, and very numerous, (Psal. lxi. 17.) and all ministering spirits for those that are heirs of salvation, Heb. i. ult. 1 nay, the most mighty of the heavenly host, it may be easily proved, (if this were a place proper for it), are guardians and protectors of Christianity.

Ver. 8. Because of fear in the night.] And do all of them unanimously oppose the spirit, wickedness, i.e. wicked spirits in high places, who seek to destroy the church, (Eph. vi. 12.), and may be meant by the terror of the night, as the Hebrews expounded Psal. xci. 5., and being the rulers of the Gentile world, stirred them up to persecute Christianity, as destructive to their kingdom of darkness.

Ver. 9. Made himself a chariot.] But in spite of all they could do, Christ is here represented under the type of Solomon, as carrying his church triumphantly through the world, (for the word appirion, which is never elsewhere used, seems to signify an open chariot, in which Solomon, and perhaps his queen, rode, to be exposed to the view of every one in the streets of Jerusalem), who beholding her, and the love of Christ to her, were thereby invited to become members of his church.

Most Lexicographeers derive this word appirion from a root which signifies to fructify, and therefore will have to signify a bed. But Avenarius, I think, more probably hath derived it from two words, which give it the signification of something carried on wheels, and therefore must denote at least a chariot having a bed or cushion in it.

The wood of Lebanon is cedar, denoting the perpetuity of the gospel, the preaching of which is the chariot here mentioned. So Theodoret, by the Φυλαίς (as the Greek translates it) οὗτος ἔρινθος παραμένει, &c. "Let us understand," saith he, "the holy apostles, who carried the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," &c. These were literally made 'and performed by Christ himself, whereas the chariots wherein Solomon rode, he could only command or direct others to make.

Ver. 10.] The description of the richness of this chariot of Solomon's follows in this verse; in which we are not to seek, I think, for something in the gospel answering to every part of it, but only to look upon it as setting forth the great splendour of it, and the riches of that grace which God vouchsafes to men therein.

The particular parts of the chariot I have described as well as I could in our language, and inserted in my paraphrase another translation of the last word mibbeoth, which signifies as well from or by, as for the daughters of Jerusalem. The most ingenious of which, it is likely, were employed in working that foot cloth which lay at the bottom of the chariot, with elegant figures of shepherds and shepherdesses perhaps, and all their innocent courtships. So that phrase may be interpreted, paved with love; but I have contented myself in the paraphrase to say only, with love's figures.

Some think they find in this chariot an imitation of that seat whereon God himself sat between the cherubims, with which they have compared it; but I cannot be persuaded that Solomon would be so audacious.

Ver. 11.] Nor do I see any foundation for the fancy of the Hebrew in Sedar Olam Rabba, cap. xv. (which the Chaldee Paraphrase touches upon), where they make the day of Solomon's espousals to be the next day after the feast, which he held seven days for the consecration of the temple, 1 Kings, viii. 66. Which was the day of the gladness of his heart indeed, but cannot be called his espousals. Which was not the day of his coronation neither, for then he did not ride in a chariot, but upon his father's mule; and was not crowned by his mother, but anointed by Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, 1 Kings, i. 33. 34.

The day of his espousals.] Therefore was the day when he took Pharaoh's daughter for wife, at which time it was the manner to crown married persons, and his father being dead, it was done by his mother. Of this custom mention is made by many authors, which the learned reader may find in Bochart, his Geographia Sacra, part ii. i. c. 25. Where he applies that passage in Ezekiel unto this, xvi. 8. 12. "When I looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, (i.e. thou wast fit for marriage); I entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine; and I put a jewel in thy forehead, &c.—and a beautiful crown upon thy head." For the Minneh informs us, that this nuptial crown was in use among the Jews, as well as other nations.

All which I do not see how it is any other way applicable unto Christ than I have expressed in the para-
phrase. The church indeed herself may be said to be his crown and joy, in that sense wherein St Paul saith the Thessalonians were his, 1 Thess. ii. 19. But this is not to put a crown upon him; and the church can in no sense be called his mother, especially since she is his bride. And therefore herein interpreters strain too much, who ought, I think, to have ascribed that to God the Father in the mystical sense, which is ascribed unto Bathsheba in the literal.

CHAP. IV.

The Argument.—The first seven verses of this chapter I take to belong to the foregoing, and are the words of the bridegroom, who praising the incomparable beauty of his spouse, and assuring her she should still appear more lovely and illustrious, concludes the third scene, as some call it, of this dramatic poem. And then begins a new representation at the eighth verse, which continues to the second verse of the fifth chapter, and comprises the 4th part of this song. Wherein the bridegroom expresses his love to his spouse, his esteem of her, and joy in her, in words of greater dearness, and higher kindness, than have been hitherto used. Which she prays may be continued, and he graciously grant it, inviting all to partake in their joys.

BRIDEGROOM.

Ver. 1. BEHOLD, thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair, thou art fair, thy locks within thy locks; thy hair as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilboa.] Great is thy beauty, O my beloved; admirable is thy beauty, worthy of men’s contemplation: Whom I can liken to nothing better than to a pure and chaste virgin, (2 Cor. xi. 2.), whose modest eyes, fixed only on him to whom she is espoused, sparkle within her locks when she is unveiled; and who appears to want none of those costly ornaments which are wont to set off the natural beauty of the face. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even born, which came up from the washing: whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.] Part of whose grace lies in the sweetness of thy mouth, full of white and even teeth, none of which stand out, or are longer than the rest, but all closely set both above and below in exact order and equality; being firm and sound also, without any breach or want of any of them. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks.] To which add fine and delicate lips, of a bright and lively crimson colour, with a sweet and charming voice; and cheeks that appear as pure a white and red, when the veil is off, as the blossoms of pomegranates. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 4. Thy neck is like the tower of David built for an armoury, wherein there hang a thousand buckles, all shields of mighty men.] And all this upon a goodly body, of a proper and tall stature, whose round and well-formed neck resembles that lofty structure of the tower of David, which may be a pattern of other neat and elegant buildings; and is not more adorned with the shields and bucklers of his worthies, which hang there in great abundance, than it is with pendants and a necklace of pearl, and other jewels, which have been the treasure of mighty princes. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.] Below which thy two breasts rise up, purely white, exactly round, of a just size and equal bigness, which put me in mind of two young kids that, being formed together, and brought forth at the same time, are so perfectly like, that none can know the one from the other; the tops of whose heads I have seen at a distance, appear like the teats of these breasts, as they fed in the same field among the lilies. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.] Such as this is the beauty of my church, as will be seen more fully when the night of persecution is gone, which hides it from the eyes of worldly men; though in the mean time she is most lovely in mine, and no less precious than the mountain and the hill from whence are fetched the most excellent perfumes and the richest spices. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. Thou art fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.] To say all in one word, Thou, my love, art the perfection of beauty, there being a most admirable harmony between the several orders, estates, and degrees of men in the church, and not the least spot or blemish (Eph. v. 27.) to be found in its constitution. See Annot. [g]

BRIDEGROOM.

Ver. 8. ¶ Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of the leopards.] ¶ And now that all the world may see I have espoused, nay, married thee unto myself, (Rev. xxi. 2.), come from those hallowed mountains whither thou hast fled for safety, (ii. 14. 17.), where, though I was present with thee, yet thou wast not free from danger, but exposed to the rage and cruelty of furious and troublesome men: come, I say, and dwell there no longer, but look down from thence, and behold the goodly heritage and the pleasant state that I have prepared for thee. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 9. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.] Thou hast strongly engaged my affection, thou hast endeared thyself unto me, my tenderly beloved spouse; thou hast entirely possessed thyself of my heart, by that lovely unity which I see between thy pastors, and between the people that live in holy obedience to them. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!
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song much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices.] Thy love to me and my commandments, O how amiable is it! how doth it enend thee unto me, my beloved spouse! how much more delicious is that love, which thy members have one for another, and for all men, than the best entertainments the world can give! how much more grateful are the rest of thy virtues, than the odours of the richest spices, even of those that are burnt at the altar! See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.] Nor are thy words less pleasing than thy deeds, the honey that drops of itself from the comb being not more sweet, sincere, and pure, than thy doctrine, O my beloved spouse; which is the delicious food of young and old, of weak and strong, and most powerfully recommended to their affections by the famed holiness of thy life, which, like the strong perfumes that come from the aromatic plants of Lebanon, fill all places with the delightful scent thereof. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 12. A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.] For as a garden well planted, watered, and defended, abounds with all sorts of flowers, and with variety of pleasant fruit, so doth my well-beloved spouse, by the singular care and special providence of God over her, with all the fruits of righteousness, admitting none to her mysteries but those who are pure and holy, and washed from all their defilements. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 13. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, cymbire, with spikenard.] Which makes the several orders and ranks of thy young novices (such is the exemplary purity of their lives) look like the young sets of pomegranates, and other odiferous fruit, such as the cyrus and spikenards, which are growing up into a paradise. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 14. Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief spices.] Planted only with the like precious herbs, shrubs, and trees, to those now mentioned, as saffron, sweet cane, cinnamon, with those that yield frankincense, myrrh, aloes, and the choicest spices; which are not more serviceable to our health or pleasure than that rare composition of graces which is visible in the church, makes her members acceptable unto God, and useful unto men. See Annot. [o]

Ver. 15. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.] Whose virtues are preserved in life and vigour by that heavenly doctrine, which flows from me as plentifully and perpetually, as waters do from those springs that break out of the high mountain Lebanon, which run continually in a large stream, and supplying all the gardens in the neighbouring places, keep them fresh and flourishing. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 16. ¶ Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou spouse.

Annotations.

[a] Ver. 1. Behold, thou art fair.] The Lord of the church is here introduced, describing the beautiful estate of it, under the person of a lovely virgin; whose elegant features are particularly represented to raise admiration and love in others, and to give the church the comfort of being so amiable in his eyes, whom no beauty can please but that which is divine. And they are represented by comparisons borrowed from the country, which was most suitable to a Bucolic, or pastoral poem, as I have already said this is.

Thou hast done eyes.] And first her eyes are compared to those of a dove, (for such reasons as are suggested in the paraphrase), when they are unvailled, as those words mikbaas letsamatech may be translated, (of which see ver. 3.), unto which I have here respect in my paraphrase, as well as to our translation, where this phrase is rendered, wibin thy locks.

Thy hair, &c.] Then the hair of this virgin's head is compared unto that of goats, as the next passage is to be translated, by repeating the word hair in this manner: "Thy hair is like the hair of a flock of goats." Thus the people of Israel are said to have brought for the service of the tabernacle, scarlet, and fine linen, and goats, that is, goat's-hair, as we truly translate it, Exodus. xxxv. 23. And in the next chapter, ver. 13, he made curtains of goats, (where we supply the word hair) for the tent over the tabernacle, according as he had been ordered, xxxv. 4. xxxvi. 7. Upon which passages Aberdeen observes, that Moses makes no mention of wool, either of lamb or sheep, because that was vile and contemptible in those countries, in comparison with the hair of goats, which was wont to be shorn, not only there, but in other places; for Aristotle observes the same of the goats of Cilicia. And some of them had a wool, as we may call it, so fine, that it was almost as soft as silk, which was that the women spun for the use of the tabernacle, Exodus. xxxv. 26. To this sort of hair, perhaps, there may be an allusion in this place, in regard of its softness, as well as length and thickness, which is a great commendation of hair in men and women.

But there was also a coarser or harder sort, with
which they made locks and ornaments for the heads when they were bald, or would appear very fine, as Brunnius hath observed in his book about the Priests' Garments, l. i. c. 9.

And in general it may be observed of hair, that it was always accounted a very great ornament; which made Philostratus, in a letter of his to a youth whom he loved, beseech him by no means to cut it off; in χρώματα, αξίωμα, κατὰ ἑπότως, καὶ κατὰ γένεσιν, there being no less beauty in a good head of hair, than in gold, in silver, in pendants, and such like ornaments. Which he illustrates by what it contributes to the greatness of several other creatures, as the lion and horse, &c.; and was notably expressed by Lycurges, when he gave this reason, why he ordained in his laws that his citizens should take care of the growth of their hair, because it made "beautiful persons more comely, and deformed more terrible," as Plutarch relates in his Apophthegms.

That appear from Mount Gilead.] Galaad was a mountain fit for goats to browse on, as may be seen in Bochart; which shows these last words of this verse should be thus translated, "that ascend from Mount Gilead," to the higher parts, that is, of that mountain, or of that country.

I should have ventured to compare the apostles and prophets to these two eyes, who being illuminated by the Holy Ghost, (represented by a dove), and having no other aim but sincerely to make Christ and his religion known in the world, resembled the eyes of doves, (see chap. ii. 14.); but I did not know to what the locks and hair could be handsomely applied, and therefore I have looked upon these, and the rest that follow, only as parts of those things that make up a perfect beauty. Theodoret hath made the aptest application that I can find; which is this, that hair signifying what is superfluous, the meaning may be, (if there be any of every particular in this description), that "even in human things, and worldly affairs, wherewith we cannot but be sometimes perplexed, the church behaves herself laudably, and preserves a decorum."

[b] Ver. 2. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep.] Here follows a description of the teeth, which are a great part of the beauty of the mouth, as that is of the face. And their beauty consists in their whiteness, in their evenness and just proportions, and in their closeness and firmness, so that there be none wanting, nor any gap between them. Which are all here expressed, and said to be like a "flock of sheep come from the washing," in respect of whiteness, and as equal as if they had been exactly polished and fitted for their places, in just proportion, by an artificer, (so the word we translate shorn signifies), they that are below also answering to those above, as if they were twins. And none of them miscarry, (so that which we translate barren should be rendered), i. e. drops out of the mouth; which is as much as to say, there is a perfect number, as well as order of them.

Now, the teeth being the instruments whereby we chew our meat, they may be looked upon as an apt emblem of the inferior pastors in the church, who prepare Christian doctrine for the people. Which application though I have not adventured to make in my paraphrase, (because I take these five first verses to mean no more, but only to set forth the loveliness of the church in general, by the figure of a virgin of a most accomplished beauty), yet I shall here note, for the help of those whose thoughts lead them that way, that the virtues of such pastors are, —saudour, purity, order, concord, exact agreement among themselves, one of them not seeking ambitiously to over-top the rest.

[c] Ver. 3. Thy lips, &c.] In the beginning of this verse there is no great difficulty; it being certain, that schani, (the colour of the lips), signifies some very bright and resplendent colour, which strikes the eyes sharply, (as it originally seems to import), viz. either scarlet, as we translate it, or crimson, or purple; such as the poets call coral lips. Whose fineness is here compared to a thread, and is another great part of beauty; as a sweet accent of the voice also is, nothing being more ungrateful than a tone that is coarse and clownish.

If any list to apply these particularly to something in the church, the lips may be thought to signify the teachers in the church, who delivered the doctrine they had learnt from the higher ministers, who had prepared it for them, and by them for the people. And the voice signifying their excellent manner of preaching; insinuating into the hearts of those that heard them, being accompanied with great modesty and humility, though full of authority and power. Unto which only the last clause of this verse can be applied, which is this.

"Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate, within thy locks."

Where two or three words puzzle interpreters. First, That which we translate temple, which are not reckoned as a part of the beauty of the face, especially being covered by the locks; and why they should be likened to a slice of a pomegranate, is hard to tell. Grotius, therefore, by the temples understands the cheeks, (as the Vulgar doth), which, in regard of their redness, are like to the grains of kernels within a pomegranate. So the Chaldee indeed interpretts the other word, a piece of a pomegranate; when he thus glosses, "they are replenished (viz. just and pious men to whom he applies it) with precepts, as a pomegranate;" i. e. as pomegranate is with kernels or grains with which it abounds, and to which that interpreter no doubt hath respect.

But our learned Dr Castel hath, out of the neighbouring languages, more clearly explained both these words, and the last also, and hath made them all easy and natural, by showing that the whole clause
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is thus most exactly translated; as the "flower of the pomegranate, so are thy cheeks without a veil." So he translates the last words, which we met with before, ver. 1. milbaath letsammeth, not "within thy locks," but "without a veil." That is, when thy veil is laid aside, thy cheeks appear of a most lovely colour, for such is that of the pomegranate-flower, the purest white and red, most exactly mixed. V. Orat. in Schola Theolog. p. 37.

[d] Ver. 4. Thy neck is like, &c.] The neck being compared to the tower of that goodly fortress which David made upon Mount Sion, which overtopped all the rest of the buildings of the city of Jerusalem, denotes, among other things, the tallness of the whole body.

Built for an armoury.] This tower is said to be built letalpijoth, (for an armoury, we render it), which the LXX. knew not what to make of, and therefore retain the Hebrew word; and others do but guess at its meaning, having no certain rule from whence to fetch its original. Aquila translates it fortifications; but Symmachus translates it heights; which last I have followed, adding another signification also derived from alaph, to teach or instruct.

Thousand bucklers.] This tower, it seems, was adorned with the shields and bucklers of those mighty men mentioned, 1 Sam. xxiii. and such like worthies; with which Grotius ingeniously compares those precious stones, which are wont to be the ornament of the neck. But what answers to this in the body of the church, I know not, unless we admit the opinion of R. Solomon, and others of that nation, who will have this to be the place where the Sanbedrin had a room, called in their language Lishath bagganith, the chamber or parlour of square stones, (which some interpreters have thought to be the meaning of built letalpijoth with square stones), where judgement was administered, and their discipline preserved, which was the strength and support of the nation, as the general council of the apostles and elders, mentioned, Acts, xv. was of the Christian church, who settled all doubts and controversies, as future councils were to do, and thereby maintained the church in order and peace. From which Theodoret doth not much differ, when he saith the church hath many shields whereby it is defended. "For thou art armed with all the weapons of the Spirit, (saith he, paraphrasing upon these words), whereby thou easily woundest thy enemies, &c. and sometimes dost refel them by the prophets, sometimes by the apostles, and layest open their weakness."

[a] Ver. 5. Thy two breasts, &c.] The two paps rise upon the breast like lilies from the ground, among which, if we conceive two red kids feeding, that were twins, and perfectly alike, they appeared like the nipples or teats upon the paps to those that beheld them afar off. Thus Bochart explains this comparison, which sets forth the exact proportion, and the pure complexion of the breasts, unto which most think the two Testaments, the Old and the New, very aptly answer in the Christian churches just as R. Solomon hereby understands the two tables of stone in the Jewish. But they forgot that this is a description of the parts of the church, (not of things belonging to it), and can be applied to nothing, that I can think of, but the two orders of preachers that were, one among the Jewish Christians, and the other among the Gentiles, as Gregory the Great expounds it. Who think these are called twins because of their perfect agreement and concord in the Christian doctrine, though one of them bent their endeavours most toward the conversion of the Jews, and the other of the Gentiles. And indeed they that taught the first rudiments of Christian doctrine, went forth by pairs, as we read, Luke, x. where Christ is said to send them forth by two and two, to admonish them how necessary their concord was, and that they had need to be assistant all they could one to the other in such a difficult work.

[f] Ver. 6. Mountain of myrrh, &c.] Here now the description stops, and proceeds no farther to the lower members of the church; which are not particularly commended, but it is only intimated, that in conjunction with their guides and directors, they made up a beautiful body, though for the present obscured by the night of persecution, as the first words of this verse may be applied. Which body might be well compared to a "mountain of myrrh, and hill of frankincense," that is, to Mount Moriah and Jerusalem, say the Hebrew, (and so the church is called the New Jerusalem in the Revelation), where the sweet incense made of these and other spices (Exod. xxx. 34.) were continually burnt in the temple.

I know it is commonly thought, that other mountains (afterwards mentioned, ver. 8.) are here meant; about which I shall not dispute. But only observe, that these two, myrrh and frankincense, were among the most precious spices of those countries, (and therefore here mentioned), as appears by what we read in Athenæus, (l. i. Diepnoroph. c. 3.), who, speaking of the noble entertainments which were made by several persons that overcame in the Olympics, tells us that Empedocles, being a Pythagorean, and eating no flesh, when he won the prize, caused an ox to be made of myrrh and frankincense, and other precious spices, which he divided among the spectators. And (cap. 8.) he puts these two among those things which were accounted ἐρημίτικα, delicacy. And Hermippus, relating what places were most famous for several things, saith—εἰς ᾿Εὐρημίτας, that frankincense came out of Syria, cap. 21. The verses also of Archestratus (l. iii. p. 101.) make mention of Syria, and say these were used for perfumes at feasts. The same I observe in other places of that author, and therefore have made the allusion here only to the preciousness of those things, which were no where so excellent as in those countries. And I have taken this verse to be still in praise of the be-
fore-described beauty; for it is evident, from the following verse, he had not yet done with that matter.

[i] Ver. 7. Thou art all fair, &c. And here, to comprehend all that could be said, he enlarges the commendation which he began withal, ver. 1. and concludes in those words, that there was no defect in any part, but altogether they made up a complete beauty, without the least speck of deformity. Which is not to be applied to every particular person in the church; but, as I have taken it in the paraphrase, to the admirable constitution of the whole, in which there was no imperfection.

[ii] Ver. 8. Come with me from Lebanon, &c. Here now begins a new representation, as appears by this, that the style wherein the bridegroom speaks is altered, she who hitherto hath been called his love or friend, being now called his spouse, and never before; though very frequently in the following part of the song. Which hath moved interpreters, I suppose, to use this name throughout rather than the other, as the higher and most excellent title.

Theodore therefore here begins his third book, very judiciously; and we may look upon this as a description of the church, coming out of the state of persecution, and receiving greater testimonies of her Saviour's love than ever. For coming from the top of high mountains, where there were lions dens, and where leopards inhabited, cannot well signify any thing else, than coming from places where they were in danger to be devoured by their persecutors, who are compared to lions in many places of scripture.

As for the mountains themselves, they are well known where they were. Only Amana some have fancied to be that mountain in Cilicia, called Amamus; which is reckoned among the highest, and joined by Ælian with Libanus and Carmel. We read also that there were tigers and panthers, &c. in this mountain, which hath been brought to countenance this opinion. Judæa and the neighbouring places being the scene of this poem, we are not to go so far off as Cilicia to seek for Amana; for as Senir and Hermon were but parts of the same mountains, so Amana was a part of Libanus, as Bochartus hath observed in his Canaan, l. i. c. 5. And though the lower parts of this mountain Libanus were very pleasant, yet the top of it, which is here spoken of, was horrid, and inhabited with wild beasts. From whence the spouse is invited to come into more delightful and secure places; for she is compared presently after to a garden or paradise, ver. 12, 13. &c. And it is no wonder Solomon should have the state of the Christian church in trouble, thus represented to him; it being very suitable to the state of the church of the Jews, when it was first formed, being then pressed by Pharaoh, and many other enemies afterward, before they came to Canaan.

[i] Ver. 9. Thou hast ravished my heart, &c. The first word of this verse, libhassatî, (which is not to be found any where else,) signifies some extraordinary motion in the heart; and is translated by some, Thou hast wounded my heart; by the LXX. (which we follow), Thou hast taken away my heart; but may as well be translated, Thou hast taken possession of my heart, and deeply engaged my affection. Which is expressed by the addition of another name for her, whom he called spouse in the foregoing verse, and here also calls sister. Which is only a word of tenderness and endearment, used by husbands to their wives; as appears by the book of Tobit, where Raguel calls his wife Edna; his sister, vii. 16. and Tobias calls Sara by the same name, after he had married her, vii. 4. 7.

One of thine eyes, &c. All the difficulty here is, what may be thought to be meant by one of her eyes, and one chain of her neck. Some take eyes to signify faith and charity, others the church of the Jews and Gentiles, and then one eye must signify one glance, one look of thy eyes; but nothing pleases me better than the old interpretation of Alcuinus, who by the word one understands oneness or unity; and by the eyes (as vers, 1. the pastors and guides of the church; and by the one wreath of hair about the neck, the pious unity of the people subject unto them.

It may be interpreted also, “the least glance I have of thee and of thy beauty, mightily engages my love to thee; for thy eyes are the very seat of love;” as abundance of authors express it.

[k] Ver. 10. How fair is thy love! The love, or rather loves (as it is in the Hebrew), which is here extolled, may signify our love to God, and unto one another; and ointments be applied to all the graces which flow from thence.

[l] Ver. 11. Thy lips distil, &c. That which distils from the lips, as honey from the comb, can be nothing but pure and most delicious doctrine, delivered in such a manner, as to invite all to taste of it. For this, by all sorts of authors, is compared to honey; and made Xenophon be called the Attic, and Sappho the Pierian Bee; because of the sweetness of his orations, and of her poems. When the rare eloquence of Plato is said to have been predicted by bees, which came and sat in his mouth, when he was an infant; which is reported also, by no mean authors, of Pindar, Lucan, and St Ambrose.

Honey and milk are under thy tongue.] This signifies the same thing; for these were anciently the food of infants, and may denote that the church hath instruction for all sorts. So wide from the truth is the exposition of the doctors in Maimonides (Porta Mosis, p. 85.), that this milk and honey being said to lie under the tongue, signifies the concealment of such truths as are very sweet, till men be fit to receive them.

The smell of thy garments.] Garments, wherewith we
are clothed, signify; in the New Testament, our whole conversation; and their perfume, therefore, denotes not only the excellency of the Christian life, but its being known also every where.

Like the smell of Lebanon.] From the trees in the forest of Lebanon, came many sweet spices, particularly frankincense, from which some think it took its name of Lebanon, though others think rather from leban, white, because of the snow that lay perpetually upon the top of this mountain.

[†] Ver. 12. A garden inclosed.] In the forest about this mountain Lebanon, Solomon built himself an house, which we find described, R Kings, vii. 2. &c. unto which no doubt there belonged a garden, with springs, and fountains, or receptacles of water; and all sorts of trees, and plants, and flowers, that might make it delightful. Unto which I conceive he hath respect in this, and in the following verses.

I know that very good authors think he here describes a perfect virgin; “like a garden newly inclosed, in which no seed hath been sown;” as the doctors speak in Perk Eliezer, cap. 21, which hath made some Christian writers apply this to the care of the church, to preserve herself pure and undefiled, &c. But it is more agreeable to what goes before, and follows after, to expound it, as Theodoret doth, of the church bringing forth not only the fruits of godliness and virtue, but all sorts and variety of fruit, like an excellent garden; and therefore guarded by the singular care and providence of her Lord and owner, from tyrants and heretics, who, like wild beasts, or thieves, would destroy or deflower her.

A spring shut up, &c.] The same meaning hath a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed; that the waters may be preserved from dirt and filth, which cannot be thrown or fall into them, to trouble them and make them muddy, when they are so secured; but they flow purely. And, indeed, in the prophetic language, the flourishing condition of the church, after it hath been in affliction, is set forth by the planting of a wilderness with all sorts of the best trees; and by making fountains break forth, and waters flow therein, Isa. xli. 18. 19., li. 2.

The LXX. (according to the Vatican copy, and that which Theodoret follows), and the Vulgar Latin, take the second comparison here, to be the same with the first, reading it thus: “A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a garden inclosed,” &c. (just like ver. 9. and ver. 11.), reading, it seems, in the Hebrew, gan, a garden, where we now read gal, a spring. But this doth not at all alter the sense, and therefore need not trouble the reader.

It is possible, that in the last words of the verse, a fountain sealed, there may be a description of the Christian font, or baptism; to which none were admitted, but such as sincerely renounced all wickedness, resolving and promising to lead a holy life. Which sense Theodoret may be thought to have expressed, when he saith, the church is compared to a fountain sealed, in µυστήριον, καθαρός ἀπομείωσις, as not lying exposed to all comers, but only to those who are worthy. Though his next words seem to confine this passage to the mysteries in the other sacrament of Christ’s body and blood; which they only that are already initiated in the Christian church can partake of, and not after their initiation wallow again in filthiness, but live accurately, or purify themselves by repentance, if they fall into any sin.

St Cyprian makes use of this verse, to prove the unity of the church, not only in his book upon that subject, but in several of his epistles, saying, “If the church be a garden inclosed, and a fountain sealed; how can any man enter into that garden, or drink of that fountain, who is not in the church!” &c. Epist. v. 69. 74. 75. Edit. Oxon.

Cotovius, in his itinerary, says, that there is a fountain three miles from Bethlehem; southward, called by this name of fountain sealed; to which he went, and was told, that water still runs from thence in pipes to the place where Solomon’s temple stood. But he himself intimates, that herein he follows an uncertain report.

[‡] Ver. 13. Thy plants, &c.] By these Schelachim, young plants, or shoots and cimes, (as the word signifies), we may well understand those whom the apostle calls ἱδρύμα, who had newly received Christianity, and are here represented as a goodly nurture of pomegranates—a fruit in that country very delicious, and no less useful many ways; for it was of a grateful smell, and had a wony juice, very refreshing, and therefore much desired in those fresh places. Theodoret also thinks, that hereby is set forth, the great variety of Christians in the church, or, as his words are, “the many orders of Christians that shall be saved.” For there is one order of virgins, another of widows, another of married people; as there are also, rich and poor, masters and servants, &c. who have their several places and stations in one and the same church; as the grains of the pomegranates lie in their several cells, and distinct closets, (as they may be called), and yet are all contained in the same shell, and all compose one body.

Campb.] Of Gopher, which we translate Campisbury, see chap. i. ver. 14. Where it is joined with Æred, as it is here. Of which, (i.e. of Æred), there were several kinds, and therefore a word of the plural number is here used, as a word of the singular in the beginning of the next verse, which we in English express by the same word, gophered, in both places.

[ε] Ver. 14. Saffron, Calosum, &c.] Most of the names of these fragrant shrubs or trees, which we read in the Hebrew text, are the very same with those now in use in our and most other languages. The first of them, כּוֹכֵב, (saffron), being not much different from crowne, from whence that messenger in Gallicia, called Corpez, had its name; whereas the best crowne in the world then grew. The next
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Canne, (which we translate calamus,) is a sweet cane or reed. Cinnamon also retains the same name, as do myrrh, (which grew only in the midst of Arabia, among the Sabæans,) and aloes, which dropt from a shrub in those countries; and was reckoned among the prime spices, as the last words of this verse are very well translated.

Chief spices. In the Hebrew, the words are, the top or the head of aromatics, which signifies the most excellent spices. Just as the top of myrrh Exod. xxx. 23. signifies the best and purest myrrh, and the top or head of oil, Psal. cxii. 7., the most excellent oil. I shall only note further, that frankincense, myrrh, calamus, cinnamon, (called there mēdōc), are thus joined together by an ancient poet in Hosea, 11. ix. cap. 12. Where Mnesimachus, in a poem of his, called Hippopotamos, making a description of a great supper, which was a marriage-feast, saith, at the end of it,

Cinnamon, mēdōc (it should be spice, I suppose) ērōs; Sec.

Where Cinnamon, (the attribute of smell,) which we commonly translate cimbræus, and is so rendered in the ancient Glossary, signifies most excellent. For by that word, the LXX. translate the Hebrew nēmeith, Prov. viii. 6., excellent or princiely things. And so noble was the smell which the spices gave, that the poet saith, it moved the nostrils, i.e. strongly affected them, and stirred up in the brain a brisk sense of pleasure.

I do not think fit to seek for any thing in the church, particularly answering to every one of these excellent spices, as interpreters do, but look upon them only as representing in general, the incomparable virtues of the church, and its acceptableness unto God. Or, that there are in the church, all things necessary to salvation; for such unguents, and other compositions, were made of the balsam, fruit, or seed of these shrubs, conducting much to health and long life.

A fountain of gardens, Sec. This verse Theodoret judiciously connects with the foregoing, after this manner; ἢ γενέσθαι το ζωήν, and it (i.e. this parable or similitude as we translate it) hath also a fountain.

A fountain of gardens, and well of living water, are the same thing, as Bochart hath observed in his Canaan, i. 11. c. 18. Where he shows, that here, which we translate πῶς or well, signifies a fountain, as much as manṣūţ. Libanus abounds with such springs, (as all great mountains do;) and particularly there is at the foot of it, an excellent spring, which grows presently into a river, that waters the whole plain between that and Tripolis with a good stream, whereby the vineyards, olive-yards, fig-yards, and gardens, which were very numerous, were all supplied. Uz, which Theodoret compares the evangelical doctrine, (according to that of our blessed Saviour's, John, iv. 10. 14;) only he adds also the law, making fountain and well in this verse two distinct things; and by the latter, imagining the law to be denoted, because things lay there deep and secret, as in a pit.

[S] Ver. 16. Awake, O north-wind, Sec. The same great person thinks the north-wind is here commanded to arise, merely that it might be gone, (as being pernicious to fruit,) and give place to the south-wind, which is only invited to come and blow upon the garden, with its soft, gentle, and benigne breath. But most interpreters take it otherwise; and some imagine that these two, being the most vehement winds in those countries, are called upon to blow, that by their strong shakings of the aromatic plants, they might make them send forth their odours the more plentifully. But it seems more reasonable to think, that these two winds were most profitable in their turns, for these two purposes. First, the north-wind was useful to close the pores of the trees, and shut up their effluences, that they might not spend themselves too much, and be exhausted by perpetual evaporation. And then the south-wind, coming in due season, opened and relaxed them again; making the aromatic gases drop freely, and the sweet odours fly more actively abroad.

And if this garden, to which Solomon here alludes, had the same situation which the maps and charts give to that at Jerusalem, (which they place on the east side of the city, having the wall on the west,) these two winds here mentioned, were those which alone were desirable; the east being biting and blasting, not only in Egypt, Gen. xiv. 6. but in Judea also, Ezek. xix. 3. and in Assyria, Jonas, iv. 8. And therefore they defend their fruits against it, that they might not be exposed to it.

Let my beloved come, Sec. There is no doubt but this conclusion of the chapter is the voice of the spouse, praying her beloved to favour and prosper his own plantation, for his sake as well as for her's; that he might not lose what his self had designed, and so happily begun and seated in such beautiful order, but take the pleasure of seeing it grow to perfection.

CHAP. V.

THE ARGUMENT.—The first verse belonging (as was said before in the argument of the fourth chapter) to the foregoing representation, a new one begins, ver. 2. which continuing to the end of this chapter, makes the fifth part of this pastoral. Wherein is represented how soon our spirits flag, and grow weary of the most heavenly delights; nay, how drowsy the best minds sometimes are, and how insensible of God's love. For the spouse is introduced, (ver. 2. 3.;) as in a slumber, and not so readily as formerly to comply with his gracious motions. At which the bridegroom takes not such delight, as to leave her in that dulness, but awakes her out of it, to such a lively sense of her negligence, that she

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applies herself to seek his favour with greater earnestness than ever, ver. 4. 5. 6. The sense of which, though she could not presently recover, (ver. 6. 7. 8.), yet she expresseth the greatest passion for him, and the highest admiration of him; in a rare description which she makes, (ver. 10. to the end of the chapter,) of his beauteous excellencies and perfections.

Bridegroom.

Ver. 1. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten of my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk of my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. I am well pleased to see the fruitfulness of my garden, and therefore have not denied thy request, my tenderly-beloved spouse; but am present in it, and have brought it to such perfection, that it hath produced many excellent persons, more precious than myrrh, and all the spices before named; with whose services I am not only well pleased, but rejoice in the purity of their doctrine, and of their lives; inviting all that bear any love to me, both in heaven and in earth, to rejoice and be exceeding glad together with me. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. If I sleep, but my heart wakest: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I heard these gracious words, though I was not perfectly awake, and knew it was his voice, and not the voice of a stranger, (John, x. 5.), which called upon me, and that with importunity, (Rev. iii. 20.), saying, Give me free admission into thy best affections; why dost thou delay, who art so very dear to me, so entirely beloved by me, who hast consented to love me above all things, and to keep thine holy and undefiled, by loving me alone; which I have long desired, and taken much pains, and endured great hardships, to win thy love. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. I have put off my coat, bow shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, bow shall I defile them? But so stupidly dull and drowsy was I at this time, that I did not answer his kindness, as it deserved; but made unhappier excuses, and desired I might not be disturbed, now that I was taking my repose, and could not without difficulty leave my bed, and my beloved rest; the sweetness of which I had begun to taste. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. My beloved put by his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. And yet such is the kindness of him, who is worthy of all love, he did not presently leave me to myself, but first raised me out of my slumber, by letting me know he was not well pleased with me; and making me sensible of the danger of such delays; which put me in such a commotion, that I was in great anguish of mind, and even quivered and shaked with fear, and grief; and sorrow. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handle of the lock. Whereby I was not quite dejected, but only excited to shake off my sloth, and to make the more haste to acknowledge his goodness, and embrace his gracious motions to me; unto which I applied myself with zealous endeavours, resolving to entertain him with the most ardent love, and with the highest expressions of my esteem of him and of his favour. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone; my soul failed when he spake; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. But, though I thus repented of my negligence, yet see the lamentable effects thereof; for when I had thus disposed my heart, and set it wide open to receive his commands, my beloved had withdrawn his gracious presence, and was gone quite away out of my sight; which made me even sink down and die with fear, that I should not recover him again, especially when I called to mind those many words of grace, wherein he made his addresses to me, calling me (ver. 2.) his sister, his love, his dove, his undefiled; with which I was now affected too late, for I sought him diligently, but could not find him; I beseeched and intreated him to return, but received no answer from him. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. The watchmen that went about the city, found me; they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. This, though it was very bitter to me, yet did not utterly discourage me, but still I continued to seek him everywhere, as I had done heretofore; (iii. 3.) but they who formerly instructed me, and directed me unto him, now fell upon me with grievous reproofs, nay, reproaches for my fault, which cut me to the very heart; nay, they whose office it was to preserve the city of God in peace and safety, exposed me to open shame, and the foulest disgrace. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love. So I turned myself to those of my neighbours and familiar acquaintance, who were awakened by my cries to come and see what was the matter, and conjured them, as they would answer it to God, that if they met with my beloved, they would let him know—what shall I say? what shall I desire you to tell him? but that I do not enjoy myself, now that I want his company; nor can be well, till I recover his love again. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. ¶ What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? ¶ And some of them had so much compassion upon me as to interest themselves so far in my sorrows, as to inquire into the cause of them; and how they might be assistant unto me in their cure; for they asked me, Wherein doth thy beloved excel other excellent persons? he is very lovely, no doubt, because beloved of thee, who art the most amiable of all other women; but what is his pre-eminence? wherein do those, who
are worthy of the greatest love, fall short of him? that thou art thus solicitous about him, and layest such a severe charge upon us, to assist thee in thy search of him. See Annot. [1]

Ver. 10. My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.] To whom I replied, My beloved is that great son of David, of whom you have heard; who is of a princely form, having admirable beauty and sweetmess mixed with equal majesty and brightness, dazzling the eyes of those that behold him, chose by God to do the greatest things, and bring all nations into his obedience. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.] And therefore wears a crown of pure gold upon his head; from whence his curled locks hang down upon his brow, which are of such a shining black, that they add an excellent grace and greatness to his royal beauty. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 12. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and white set.] His eyes are sparkling, and yet mild, like those of milk-white doves, when they are highly delighted, as they sit by the river’s side, or other places where there is abundance of water. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 13. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.] The lovely down also upon his cheeks is no less gratusful, rising there like spices, when they first appear out of their beds, or like the young buds of aromatic flowers, in the paradise before described; where the purple lilies are not more beautiful than his lips, from whence flow words more precious, and more pleasant, than the richest and most fragrant myrrh. See Annot. [n]

Ver. 14. His bands are as gold rings, set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires.] And as he hath the majesty of a prince, so he hath the compassion of a priest; and therefore cloathed with such a vest as the high-priest wears, when he ministers before God, and is adorned with the ephod, unto which the breast-plate, with all its precious gems, is constantly annexed. See Annot. [o]

Ver. 15. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.] His thighs are also covered with fine linen, which makes them look like pillars of the whitest marble; over which the holy robe is thrown, with gold bells at the bottom of them; all which are so contrived for beauty and glory, that his aspect, when he appears in these flowered vestments, is no less stately and great than the forest of Lebanon; whose goodly cedars do not more excel all other trees than he doth all other men. See Annot. [p]

Ver. 16. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.] So you would say, as well as I, if you did but hear him speak, or if he did but breathe upon you; and, to say all in one word, there is nothing wanting to make him the desire of all nations; nor any thing in him, but what is desirable; and therefore do not wonder, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that I am thus concerned about him, and restless till I find him; for this is the true pourtraiture of my beloved, this is the character of him, who, by owning me for such, gives me leave to call him my friend. See Annot. [q]

Annotations.

[a] Ver. 1.] Unto that invitation, which is made by the spouse, in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, the bridegroom here gives an answer; and testifies his acceptance, by coming to taste the fruit of his garden, nay, to make a feast in it; of which he calls his friends and companions, after the manner of those countries, to be partakers. His receiving fruit from his garden, is expressed in these words, “I have gathered my myrrh,” with the rest of the spices mentioned in the former chapter. Then follows the feast, (which they always made when they gathered the fruits of the earth), in these words, “I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey,” &c. Which is put instead of all other things, because it was one of the greatest entertainments of those countries. As appears from hence, that it was among the presents sent to Joseph, when viceroy of Egypt, Gen. xliii. 11. and brought to David by the great men of the country, as part of his provision, while he dwelt among them in his banishment, 2 Sam. xvii. 29. and is mentioned also by Homer, as the entertainment which Hecamede gave Nestor and Patroclus, before whom she set green or fresh honey.

And as that comprehends all royal dainties that were to be eaten, so wine and milk all the liquors at the feast; whereby is represented the joy he took in the fruit of his garden. In which joy he would have all good men, and angels themselves, (Luke, xvi. 10.) to participate in the highest measure, that their joy, as our Lord speaks, might be full. For that is the meaning of “drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”

I have not adventured to be very particular in specifying the things to which these expressions may be applied, but have only mentioned the evangelical doctrine, and the good works of Christians. If by myrrh and spices any special thing be designed, I should think it is the martyrs, who offered up themselves most acceptable sacrifices unto Christ, and made greater joy in heaven than the mere repentance of a sinner could do. And the joy that Christ took in such victorious souls as laid down their lives for him, nay, did but heartily entertain his doctrine, is expressed by their feasting with him, Rev. iii. 20.

The last words, “Eat, O friends, drink,” &c. may soberly be applied to the Eucharist, where we feast with Christ on his sacrifice, and he feasts with us, beholding our love to him and one to another.
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[b] Ver. 2.] Here now begins a new scene or part of this pastoral song, wherein Solomon represents himself as having lost that clear sight of the Messiah which he had in the following vision, chap. iii. 4. (for they could not always keep up their minds to such a pitch of contemplation.) But falling into a trance, thought he heard his voice (though he saw not the person) speaking to his spouse. Whom Solomon conceives to be in the same condition wherein he then was himself, and to hear those words spoken, ver. 1. between sleeping and waking. So the first words of this verse signify, "I sleep, but my heart waketh;" the same with those of Psal. xxiv. 4. "falling (asleep), but having my eyes open." In which condition the Greeks describe their Saturn, of whom they say, ενθαπεριερεροται και επεφέροντας μανθεντες, "sleeping he saw, and waking he slept." She having, therefore, but an imperfect sense of his kindness to her, and presence with her, he awakens her to attend more lively to his love, which he was desirous more fully to discover, and therefore calls upon her by more names of endearment than ever. For here are four put together, the following rising still higher than the foregoing. And he represents (after the manner of lovers) what he had suffered to gain her affection; which seems to me to be the meaning of the last words, "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Wherein he is represented as a beautiful Nazarite, having bushy hair, and many locks, (as Sampson had,) who having traveled all night to see her, was thereby very wet. For there were two sorts of dews; the morning-dew, which was soon gone, Hos. vi. xiii. 3. and that dew which fell in the night, and lay long, and wet those who were in it very much. Whereby it signified in scripture, hardships and great afflictions, Dan. iv. 25. There are those, indeed, who by dew understand the evangelical doctrine, by which innumerable souls were begotten unto Christ, as David prophesied, Psal. cx. 3. But this is not agreeable to what follows; and their reason for this exposition is not true, that dew is always taken in a good sense, for I have shewn the contrary; and the dropping of the prophets (a metaphor taken from dew) is their prophesying against a place, and threatening judgments to come upon it. Ezek. xxi. 2. Amos, vi. 16.; which makes me think that Solomon here rather alludes to the last verse of the 110th psalm, (if he had that psalm in his eye,) which predicts the troubles and afflictions of the Messiah, "by drinking of the brook in the way." If this exposition of this difficult verse be not allowed, it may be supposed that the Messiah is here represented as coming in the person and condition of a poor man to beg entertainment, and having not any where to lay his head, (as our Lord speaks,) was thereby exposed to the cold air, &c. Which will make this a commendation of charity to the church, shewing also the danger of neglecting it.

[c] Ver. 3.] And then this verse agrees perfectly with what we read in the parable, Luke, xi. 7. Where the goodman of the house was unwilling to be troubled, even by his friend that came to beg his assistance, when he was going to compose himself to rest. But I take it to be a description of the dulness which is sometimes apt to creep upon the most excellent minds; who in some tempers are so listless as not to be much affected with the best motions that are made to them. Of which infirmity Solomon, having had many examples in the history of his own nation, might well conceive the spouse herself to be backward to entertain the grace which was offered to her.

There are no difficulties in the words; which signify plainly, that she, having composed herself to rest, and being half asleep, was unwilling to be disturbed. For going into bed, she had put off her clothes and washed her feet, as the manner was, that no filth, which they had contracted in the day-time, (they wearing sandals only, not shoes as we do,) might foul the sheets; and it would have been a trouble to do all this over again, which is the meaning of the last words. "How shall I do these things?" i. e. I cannot easily persuade myself to it.

I shall only therefore set down the pious note of Theodoret upon these words: "Let us learn from hence what mischief, sloth, and laziness doth, and in what troubles and pains it engageth us. For the spouse here excusing herself, and not being willing presently to rise to the bridgroom, is compelled, a little while after, not only to rise and run down to the door, but to run through the city, and wander about the streets, and fall among the watchmen, and by them to be wounded; and after all could scarce find her beloved; to whom if she had presently hearkened, and obeyed his heavenly call, she had avoided all these inconveniences." There are those, not only among us, but also in the Romish church, who apply all this laziness to the state of the church after the time of the great Constantine. For which I see no warrant, but think we may rather apply it to those churches, who, presently after our Saviour's departure to heaven, left their first love, and grew cold, as we read in the second and third chapters of the Revelation. For it seems probable, by the sixth chapter of the book, in the beginning of it, that here he speaks of particular societies, not of the whole body of the church.

[d] Ver. 4.] Yet such is the infinite goodness of the divine nature, he immediately represents the Messiah as not provoked by this neglect wholly to cast off his spouse, but rather stretching forth his hand to awaken her out of this security. For so it follows, "He put in his hand by the hole," i. e. at the window or casement, as if he would draw her out of her bed; or as it may be interpreted, in a
threatening manner, to punish her for her sloth. For so “putting forth the hand” signifies, to do some execution, 1 Sam. xxxvi. 9. 11. 23. Which agrees with what follows, that presently she was mightily moved thereby, and more than awakened, being full of solicitude; and fear, and grief, and trouble. Which shows, indeed, that she did not intend to deny, but only to delay him; and yet he took this so ill, as to put her in great fear of some danger from it, (as our Saviour doth in his letters to the churches, Rev. ii. 5. 16. 21. 23. &c.) For the word bowels signifies the affections and passions, and the Hebrew word hamu, which we translate was moved, signifies made a noise, or was tumultuous, and therefore denotes the passion of trouble and grief, and of fear also, nay, of great fear and perplexity. For so St Hierom here renders it, “My belly trembled,” as he doth in Ezek. vii. 16. where it is applied to doves, (to whom the spouse was here compared, ver. 2.), and we translate it mourning, but it should rather be, trembling like doves. For that is their nature, Hos. xi. 11. all authors observing them to be exceeding timorous; and therefore so it may be translated here, “I was so full of trouble, that I quivered like a dove.”

Others, by “putting forth the hand,” understand the touch he gives by his Holy Spirit; which doth not contradict what I have said, threatening being employed by him for that purpose.

[c] Ver. 5.] And having had this glance of him, (whose voice only she heard before, ver. 2.), she starts up immediately, and endeavours to correct her error. And is here represented as making such haste to open the door, that she broke the vessel of myrrh, which she snatched up when she rose, intending therewith to anoint and refresh his head, which was wet with dew. Or rather, her hands shaken in that panic fear wherein she was, and so she spilt some of the myrrh, and it ran about her fingers. By which is denoted the great speed she made to shake off her sloth, now she saw her danger, and the fear that came upon her, lest she should lose her beloved, to whom she now resolved to express the greatest affection imaginable. For it was not barely myrrh, (which was one of the most excellent spices, John, xix. 39.), but the most precious myrrh, which she took up to carry to him. So mar ober signifies, which we well translate sweet-smelling myrrh, but word for word is current myrrh. Either in that sense wherein money is called current, Gen. xxvii. 16. as some fancy, or as Rasi thinks, because the spirit, that is, the odour of it, diffused itself round about the place where it was, that is, was exceeding fragrant; or, as Bochart will have it, was that which wept, (as they speak), and dropped from the tree of itself, which as it was the most unctuous, so was the richest and best for all manner of uses. See his Phileg. 1. lii. c. 22. And besides this, Theophrastus observes, that out of myrrh, being beaten, there flowed an oil, called ezki, which was very precious; as I find in Athenaeus, l. xvi. c. 11. And accordingly the Chaldee and Aquila translate ober in this place, choice myrrh; Symmachus myrrha, the prince, from whom the Vulgar, the most approved myrrh.

[f] Ver. 6.] But notwithstanding her repentance, she was thus far punished for her sloth, that her beloved abstained himself from her for a time, and she could not hear the least tidings from him, or notice of him. Which cast her into such an excess of grief and fear, that she swooned away, and was like a dead body, (so that phrase, “my soul went forth,” signifies to die, Gen. xxxv. 18. xliii. 28. and other places.) And recovering herself again, was extremely troubled by the reflections she made upon his kindness, and her insensibleness of it. For which she asked his pardon, and sought his favour, but could receive no tokens of it.

[g] Ver. 7.] I take watchman here in a good sense, as before, (iii. 3.), unto which I refer the reader. And only observe, that to find a person, signifies sometimes in scripture-phrase, as much as to fall upon him; as we speak, and that on a sudden, Judges, i. 5. Psal. xxi. 8. cxix. 143. Isa. x. 10. And so I have expounded it here, and referred the smiting and wounding her, to the reproaches they cast upon her. For there is a smiting with the tongue, as well as with the hand, and that not only by enemies unjustly, Jer. xviii. 18. but by friends, out of love and charity, Psal. cxii. 5. For there is not a greater kindness, than sometimes even to upbraid us with our faults. Which is farther expressed by “taking away her veil” from her, as much as to say, exposing her to shame, a veil being thrown over women’s faces for modesty-sake, as well as in token of subjection, Gen. xx. 16. And so St Hierom, in his epistle to Lucia, takes this veil, or pallaum, as he calls it, to be pudicitiae signum, a sign of chastity; and therefore to take it away, was to represent her as an impudent whorish woman. Greg. Nyssen adds, that it was ἐμφύλιον ἀργυρὸς, (Hom. xii. upon this book), the nuptial veil, which, together with the face, covered the whole body; and therefore, to be disrobèd of it was the greater reproach, because it was to disown her to be his spouse, as she professed herself.

[h] Ver. 8.] This verse is very plain, expressing the admirable temper of a true penitent, who leaves nothing unattempted to recover the favour of her Lord, (for, finding no comfort from the watchmen, she implores the help of all good people), and yet doth not complain of what she suffered, nor of the hardness of those who should have helped to restore her, and not dealt so severely with her, (according to that of the apostle, Gal. vi. 1.) but only bewails the loss of his presence, and represents that, notwithstanding, she had not lost her love to him, but rather that it was so great, she could not live without him.

It must be confessed, that there is no necessity of reading those words which we translate, “that ye tell
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him," by an interrogation, What will you tell him? as the Hebrew seem to import, (for the particle **mab** doth not always denote that); but it adds much to the life of the speech, and represents her passion to the height, if we so translate it, as I have taken it in the paraphrase.

[i] Ver. 9.] In this verse the daughters of Jerusalem reply to her, and being touched with a pitiful concern for her, (whose admirable beauty discovered itself to them in this wretched condition wherein they saw her), they desire to have a character of her beloved, that they might be the better able to know him if they met him, and be the more excited to help her to seek for him when they understood his deserts.

[k] Ver. 10.] In this part of the character which now follows of him, Solomon seems to me to have had his eye upon the person of his father David, 1 Sam. xvi. 12. whose very aspect promised much, and shewed that he was born to rule. And whether we translate the first words, "white and ruddy," as in our Bible, or as Bochartus, *white and ibining*, or *glistering*, (making *adom* not to signify *rubber*, but *rublus*, and the whole to be as much as *summe candidus*, exceeding fair, and of a pure complexion), it matters not. For it only signifies, in my opinion, the majestic beauty of his aspect, which David himself had also described in those famous words, Psal. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men."

And then, in the latter part of this verse, he hath respect, as I take it, both to what they sang of his father David, after he came from his victory over Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 7, and to what David himself sang of this great prince in that 45th psalm, 3. 4. &c. and more largely, Psal. cxv. 3. 5. 6. which all relate to the conquest of the world unto him; and is signified in his expression of his being "chief (or lifting up the standard) over ten thousand," that is, over great multitudes or armies, Psal. iii. 6. The LXX. translate it, *chosen out of ten chosen*; unto which I have had respect also in the paraphrase. As for mystical significations, some think by "white and ruddy" is meant his divine and human nature, others only his humanity, &c. (as may be found in interpreters), but I have not dared to meddle with them. And shall but just mention the fancy of the Cabbalists, who understand hereby the effects he works in us. For sometimes he dispenseth himself in mercy and kindness, and then, say they, he is white; sometimes in the zeal of justice, and with anger, and then he is red.

[l] Ver. 11.] Now, being thus represented as a king, he is next described as having a crown upon his head. So I understand *citbehem* (which we translate gold), as Rasi doth, who takes it for a diadem, and indeed in other places of scripture it signifies some precious ornament, as Prov. xxi. 12. Now, this crown upon the head is said to be such an one as David had mentioned before, Psal. xxi. 3. of pure gold. In the Hebrew of *Pax*, which Bochartus (both in his Phleg. i. ii. c. 27. and in his Canaan, i. c. 46.) shews was the island anciently called *Taprobana*, in which the footsteps of this word *Pax* remained in Ptolemy's time. Who mentions in that island the river *Phasis*, and the creek, or bay, *Pasis*.

The same excellent person, in his book of Sacred Animals, (par. 2. i. c. 10.), shews, that in the latter part of this verse, we are to understand by *kevsoth* (locks) the foretop, or the hair coming down the forehead, which is expressed in the next word, *ultalim*, hanging down. And this foretop is only mentioned because little else appeared when the head had the crown on it.

This hair is said to be as black as a raven, because such shining black hair was accounted majestic, and much affected in those countries, insomuch that they endeavoured by art to make their hair of this colour; as Pliny informs us, employed the eggs, the blood, and the brain of ravens for that purpose. They looked upon this colour of hair also as a token of courage and fortitude; and with a pure clear complexion it was very lovely.

There are several mystical applications made of this, which I had rather the reader, who hath a mind to them, should seek in others, than find here.

[m] Ver. 12.] The plainest meaning of this verse is that of the LXX. and Vulgar Latin, which is to the same effect with that I have set down in the paraphrase. For *washed* and *sitting* do not refer to the eyes, but unto doves, who love to sit, stay, to tarry (as the word imports) by river-sides, and other places which abound with water, and are then so pleased, that their eyes appear very quick and lively. And such piercing eyes, adding much to majesty, they are here made a part of this glorious person's character.

*Washed with milk* signifies doves as white as milk; which are most lovely, and when they have washed themselves, look as if they had been in milk.

As for the common sense which the Hebrews give of this verse, and which most modern interpreters follow, Bochartus, in the beginning of the second part of Sacred Animals, seems to me to have evinced, that the Hebrew word will not bear it. But it is fit to mention it; and it amounts to this, that his eyes were "clear and white, and full set," (or set in perfection, as Aben-Zeza here interprets the word *milteb*), like a diamond or precious stone in a ring, neither too much depressed, nor too prominent, but handsomely filling the sockets. And as if this were the natural interpretation of the last phrase, *josebeobat al milteb*, sitting or dwelling by fulness or fillings, I should think there might be an allusion to the precious stones in the pectoral of the High Priest, which are said to be "set in their fillings," Exod. xxviii. 17. 20. But this phrase doth
not refer, as I said, to the eyes, but to doves, that sit by places abounding with water; or, as Avenarius will have it, ad vas plenum latic, by a vessel full of milk.

The mystical application of these eyes to the doctors of the church seems impertinent, because they are described before in the eyes of the spouse; iv. 2. Rather, therefore, his exact care and providence over the church, which nothing can escape, may be hereby represented; for he sees into the very heart and reins, as he himself affirms, Rev. ii. 18.

[n] Ver. 13.] This verse is so difficult, that it is a hard matter to give an account of it. The plainest seems to be this, that by cheeks we are not to understand those that are smooth, but wherein the hair begins to grow; which added much in those days to the goodness of any man, and was looked upon as a token of vigour, strength, and courage. And it may aptly be compared to the flowers, or the sproutings and budding of plants and trees. So I understand migdalath (which we translate flowes) to signify buds, putting forth like little towers.

The lips may seem unfitly compared to lilies; because white lips are not beautiful. But Almonazar hath observed out of Dioscorides, Theophrastus, and Pliny, that there were lilies of a purple colour. And besides, I find in Pliny, (l. xxi. c. 5.), mention made of a lily, (which he calls rubens li-lium; which was much esteemed, he saith, in Syria). He shews there also a way how to make purple lilies.

There are those who think Solomon compares the lips to lilies, only in regard of their fineness, and delicate softness; thick blubber-lips being very unhandsome, and a sign also, they say, of dulness, and making the speech less graceful. And indeed eloquence is sometimes described by lilies, and may be here meant.

Concerning “sweet-smelling myrrh,” see ver. 5.

And thus far we have only the description of an amiable, gracious Majesty, which is much advanced by a sweet voice and elegant speech. The mention of which may well put us in mind of what is said of our Saviour, Luke, iv. 22. compared with Psal. lxiv. 2.

[g] Ver. 14.] If we understand the first part of this verse to be meant of the hands, it is thus to be interpreted, “He hath golden rings on his fingers, (as before he is said, ver. 11. to have a golden head, i. e. a crown of gold upon it), set with the chrysolith,” as tarsis (which the LXX. here do not translate) it is most probable signifies. And then the latter part of the verse sounds thus, word for word, “his belly is of polished ivory, covered with sapphire,” i. e. is purely white, streaked with blue veins. But who sees not, that though this be ingenious, yet it is not true? for the body is no where covered (as the word here is) with veins; which must needs signify more than streaked here and there. And besides, it is not only against the rules of decency, but against the very scope of this discourse, to fancy that any of those naked parts of the body are here described, which are not commonly exposed to every body’s view. For the spouse is desired to tell, by what marks this person might be discovered, ver. 9. Now, he could not be known by any of those parts which lie concealed and hidden from all men’s eyes, being industriously covered. And therefore no such hidden parts are here represented, because he could not thereby be known and distinguished.

I conclude, therefore, that now she proceeds to describe the habit of this great person. And Solomon having in his mind the idea which his father had given him of the Messiah, in the 110th psalm, (where he is said to be a priest as well as a prince), represents him in the habit of the high-priest. Whb, among other noble vestments, had an embroidered coat, the sleeves of which, the Hebrews tell us, came down to his very wrists, nay, as Maimonides saith, as far as to the hollow of his hand. Which I take to be here meant by his hands, (which comprehend the arms and shoulders), that is, the clothing of those parts. And these sleeves, as well as the whole coat, were embroidered, (as you read, Exod. xxviii. 4.), to make the high-priest appear the more glorious. And if you ask what his embroidery was, the Hebrews tell us, that part of it consisted in a kind of oilet holes, finely wrought. And R. Solomon Jarchi expressly saith upon that text, that “they were holes made in gold rings, in which were fixed precious stones,” &c. (as is afterward said of the stones of the ephod, ver. 11.). Which so fully explains these words, “His hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl,” that I need seek no farther. Though I have sometimes thought that the ephod itself might be here intended; which being fastened upon the shoulders, (which in order, after the head, eyes, cheeks, and lips, come to be here described, and are comprehended, as I said before, under the name of his band), hung down before and behind to the bottom of the back; and had two gold rings, unto which the breast-plate was fastened, as we read, Exod. xxviii. 27. 28. Maimonides saith it had four rings; two above, at the jewel-buttons; and two below, about the girdle of the ephod. Which was one of the principal ornaments of the high-priest, when he ministered; the other, and the greatest of all, was the breast-plate hereunto annexed, and, as they say, was to be inseparable from the ephod. Now, this breast-plate is meant, as I take it, in the latter part of this verse. Where, under the word which we translate belly, and properly signifies breule, is comprehended the breast, and all; which this Cozen, as the Hebrews call it, covered; and as it covered those parts, so it was itself covered, or overlaid with twelve precious stones. The sapphire, which was the tenth, is only here mentioned; but it is usual in scripture, to touch only upon
one thing in a history, when the whole is intended. And besides, it is evident from the foregoing part of this verse, that more must be understood, when one alone is mentioned; for rings are spoken of in the plural number, and said to be filled with sardis; which must therefore denote more stones than one, as sapphire doth all the rest of the twelve, which could not be mentioned in so short a description. Or sapphirina here, in the plural number, may signify stones as precious as the sapphire. Certain it is, the Chaldee Paraphrast thought there was some respect here to the high-priest's breast-plate, for he mentions all the stones therein, one by one. Which may make this interpretation of mine to seem less strange. And I conceive the sapphire to be here mentioned rather than any other, because it is of the colour of the heavens, and fittest to represent the sublime dignity in which he is now described. For the pavement under the feet of the God of Israel, when he appeared unto his nobles at Mount Sinai, was of this colour, Exod. xxiv. 10. and so was the throne of God in thefirmament, which Ezekiel saw, Ezek. i. 26.

Nor need it seem strange that the belly, upon which this covering was, is said to be of polished ivory, (when there is no mention of any such thing in the law,) for it only denotes that it was shining and bright as that; and may possibly relate to the tunic or coat of fine linen, wherein the high-priest was to minister, (Exod. xxvii. 39. xxx. 27.) especially upon the great day of expiation, when he was not to put on his robe, nor his fine linen coat, with any embroidery, but of fine linen alone, Lev. xvi. 4.

The LXX. seem to think it was the breast-plate itself, (which indeed was very shining,) for they translate it sīgō; which shows they meant some covering of the belly which was hollow, as the breast-plate was. Which I doubt not is the covering of sapphires here mentioned; it being, as you read, with twelve large precious stones, where, in were engraved the names of the twelve children of Israel. And was the most precious part of all the high-priest's habit; and therefore more commonly called by the Jews an ornament than a garment, or any part of his vesture; the whole of which was contrived "for glory and for beauty," Exod. xxviii. 40. i.e. that God might be served most magnificently.

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Next in order follows the description of the thighs; that is, of the garments upon the thighs; which were the very first that the high-priest put on, when he went about to chaste himself for his ministry. And we here said to be made of sōskos, which is a word common to fine linen, and to pure white marble, (so the LXX. twice translate it Parian marble, Est. i. 6. 2 Chron. xxix. 2.) which the breeches of the priest resembled, being made of byssus, or pure fine linen; a thing of great price in those countries, as appears both by Pliny and Pausanias. The latter of which authors, in his Elision, mentions this among the rarest things (which were worthy of admiration) in that country, and saith, "It was not inferior to the byssus of the Hebrews." Who were ordered to make this part of the priest's garments of "twined fine linen," Exod. xxxi. 28. which rendered them the more substantial, and made them sit the softer and stiffer, like pillars. For the Hebrews say they were made of six-thread byssus, and that they came down to the knees; where they were not gathered at the bottom, but sat open.

Below which breeches came down the holy mīlāy, or robe, upon the skirts whereof hung round about belts made of pure gold, Exod. xxvii. 34. Which may possibly be the basis of fine gold, here mentioned, to which the femorália, or garments on the thighs, reached. Same refer all this only to his stately gait, and princely motion; others to his strength and firmness, (which lies much in the thighs,) and his ability to march against his enemies, and pursue them. And then the sockets of fine gold are his sandals, bound upon his feet with golden ribbons, or something of that nature. The reader may esteem which he thinks most probable, for the explication of the first part of this verse: "His legs (or thighs rather) are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold."

Now, if my conjecture be allowed, then the latter part of the verse will not be hard to explain. For this and the rest of his habit being contrived for "beauty and glory," as was said before, from Exod. xxviii. 40. it made the high-priest appear with unusual majesty; the riches of these vestments being not easily to be valued. And as his countenance, or rather his aspect, his whole appearance, (as the Hebrew word may signify,) was as stately as Lebanon. Which was one of the greatest sites in those countries, both for cedars and many other things, especially after Solomon had made his garden there, of which we read in the foregoing chapter, ver. 5. 16.

Unto which lovely forest and garden, the appearance of the high-priest may be the better compared, because there were flowers, as well as pomegranates, if we may believe Philo, (in his third book of the Life of Moses,) wrought in the bottom of the holy robe. Which the LXX. also affirm, in express words, that there was "ānūn, or "floury words," as well as pomegranates and bells, in the hem of the mīlā, Exod. xxviii. 34. And indeed the pomegranates being made of wool of divers colours, they themselves might look like divers sorts of flowers. And, besides this, it is to be observed, that several other parts of the high-priest's habit are peculiarly commended to be made of a work called sōskos, which we translate cunning work. Thus sōskos is ordered to be wrought, Exod. xxviii. 6. and the girdle of it, ver. 8. and the breast-plate, ver. 18. Which some translate artificial, others ingenious work; and all agree to have consisted in cer-
tain beautiful figures of flowers and animals; and in variety of colours. The girdle, moreover, is ordered to be made of a work called rehem, which we translate needle-work, ver. 39, because it is thought not to have differed from the former, save only in this, that the other things were only woven curiously, but this also curiously wrought with the needle. The Jews give another difference, that this was wrought so that the figures appeared on both sides, the other only on one. About which I shall not trouble myself, but only take notice that Josephus (in his 3d book of Antiquities, chap. viii.) explains this work thus: "Flowers were woven in this girdle, with scarlet, purple, blue," &c.

And if flowers, (as others say animals,) then, in all probability, trees also were wrought in these priestly vestures; which made the fuller representation of a forest. Among which that of Lebanon was the principal, and indeed the most beautiful place in all those countries, which made the prophet express the glory of the church in these words, "The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it," Isa. xxxv. 2. see also Hos. xiv. 5. 6. 7.

Some think that hereby only the tallness of his stature is denoted, which was always looked upon as a princely thing, as it was in Saul. As for mystical applications of these two verses, there are none to be sought for, if I have given the true sense of them, but such as relate to the excellency of Christ's everlasting priesthood, and its pre-eminence above the other, as much as the cedar excels all the trees of the forest.

[9] Ver. 16.] There is little difficulty here. For mōsheth (Hebrew palate, which is within the mouth) can signify nothing but either his words, which come thence, or his breath. And words being mentioned before, ver. 13, the latter is probably here intended. Which is said to be sweetness, nay, sweetnesse; denoting the perfect soundness of the internal parts, as the foregoing description sets forth the excellent shape and stately vesture of the outward. It is applied by interpreters, to the purity of Christ's affections and passions; but may be as well to his breathing upon his apostles, when he bid them receive the Holy Ghost. Which concluded in a manner what he did upon earth, as it doth his description in this place. For she, finding his praises to exceed all her thoughts, sums up all in a breath, and comprehends his whole character in this; that he is all over lovely, attracting all men's affections, not only those that saw him, but those that heard of him too.

CHAP. VI.

THE ARGUMENT.—In the foregoing description, the spouse expressed such an unsignified affection to him, (which he again confidently asserts in this sixth part of the song, ver. 3.), that it not only mightily moved her companions to join with her in the search of him, but invited the return of the bridegroom again. Who graciously declares the like affection unto her, (from ver. 4. to the 11th), in such words as shewed that his kindness remained unalterable, and that she delighted in none but her; as incomparably more amiable, even by their own confession, than all those beauties whom the world most admires. With which kindness she is so ravished, that it snatches her away from the dearest friends she had, though very desirous of her company, ver. 13.

COMPANIONS, OR DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.

Ver. 1. Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee? These are high commendations, indeed, which thou givest to thy beloved, which make us in love with him, as before we were, (iv. 9.), and still are with thee, O thou most lovely of all other women; whither dost thou think he hath betaken himself? He is not quite gone away, sure, but only diverted into some retirement. Which way did he go? and where dost thou guess he hath hidden himself, that we may go along, and inquire him out, with thee? See Annot. [a]

SPouse.

Ver. 2. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilias.] I heard my beloved say, that he was gone down into that garden which he himself hath planted, (v. 1.) there he delighteth to be, among those pious persons, whose virtues make them like to the garden-beds, that are full of spices; he is always present in every part of this happy company, and hath fellowship with them, and is daily adding more and more pure and sincere souls, who are without all guile, unto their society. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; be feedeth among the lilias.] Of which I being a member, hope I may still say, that he hath not cast me out of his favour, but still retains a kindness for me, because I am steadfast and faithful in my love to him, who takes a constant care of such as study to resemble him. See Annot. [c]

BRIDEGROOM.

Ver. 4. ¶ Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.] ¶ It is true, O my beloved friend, who art still dear unto me, and most amiable in my eyes, I have not lost my esteem of thee, for I see thou hast not lost thy affection to me; nor that lovely, that decent and comely order, which makes thee not only beautiful, but venerable, nay, amazes all beholders, or at least strikes them with great admiration of thee. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me; thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.] Thou needst not look so earnestly, and with such care and solicitude, upon me, as if I had forgotten thee; for I see the same sparkling beauty in thy eyes, which I did before, (iv. 1.), and it no less affects my heart, (iv. 9.), thou wastest none of those ornaments which I formerly commended, but retainest them all, notwithstanding the discomposure in which thou hast been. See Annot. [e]
Ver. 6. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twain; and there is not one barren among them. The same I say also of thy teeth, which are still white and clean, even set both above and below; firm and sound also, without any breach, or want of so much as one of them. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.] And, to be short, (and not to repeat every thing again,) I see the same fresh colour in thy cheeks, which makes thee look as lovely, now thy veil is off, (v. 7.), as thou didst in the first blooming of thy beauty. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. There are three score queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.] Wherefore, though other kings and princes of these countries have a great many queens, and more wives of an inferior rank, and virgins that attend them without numbers, whose beauty they highly admire; see Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her: the daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.] I have one only, and none other, whom I entirely love, and that is thyself alone; who preserves an inviolable faith and affection to me, and therefore art dearer to me, than an only daughter (and she the most accomplished person and perfect beauty) is to her mother; whom all other persons at last shall admire, the queens themselves before named, calling thee blessed, and wishing all prosperity to thee; and they: the next degree shall praise thy excellencies, and confess their own imperfections. See Annot. [i]

Ver. 10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?] Saying, What an astonishing beauty is this, that appears like a clear morning after a dark night, and increases in lustre more and more, looking as bright as the moon when it is at full, nay, as splendid as the sun when it shineth in its strength; and no less dazzles our eyes, and amazes our thoughts, than a glorious host of heaven, or an army here on earth, when it stands in battalions with all their colours displayed? See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the wine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.] Only this I expect from thee, that thou bring forth fruit proportionable to my care of thee, and kindness to thee; for to that end I went down before, (v. 1. vi. 2.), and now go again, into my garden, (which I have not neglected to dress, and prune, and water,) to take a view in what condition it is; and in what forwardness the several sorts of fruit are, which I justly look to receive in their due seasons. See Annot. [l]

Spouse.

Ver. 12. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the cibariots of Ammi-nadib.] Also! what am I, that I should receive such praises, who am not worthy of thy care? But they have put such motions into my soul, as make me aim at the highest perfection, and make all the haste I can likewise to attain them; and therefore I must, for the present, take leave of you, O my friends, who have kindly assisted me in the search of my beloved. See Annot. [m]

Companions.

Ver. 13. Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.] Let us have thy company again, O thou fairest and most accomplished of all the daughters of Jerusalem. Come back again, come back, that we may behold thy wondrous perfections. And if any ask, What is that you would see? what would you enjoy in her happy society? Our answer is, such a divine presence as appeared to Jacob, when he saw the angelical choirs, which made him cry out, "This is God's host," and call the name of that place, Mabatam. See Annot. [n]

Annotations.

[a] Ver. 1.] The daughters of Jerusalem (mentioned ver. 8.) here justify what the spouse had said in the conclusion of the former chapter; and declaring themselves in love with him whom she had described, are desirous to join themselves to her company, and go in quest of him. In order to which they would know, whether she thought he was gone, when he went from her.

[b] Ver. 2.] Unto which she replies in this verse, and seems to tell them, in his own words, what she had heard him say about that matter, v. 1. And it signifies that he was still in his church, and in every part of it, though sometimes they were not sensible of it. For so Theodoret well observes, here is distinct mention made of a garden, and of gardens, i.e. of the Catholic church, which is but one, and of the several parts thereof. For sometimes St. Paul mentions only the church in the singular number, and sometimes the several churches even in the same nation, (as in the epistle to the Galatians, i. 1.), and in the same province or city, x Cor. xiv. 34.

He is said here to go down into his garden, with respect to the mountains mentioned, iv. 8. And to feed in the Hebrew, is either to do the office of a shepherd to his flock, or relates to his communion with his people, mentioned chap. iv. 16. v. 1. Which may be the meaning also of gathering lilies; or, as Theodoret will have it, by this last clause is to be understood, his gathering holy and pure souls that are like to him, and joining them unto his church. And so the Arabic translation is, to gather together the lilies," following the Septuagint, who translate it, ἀναρίζετο. And indeed I find the Hebrew word lakat, signifies to collect things into an heap or bundle; as stones, Gen. xxxi. 46. manas, Exod. xvi. 27. fruit, Lev. xix. 9. silver, Gen. xliv. 14.

The whole denotes, that communion with him is only to be sought in his church; especially in that part of it which preserves the order wherein he hath
disposed all things, (like the walls and beds in a
garden), and kept themselves also in the purity of
his religion.

[c] Ver. 3.] Now she seems to have so perfectly
recovered herself out of the slumber wherein she
had been, as to have regained her former sense of
him, and of her interest in him; repeating
those words which we met withal before, ch. ii. 16.
Of the latter part of which ("he feedeth among the
lilies") I think she farther to note, that
to feed may relate either unto himself, or unto
others, for there are examples of both. Of the
former, Gen. xii. 2. Job. i. 14. Of the latter,
Gen. xxix. 7. o. xxxvii. 12. I take it here rather
in this latter sense, and suppose it signifies his do-
ing the office of a shepherd; and that he is said "to
feed among the lilies," as in the Revelation, "to
walk in the midst of the seven candlesticks," i.e.
there to have his conversation, to take up his abide
with them, &c. as he often says in the gospel of St
John, (xiv. 23.), that he would with those who
love him, and keep his commandments.

And such persons are here compared to lilies, which
being a name given by Christ to himself, Greg.
Nyssen and Theodoret hereby, not unfitly, under-
stand such as are conformed to Christ his Head,
and have his image wrought in their souls, in
righteousness and true holiness. For, saith the
former of them, ἡν ἀληθ. &c. "whatsoever things
are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever
things are just," &c. (see Phil. iv. 8.) ὡς ἐστι τὰ
μακρά, "these are the lilies in which Christ delights."

[u] Ver. 4.] And now we must conceive, either
that they went to the garden together, and there
found him, or that he, hearing this hearty profes-
sion of unmoveable love to him, meets them; and,
to revive her drooping spirits, falls again into a
new commendation of the spouse, in the very same
terms as before, and in some higher.

And first, he compares her to Tirzah, which was a
beautiful situation in the country of Ephraim, and
therefore made choice of after these times by Jeru-
saem, for the seat of his kingdom; and so con-
tinued till the building of Samaria, as we read,
1 Kings, xiv. 17. xv. 21. 23. and several other
places; to which add Josh. xii. 24. The very or-
iginal of the word signifies as much as urbem amabi-
le, or a city that pleaseth one; and therefore cho-
en by one of the ancient kings of Canaan, for the
place of his residence.

And lest this should not be high enough, he next
compares her to Jerusalem, which was the most
lovely place in the territories of Judah, and indeed
of the whole country. For which cause, as it had
been the seat of one of the kings of Canaan, so the
royal palace of David, nay the house of God him-
self, was afterward there built; and is called by
Jeremihsh, in his Lamentation, "the perfection of
beauty, the joy of the whole earth." ii. 15. It is
mentioned by Pliny likewise, l. v. c. 14. as the
most famous city in the East.

And as she had commended him before, not only for
his beauty, but majesty, so he doth here, in the
last place, call her "terrible as an army standing
in battalions, striking an awe, that is, into beholders.
So I think it is to be expounded as referring still
to the goodliness of her aspect, and not to her being
invincible, inexpugnable, and striking terror into
her enemies, as some interpret the whole verse.
Every part of which seems to me to be a new
proof, that Solomon speaks not in this book of
one single person, (whom some fancy the Shu-
lamite, others Pharaoh's daughter, whom others
take for one and the same), under the name of the
spouse, but of a body or society of men; for none
else can be fitly compared to cities, nay, to
armies drawn up under their banners. Which last
part of this verse may be applied to the comely
order which Christ appointed in his church, which,
while it was preserved, made the church very ve-
erable in the world. So Theodoret, τεράστια καὶ
μακρά, &c. "For they are astonished who behold thy
order, there being nothing disorderly, nothing un-
certain or undetermined, nothing confused and in-
distinct; but all τεράστια καὶ μακρά, orderly
appointed, and judiciously determined.

Some refer this terribleness, as we translate it, to the
gravity, or rather severity of her countenance, which
forbade all wanton reproaches to so great a beauty.

[c] Ver. 5.] In this and the following verses, he
seems to descend to a particular description of the
several parts of her beauty; as he had done be-
fore, chap. iv. 1. 2. &c. And he doth it in the
very same words, for the most part; to assure her,
that he had still the same esteem of her, and kind-
ness for her; and that, notwithstanding what had
happened, it had not altered her so much as to abate
any thing of his affection, or to make her appear
otherwise in his eyes than she had done. This
seems to me to be the true reason of this repetition;
others are given by Theodoret and other authors.

And first he begins with the commendation of her
eyes, as he had done, iv. 1. (though in other words).
For so the first clause of this verse may be trans-
lated, "turn thine eyes towards me;" the Hebrew
phrase signifying not only to turn one's self from
another, but sometimes to turn towards them, as
1 Chron. xii. 23. And then we are to conceive
that he speaks to her, as one ashamed to look upon
him, whom she had so much disobliged; and bid
her take more confidence, for he was still in love
with her.

If we follow the common translation, I take the sense
still to be the same; that she need not trouble her-
self any further, for she had prevailed in her suit
to be restored to his favour. The looking of the
eyes towards one, is as much as intreating and
petitioning; which he tells her she might cease, by
bidding her turn away her eyes from him.

It is most ordinarily taken for an amorous expression;
as if he had said, her eyes were so bright and daz-
zling, he could not bear the passion they excited.
Of the latter part of the verse, see an account upon chap. iv. 1.

[f] Ver. 6.] There is no difference between this verse and that in iv. 2. but only in one word, which alters not the sense. And as barbeloth, sheep, was to be fetched from hence to supply the sense there, so another word, bakkathabath, even shorn, is to be fetched from hence to supply it here.

[g] Ver. 7.] This is also exactly the same with the latter end of the third verse of the 4th chapter. The LXX. have also the first part; but they might as well have added all that there follows; which is here omitted.

[h] Ver. 8.] Here, most think, Solomon alludes to the number of his own wives, who were fewer, they suppose, in the beginning of his reign, (as Bochartus himself gathers from these words, in his epistle to the now bishop of Winchester, p. 126.) and that then he composed this song, before he let the reins of his lust so prodigiously loose, as afterwards we read he did, I Kings, xi. 4. &c. But it is not at all likely that he had so many as are there mentioned, while his mind was filled with such divine raptures as these; and therefore I suppose he alludes to the custom of other princes in the east, who, besides their principal wives that were solemnly espoused and endowed, had also another sort who were neither, and yet were wives called by the Hebrews philogbian, concubines. And such a difference the Romans ancients made between her whom they called matrona, who was only taken in marriage, and her whom they called mater-familias, who was taken also to order and govern the family, and whose children inherited. As may be seen in Anthus Gellius, ixviii. c. 8. wherein he confutes Theodoretus, a conceited grammarian, who had started other ungrounded notions of these words.

And then threescore and fourscore are only a certain number for an uncertain, not the precise number of these wives and concubines. Theodoret thinks by these are mystically intended several ranks of Christians in the church; some more, some less perfect; but they discourse better, in my opinion, who rather accommodate those to the several sorts of heretical and schismatical churches; some of which gloried in the multitude of their followers, and in their wealth and splendour; but Christ hath only one Catholic church, more glorious than them all put together, as it follows here in the next verses, And that in effect, R. Solomon Jarchi, and some other Hebrew expositors, understand these words with application to themselves. Abraham and his posterity, say they, till the descendants from Israel, were threescore in number, (compared here to queens). The sons of Noah, and their descendants unto Abraham, were fourscore, (compared to concubines). The rest who came from Ham, Ishmael, and Esau, could not be comprehended under a certain number. And so the meaning is, Whatever kindness God had for the rest of Abraham's posterity, or of Noah's, (not to mention Cham, Ishmael, and Esau), "yet I have chosen (said God) my people Israel, whom I have espoused to myself, by circumcision, and by the law, and by sacrifices," &c.

[i] Ver. 9.] This verse needs not much explication; wherein the spouse is opposed to all the forenamed beauties, who are constrained to confess her pre-emience. The Hebrew word for one signifies also only; and an only child is as much as a beloved child; as appears by this, that samarion, only-begotten, and sywara, well-beloved, are words of the same import in the New Testament. And if such an only daughter be also barab, (choice we translate it, or), sarn, as the word originally imports, free from all blemish, (that is, a perfect beauty), it makes her still more dearly beloved.

It is in vain to inquire here, who is the mother intended in this place; for his love is only compared to the love of a mother toward such an only daughter, who hath ingrossed, as we speak, all the excellent qualities that are in any other person. Which forced the daughters to admire her, (so saw her signifies, they looked upon her with admiration), and the queens to bless her, and the concubines to proclaim her praises. Thus it is most likely the latter part of this verse should be interpreted, "the daughters saw her, and the queens blessed her, and the concubines, they praised her." For though the Jews now have otherwise distinguished the words by their accents, yet Talmudicus, I observe, distinguishes them, as I have done, in his preface to Seder Zerusayim.

St. Cyprian, from this and such like places of this book, (iv. 8. 23. v. 1.), proves there is but one only holy catholic church, making this observation, (epist. 73. c. dit. Orig.), "We see one person everywhere mentioned, and no more, because the spouse also is one," &c.

[k] Ver. 20.] This verse take to be the beginning of a new part of this song; and Theodoret in particular here begins his fourth book of commentaries upon it; but I look upon these words as the praises and commendations which the queens and concubines before mentioned bestow upon the spouse, with admiration and astonishment at her transcendent beauty.

They need no explication, being of known signification; only it is fit to note, that to make the eulogy more magnificent, the speech grows and increases. For though the morning be very beautiful and agreeable to every eye, yet the moon is still more bright, and the sun far brighter than that; but all the host of heaven (which I take to be meant in the last words) still more wonderful and amazing. For there being a gradation in this place, and all the other expressions relating to the heavens, it is reasonable to think that this doth so too; and that we are to understand by it the armies or host of heaven, (as the scripture calls the stars), rather than armies upon earth. However, I have put both into the paraphrase, but have not meddled with mystical applications; they that desire them,
may look into the commentaries of three Fathers, where this verse is applied to the four degrees of Christians that are in the church. Others, with more reason, apply it to the progress which the church herself made in splendor and greatness; being at first like the morning when the day breaks, after a long night of ignorance; and then the light of Christian knowledge advanced, till the church appeared like the moon, (whose paleness may serve for an emblem of the terrors which persecution struck into their hearts,) till in the issue it dispersed all mist, and conquering all opposition, shone like the sun; and then was settled in Constantine's time, like a well-ordered army, which beat down all idolatry.

They that would see more of these applications, may look into Commonius's book De Bono Unitatis; in the beginning whereof there are applications of these things, both unto the church in general, and unto particular churches.

[1] Ver. 11.] This seems to be the voice of the bridegroom, declaring what return he expected to his love. The word ages, which we translate nuts, (of which there were several kinds, some very rich, as the pistachio,) is found only here; and by some is translated iborn or cut, which I have not omitted in my paraphrase. And beba bannachal, (fruits of the valley,) the LXX. translate boos by the brook, or river, where plants are apt to grow best; which is very agreeable to the original. The rest of the words are common; and the whole verse signifies that he went to look after the fruits of all sorts. The mystical applications may be found in all interpreters.

[n] Ver. 12.] The meaning of this verse seems to be, that the spouse, hearing such high commendations of herself, both from him, and from the persons mentioned, ver. 10. with great humility, saith, that she was not conscious to herself of such perfections, (for so the first words sound in the Hebrew, I did not know it, or I did not think so,) but is excited thereby to make the greatest speed to endeavour to preserve this character he had given her, and to go along with him into his garden, (which she had neglected before, v. 2,) there to give a good account of her proficience. For which end she seems on a sudden to take leave of her friends, (who had been so charitably as to go along with her to seek him,) that she might for some time enjoy his company alone; which is the ground of their calling upon her to return, in the next verse. This is the best account I can give of these two last verses.

It is supposed, Ammi-nadib was some great captain, who pursued his victories, or advantages, very industriously, with very swift chariots.

[n] Ver. 13.] This verse is the voice of her companions or friends; some of which wish for her coming back, that they might enjoy her company again, and see how she was improved; and the rest asked what they expected to see in her? to which the other reply in the last words, "as it were the company," &c.

The repetition of the word return, four times over, expresseth their vehement affection to her, and their desire to have her company again, whom they call Sulamith, as much as to say Jerusalem; for the name of that place formerly was Salam, which carrieth peace in its signification, or, as others will have it, perfection, for Shalom, in the second conjugation, signifies to finish, or perfect. And is a fit name here for the church, the New Jerusalem, built by Christ himself. This seems to me a great deal more probable than the conjecture of Menochus, (l. iii. de Repub. Hebr. c. xxii. n. 14.); who, because wives, when they were married, took the name of their husbands, thinks the spouse from Solomon had the name of Sulamith, which Aquila translates equinonuis, pacific, i.e. Solomonides. The reader may follow which he likes best. Solomon seems to me not to have had respect to his own spouse in this song.

To see, or look upon her, signifies to enjoy her happy society, and the benefit of her excellent virtues and perfections. Whom, in the two last words, he seems to me to compare unto the choirs of the heavenly host. For the word mesbola doth not signify any kind of company, but of such as dance or sing; as may be seen in Exod. xv. 20. xxxii. 19. Judg. xi. 34. Jer. xxxi. 4. Lam. v. 15. and many other places. Which shew that it signifies both chora, a dance, and choros, the company that dances; and so the LXX. here translate it χαρι, choirs. And Mabanaim (which we translate two armies) may as well be a proper name, as Ammi-nadib in the verse foregoing; and relates to the appearance of angels to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 2. as a token of God's special presence with him, and most lively sets forth the far more glorious presence of God, now in the Christian church. Or if we interpret it armies or hosts, as we do, still it may signify the armies above in the heavens, either the stars or the angels, called "the armies in heaven," Rev. xix. 14. and "army of heaven," Dan. iv. 35.

C H A P. VII.

The Argument. — Here begins, as I take it, a new part (which is the 7th) of this song, and reaches to verse the 11th. In which the spouse is represented returning again, as they desired in the end of the foregoing chapter; and appearing in greater lustre than before, the company of friends who attended her, praise her beautiful perfections, in such a description as was made of them, chap. iv., though varying from it in several things, (which is the sum of the first nine verses). Of which perfections she modestly acknowledging her Lord to be the author, and assuming nothing to herself; (ver. 16,) is excited thereby only to do the more good, and to labour to extend his empire
over more hearts, who were not yet subject to him, ver. 11. &c., where the 8th part of this song begins, and continues to the fifth verse of the next chapter.


COMPANIONS, OR DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM.

Ver. 1. How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the bands of a cunning workman.] And now that she appears again, like the daughter of the great King, in all royal apparel, (Psal. xlv. 13.), who can choose but admire the beauty of the meanest thing belonging to her! The very shoes of her feet are most lovely, and so are all the ornaments of her thighs, which were made by no common or careless artist, but by one that hath here-in shewn the best of his skill. See Annot. [a]

Ver. 2. Thy naval is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor; thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.] Which other excellent artists have equalled in that part of thy vesture, which covers the middle of thy body; in the very centre of which is a fountain, within a curious work rising up like a heap of wheat, encompassed round about with lilies. See Annot. [b]

Ver. 3. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twin.] Above which, thy two breasts rise up so purely white, and exactly round, and every where of such just proportions, that two young kids which were formed together, and brought forth at the same time, are not more like one another, or more lovely than they. See Annot. [c]

Ver. 4. Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the lap-sowls in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath rabbim; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus:] Thy neck also lifts up itself, with the same or greater beauty, wherein we before beheld it, (iv. 4.), being no less smooth and purely white, than it is straight and well shaped. And the same famous pools at the great gate of Heshbon, also, are not more quiet and clear than thy eyes; which are as pure and free from all perturbation, as they are fair and large; between which thy well-proportioned nose rising up, adds as much beauty and majesty to thy face, as the tower of Lebanon (whose top shows itself above the trees) doth to that noble forest. See Annot. [d]

Ver. 5. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple: the King is held in the galleries.] And now that we take a view of thy head, we seem to come to the top of Mount Carmel, which is not more richly adorned by nature, than its excellent form is by art; which hath contrived the most royal ornaments for it, and made thee an object fit for the king’s affection; who beholdith thee from his palace, is fixed in contemplation of thy beauty. See Annot. [e]

Ver. 6. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!] Which cannot be described, but only admired, and constrains all to say, O how happy art thou! and how happy are they who are acquainted with thee! for what beauty is like to that, or what pleasure comparable to those which thou impartest to them, that are in love with thy-delights. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.] Whose tall and upright stature adds much to all this beauty! and makes thee resemble the goodly palm-tree; within whose boughs, those clusters hang, to which we may compare thy breasts between thy arms. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. I said, I will go up to the palm-tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof; now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.] Which seem to be stretched out to receive us into thy embraces, and invite me and all my company with a joint resolution to say, We will take hold of the boughs of this tree; we will get up into it; and taste of its fruit: and now shall be happy indeed, and enjoy those sweet delights which flow from thy breasts, and from the breath of thy mouth; far more refreshing and comfortable than the choicest fruit that this good land affords. See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me.] If there be any thing in me that is pleasing to you, and deserves such praises, ascribe it all to him from whom I received it; for, as I have often said, I am his entirely, and he is pleased to be entirely mine, having espoused himself unto me with great desire, Psal. xlv. 11. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 10. If I am my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me] If there be anything in me that is pleasing to you, and deserves such praises, ascribe it all to him from whom I received it; for, as I have often said, I am his entirely, and he is pleased to be entirely mine, having espoused himself unto me with great desire, Psal. xlv. 11. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.] And O that he, (without whom I can do nothing), would accompany me in the charitable design I have, to go and visit other people, besides you, Ye daughters of Jerusalem! Let us go, my beloved, unto those poor despised people, that live in the fields and country villages; let us not only go to them, but dwell among them. See Annot. [l]

Ver. 12. Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there shall I give thee the kisses of love.] Let us diligently visit the vineyards, that have been newly planted there, and bestowed utmost care upon them; let us see if they give my hope of good fruit, in promoting which, I will give thee a proof of my extraordinary love. See Annot. [m]

Ver. 13. The mandrakes give a smell, and all our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.] And behold the happy success of such care and diligence! the most excellent fruit is already ripe, and meets us
with its refreshing smell; there is nothing so choice
and so pleasant, but it ‘grows every where, and is at
the very gates; and that in great plenty and variety,
both of this year's fruit, and of the last; which shall
all be reserved for thy uses, and employed for thy ho-
nour, O my beloved, from whom it all comes; and for
the good and profit of those that belong to thee.
See Annot. [b]

ANNOTATIONS.
[a] Ver. 4.] They who earnestly solicited the re-
turn of the spouse, in the conclusion of the former
chapter, seem now to have a view of her again,
and praise her perfections in a new method, begin-
ning at the feet, and so upward, (whereas before,
ch. iv. her description was from the head, and so
downward), because they saw her in motion, when
she went away, and now at her return to them:
Whom they call the prince's daughter, alluding, I
take it, to Psal. xlv. 13. 14. and conceiving her as
that royal bride, whose clothing is there represent-
ed as very glorious. And accordingly they admire
her very shoes or sandals, (by whose shape the
beauty of the feet was discerned), which were wont
to be set with gems, as we learn from many au-
thors. I shall name none but the book of Judith,
(because what Greek or Roman writers say about
their own shoes, is not material), where sandal's are
mentioned as a part of the bravery, wherein she set
forth herself, to deceive Holofernes, x. 4. And
with these she is said, in her song, to have ravished
his eyes, xvi. 9. See also Isa. iii. 18.

Now, the feet not being here considered as naked, in
all reason we ought not to expound the next words
of the naked tights, (the discovery of which had
been immodest), but of the cloathing of them round
about. For so that word we translate, joints, is ex-
pounded by others, the circuit, or, as the LXX. their
whole proportion or model; which was as fine as the
ornaments that adorned them. So chelaim signifies,
which R. Solomon here observes is an Arabic word,
denoting not jewels, (as we translate it), but the fine
attire and trimming, wherewith women deck them-
selves, to set off their beauty.

Which agrees with what follows, “The work of the
hands of a cunning workman.” Where workman also
signifies, not artificer, but a goldsmith, who (as
Bochart hath observed) made wires, laces, wreaths,
rings, and such like little ornaments of gold and sil-
er as women used.

The Chaldee paraphrase applies all this to the people's
goings up three times a year to the public feasts; as
R. Solomon, before named, expounds also that place,
in Isa. lii. 7. “How beautiful upon the mountains are
the feet,” &c. Which, with more reason, others ap-
ply to their return into their own country, out of
captivity; and the Christian writers apply to the
apostles, going through the world to preach the gos-
pel, whose steadfastness herein may be also here rep-
resented; though I see not why it may not as well
be applied to Christians going cheerfully to worship
God in their public assemblies.

[b] Ver. 2.] The garments, I doubt not, of these
parts are still described in this verse. For what re-
semblance hath the belly itself of any person, (which
it had not been seemly neither to describe), unto "an
heap of wheat set with lilies?" and they seem to me
to have had in their eyes, that apparel of wrought
gold, mentioned Psal. xlv. 13. and represent that
part of it which covered the belly to be of raised or
embossed work, resembling an heap of wheat; by
which it is possible may be meant, many sheaves of
wheat embroidered round about (as the king's daugh-
ter's raiment was, Psal. xlv. 14.) with flowers, espe-
cially with lilies. And then, this was a figure where-
in barren was represented; which is no unlikely
conjecture, for anciently nothing was more honour-
able than to follow tillage or pasturage. From whence
it is, that we find in the latter end of Homer's 18th
Iliad, that the device contrived by Vulcan, in Achil-
les' shield, were reapers, cutting down ripe corn,
and the king himself standing in a turrow, and pro-
viding a dinner for them.

Now, in the very midst of this work, I conceive these
was a fountain; which I take to be the meaning of
the first words of the verse, “Thy navel is a round
goblet, which wanteth not liquor,” that is, a great
bowl, or basin, was wrought in the centre of the embro-
dery; full of water, which ran continually
from above into it. Or, a conduit, running with
several sorts of liquors, into a great bowl. Unto
which the word hammasog, (importing a mixture),
seems to incline the sense.

The word again, which properly signifies nakahe, as
the LXX. translate it, a great bowl or basin, is used
by the Chaldee paraphrase for a receptacle of water,
in fountains, or in ditches. As in Judges, iv. 11.
where the valley or plain of Agannaja, of bowls,
which was in Kedesh, is interpreted by Kimchi, the
field in which were many pits or trenches, like two
bowls full of water. This seems to be a plainer inter-
pretation than that of Zanchez, who fancy this to
have been some jewel, that hung down from her
girdle upon the navel, which was of this form round
like the moon. And the Chaldee paraphrase under-
stood it to be of this figure, when he applies it “to
the head of their school, who stood in the knowledge
of the law, like the circle of the moon; and seventy
wise men round about him, like a heap of wheat.”

What is the mystical meaning of this hieroglyphic res-
ture, (as it may be called), is very hard to say. It
may be applied to the two sacraments, which the
church administers to her children, the font in bap-
tism being represented by the former, and the sa-
crament of the Lord's supper by the other part of
this figure.

c] Ver. 3.] This verse hath been explained before,
iv. 5. I only observe, that the Chaldee paraphrase
applies these two breasts to the two Mesulim, whom
they foolishly expect, the son of David, and the son
of Ephraim; who shall be like Moses and Aaron,
Which I mention, because it shows that the Jews have an opinion, that the Messiah is designed of in this book, and that these words are to be applied to the leaders of the church, such as Moses and Aaron. Of which see in, the place before named.

[6] Ver. 4.] The tower to which the neck is here compared, in all probability, is the same with that, iv. 4, where it is called the tower of David, and here the tower of ivory, because of its smoothness and whiteness. And the phrase is varied perhaps to express an increase of beauty; for we meet withal in Aesop, in a description of extraordinary handsome-as.

In like manner, the eyes are here compared to pools; for specularium: and the shining moisture of the eyes, is commended as very beautiful, by many authors. Particularly by Plutarch, who commends this in Pompey, and in Alexander; and by Philostratus in his Epistles very frequently, "Thou seemest to me, (saith he, Epist. vii. i. s. 31. 32,) to carry water as it were from the fountain of thy eyes, and bid it run through thy face like rain, and therefore to be one of the nymphs. Among pools, those fair ones at Heshbon were much celebrated, which were in the very entrance of the city, hard by the gate called Bath-rabbim, because it opened towards the way that led to Rabbah, the metropolis of the children of Ammon, which made the more people pass in and out at it. For Heshbon, we find in Num. xxii. 24. 25. &c. was the principal city of Sihon, whose country bordered upon the Ammonites; and it fell to the share of the Gadites, who desired this country, because it abounded with pastureage, and was excellently watered; there being many rivulets and brooks in its neighbourhood, from whence the pools of Heshbon were supplied. Which were remarkable for their purity, and serenity, or quietness, and therefore fitter to represent the composed settled eyes of a modest virgin.

Whose gravity and majesty, I suppose, is also set forth in the next words, by comparing her nose to the tower which was in Lebanon; and appeared at a distance among the trees, especially on that side which looks towards Damascus, as the nose in the face doth among the locks of hair that fall upon the cheeks. A large, but well-proportioned nose, was always accounted a considerable part of beauty; and an indication, it was generally thought, of greatness of mind, and height of spirit. Some add, that it is a token of sagacity and prudence; and the nose being the instrument of smelling, they apply it to the great judgement and foresight of the doctors of the church; who, they think, may be hereby intended. For as the Chaldee paraphrast appilis this whole verse to the Sanhedrin, who governed the affairs of that people, (who were as full of wisdom, saith he, as a pool is of water), so Christians generally, by eyes, understand the guides and governors of the church. Who may the better be compared to the pools of Heshbon, because it was after the conquest of Canaan, one of the cities of the Leuites, (Josh. xxi. 30,) whose office it was to instruct the people. And such being called, by the Jews Rabbim, and in the singular number Rabbi, and Rabbouni, some have fancied, that they are also denoted in the name of the gate of Bath-rabbim." For hath (daughter) signifies people, or inhabitants, who were taught by those great men, (as Rabbim signifies), what was law and judgement in the gates of their cities. Damascus, also, being a great enemy to Israel, and noted for idolatry, they suppose, the nose being turned towards the watch-tower, looking that way, is an emblem of the care that Christian doctors should take, that their people be not seduced to idolatrous worship. We do not read any where in scripture of this tower; but that it was a watch-tower, the word apbe here intimates; which we translate lookout, but signifies looking like a watchman.

[6] Ver. 5.] It appears from the very phrase, "Thine head upon thee," that they mean the covering of the head. And this being a description of her utmost perfections, it denotes, I conceive, the crown or garland which she wore, (as ready for her aputites), resembling the top of Carmel. Which was another beautiful mountain in that country, whose head was covered with great variety of flowers and trees. Certain it is, that it was a rich and fruitful, so a very pleasant and lofty place, Isa. xxxv. 2. Jer. ii. 7, and therefore fitly chosen to set forth the dignity and majesty of the spouse.

But there is no necessity, it must be confessed, to interpret this of the mountain Carmel; but the words may be translated, "Thy head is like a pleasant fruitful field." For so the word Carmel (from the goodness perhaps of that mountain) signifies in many places, Isa. xxi. 10. xxii. 15. Jer. xlviii. 33. where joy and gladness is said to be taken, mi-carmel, from Carmel, which we truly translate from the pleasant or pleasant field. For there the prophet speaks of Moab, in which country Carmel itself was not. And this is an illustration of beauty in other authors, who compare the head of a delicate woman unto a fair meadow or field. As Philostratus writes to his wife, "Quod si expectas praebendam animas in regnum, &c. Thy head is a large meadow full of flowers, which are never wanting in the summer, and disappear not in the midst of winter." And in the same manner Achilles Taurus, l. i. saith of his Clitopho and Leucippe, &c.

The next word dulcia is never used any where for hair, but should rather be translated the hair-lace, that therewith the hair, and all the ornaments belonging to it, were tied up. This hair-lace is said here to be of a purple colour, i.e. it was rich and noble. For this was the royal colour; and therefore called here the "purple of the king," (as the Vulgar Latin takes it, joining the latter part of the verse with this); tied up in folds, hanging down like calses, that is, hanging loose upon the shoulders, (as some expound it), it waved up and down, imitating the frizzles and curls of the waves in calses. Others refer the two first words of people,
lying in canals, to receive a deeper tincture, by being double-dyed. Vid. Menoch de Repub. Hebr. 1. i. c. x. n. 6.

But the LXX. make the last words a distinct sentence, as we do, in this manner: "The king is tied or bound in his walks." That is, when he walks in his palace-royal, and beholds her beauty, he stands still, and cannot take his eyes off from her, being captivated with it, and tied as fast to her as the hair of her head is to the lace that binds it.

The former part of this verse is applied by the Chaldee Paraphraast to the "king, (the head of the people), who shall be just like Elias, who was zealous for the Lord of hosts, and slew the false prophets upon Mount Carmel," and the latter part of it to the "poor, who shall be clothed by him in purple, as Daniel was in Babylon, and Mordecai in Shushan."

[f] Ver. 6.] This verse may be either taken for a commendation of love, which had thus adorned her, and raised her to this pitch of happiness; or of her who is called love in the abstract, to express more vehemently how lovely she was, and what pleasure they took in beholding her beauty.

The first word, fair, may relate to the rare composition of the whole body; and the next word, pleasant, or sweet, or comely, (as some translate it), to her graceful motion, gesture, and sweet conversation. And the sense, in short, is this: "Oh how desirable do the pleasures which thou impartest to thee!"

Theodoret's note here is very pious, that we become thus beautiful and lovely, (though deformed before), by delighting in charity, and making doing good our highest pleasure.

[g] Ver. 7.] This verse is a reflection upon the whole foregoing description, as appears by the first word, not, this; as if they had said, "All this thy stature is proportionable." Which is compared to the palm-tree, because it shoots up straight as well as high, and therefore sets forth that part of loveliness which consists in tallness. Which was always thought a great addition to beauty, and was one reason why women wore ornaments upon the very top of their heads, as well as high shoes, to make them appear the taller. The noblest palms of all other were in Judea, (especially about Jericho), as Pliny writes, 1. xiii. c. 4. From whence it was, that in future times it became an emblem of that country, as we find in that medal of the emperor Titus, with a captive woman sitting under a palm-tree, and the inscription of Judaea capta.

Our learned countryman, Sir Thomas Brown, (in his Miscellan. Tract. p. 78.) hath ingeniously observed, that they speak emphatically when they say they will "go up to take hold of the boughs" of this tree. For it must be ascended before one can come at the boughs, which it bears only at the top and upper parts. But the trunk or body of it is naturally contrived, dense, gradatim cortex pallicibus, as orbis, (as Pliny speaks,) with rings in the bark.

[h] Ver. 8.] I take this verse to be still the voice of the same persons, though in the singular number, (as appears from the mention of the beloved, ver. 9. which shows it is not he that speaks here, but some other person.) For one spake in the name of the rest, (as Daniel did in the name of his other three brethren, Dan. ii. 30. 36.) or the whole choir is considered but as one person, who desired to have fellowship and communion with the church in her benefits. Of which having tasted, they say, "Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine;" that is, now we shall enjoy those delicious pleasures before mentioned, ver. 6.

That which we translate scire, in the last clause of the verse, the Vulgar translate censures, (or mouth rather), agreeable enough to the Hebrew, and most agreeable to the rest of the words. For that which is sweet, is the breath coming out of the mouth, compared to the fragrance of citrons, oranges, peaches, or other sorts of tappaubs, which is a name (I observe above, ii. 5.) common to all such fruits, as well as those we peculiarly call apples; and indeed signifies any fruit that hath a fragrant odour breathing from it.

And this may be thus mystically expounded: "And now shall we delight to hang upon the breasts of the church, and the breath or spirits of the apostles; sweeter than grapes, or the smell of any other fruit."

[i] Ver. 9.] Which is farther explained in this verse. Where the "roof of the mouth," i. e. the words which come from thence, is compared to the most
excellent wine, which was so choice, that it was fit only to be presented to him, to whose love they owed all they had, (or so delicious, as our translation hath it, that it went down glibly), and so generous, that it put spirits into those that were quite spent with age, nay, raised those who were in a manner dead. So this character of the best wine runs word for word in the Hebrew: "It goeth straight to my beloved, and causeth to speak the lips of old people, or of those that sleep," that is, are dead. For this word jesebnim, our translators thought may either signify old men, or men asleep; though exact grammarians will not allow it, but make a great difference between jesebnim and jeschnam. The first of which, (which is the word here), they say, never signifies old men, but only sleepers.

But if we wave this nice distinction, the words may also be thus translated; "which makes men speak with the lips of the ancient," i.e. sentences, or most excellent sayings. I omit other glosses, which may be found everywhere.

[1 Ver. 10.] Here now the spouse, after long silence, puts an end to the encomium, modestly acknowledging there was nothing in her that could deserve it, but only as she was his, who could not be praised enough.

The words in effect we have met withal twice before, it. vi. vi. 3. For the meaning of the latter part, "his desire is towards me," is no more than this, (as if MeDe hath observed upon Dan. xi. 37.), "Hi is my husband." Only there seems to me to be an allusion here to Psal. xlv. 11. "(The king shall greatly desire thy beauty," &c.) unto which Solomon, as I take it, hath a respect all along in this poem.

[1] Ver. 11. And now she turns herself from them to him, (beginning a new part of this song), and being augmented with those new companions who had joined themselves unto her, she desires him (without whom nothing could be effected) to go along with her into the fields and villages, that is, to those places which were not yet become his garden, of which they had been speaking hitherto. Or they were but preparing for it, by the culture he had begun to bestow upon them; which from the following verse seems to be the meaning.

Cepharim, villages, are opposed in scripture to cities, 1 Sam. vi. 18. and signifies small towns and hamlets, as we speak; 1 Chron. xxvii. 25. Neh. vi. 2. And the word nalimah, let us lodge, signifies to tarry, and to make one's dwelling or abode in a place, Psal. xcv. 1. and may be applied to the settling of the gospel in those regions where it was but newly planted. So Theodoret glosses: "Let us now take care of the meanest and most abject souls that have lain long neglected, which are tropically called the fields and villages." Most apply to the Gentile world, in this manner: "We have stayed long enough in the city of Jerusalem, and in Judea; let us go now to the heathen," &c. I pass by other applications, which may be found in interpreters, and only add this note of my own, That the gospel was first preached in cities mostly, and from thence spread itself in time into the neighbouring villages; in which idolatry lasted so much longer than in cities, that they gave the name of Paganism to it.

[m] Ver. 12.] This verse supposes those fields (ver. 11.) not to have been quite uncultivated, but that there were vineyards (that is, churches, in the mystical sense) planted in them. And her desire is, that he would accompany her in visiting them early, that is, very diligently, as the word signifies in many places. Thus, in Ecclus. xxxix. 5. it is said of a just man, that he will give his heart "to resort early to the Lord that made him." Which is suitable to what the psalmist saith, Psal. v. 1. and Jeremiah, xxi. 12. xxv. 2. 3. Thus Theodoret here expounds it, "It behoveth us to make us all fitting diligence in visiting those that have already received the preaching; whether they bring forth more than leaves, and especially whether any beginning of charity appear among them." For so he expounds, "If the pomegranates bud forth." And this, saith he, is the greatest expression of love to him, which he makes the meaning of the last words, "There will I give thee my loves." For what care we bestow upon them, he accounts as done to himself, according to his own words, "In as much as ye have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

The vines may signify the lesser sort of people, and the pomegranates the greater.

[n] Ver. 13.] The word dudaim is found only here, and in Gen. xxx. 14. Where we read, how Jacob's wives contended for them, as a most precious, that is, a rare and delicious fruit. For none can imagine they strove about that now called by us mandrakes, which have a stinking smell, and very offensive; or about any ordinary flower, such as violets or jasmin, (by which some expound this word), which they might have sent out their maids to gather easily any where. Ludolphus, therefore, in his late Ethiopic History, (l. i. c. ix. n. 23.), hath happily conjectured, that it signifies the fruit which the Arabians call maww, or maww, (called by some the Indian Fig), which in the Abyssine country is as big as a cucumber, and of the same form and shape, fifty of which grow upon one and the same stalk, and are of a very sweet taste and smell; from which cognition (as he calls it) of a great many upon the same stalk, he thinks it took the name of jadaim. Which some derive from dud, either as it signifies love, or a breast, with which they fancy this fruit to have had some resemblance.

So the sense of this verse is, that they found more there than they expected; or, that by her care the most excellent fruit was produced from people of the best rank, (who may be understood by the most rare sort of fruit), and that every where, so that they needed not to be at the trouble to go so to gather it. For at their very gates there were magadim, all precious spices, (mentioned before, in...
and those both new and old, (a phrase for plenty and variety), which, as a faithful steward, she saith she had laid up for him, with the same care that we do the most precious treasure. So the word sephanti (I have laid up) is used, Psal. xvii. 13. cxix. 11. 

At the gate] may also signify as much as just ready to be gathered, or to be brought home.

Some apply new and old to the knowledge of the Old and New Testament, by which idolatry was vanquished, and true religion planted in the world; and they think our Lord himself alludes to this place in those words, Matt. xxi. 53. which he speaks of a wise scribe, that "bringeth forth out of his treasures things both new and old." Others apply new and old unto those virtues that flow only from faith, hope, and charity, and that are planted in us by nature. But I think it most aptly be accommodated to the spiritual gifts which were newly bestowed upon the church by the Holy Ghost, after our Lord went to heaven, and the temporal blessings which they enjoyed before; which are now all reserved for him, to be employed in his service. And so these words seem to me to have respect unto the 110th psalm, ver. 3. where it is said, "In the day of his power, they should be a people of free-will offerings." For when men give up themselves to God sincerely, they readily devote all they have to his uses, when he hath occasion for it. And thus the first Christians at Jerusalem did, who brought all their goods unto his treasury, and other nations afterwards made plentiful oblations, as need required, thereby fulfilling another prophecy, Psal. lxii. 10. 15. Unto which magadium may have respect, for such precious things as silver and gold, as well as the excellent fruits of trees, are called by this name; as may be seen, Deut. xxxiii. 12. 14. 15. 16.

CHAP. VIII.

The Argument.—The first four verses belong to the end of the foregoing chapter, wherein the spouse continuing her ardent desire to see his kingdom enlarged, he agrees to it. And then begins (ver. 5.) the ninth and last part of this song, in which all the persons speak in their turns. Her friends admiring her new advancement, and the spouse declaring the mighty power of love whereby she had attained it, and hoped to keep it, and was made desirous to propagate it unto those that wanted it, ver. 6. 7. 8. Which the bridegroom favours, ver. 9.; and they all promising greater industry in his service, he testifies his acceptance of it, and she her longing to see all this accomplished, ver. 10. 11. &c.

Spouse.

Ver. 1. O that thou wert as my brother, that suck'd the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without? I would kiss thee; yea, I should

not be despised.] And now, having finished this blessed work, I hope to enjoy more intimate fellowship with thee. I cannot but wish, at least, to be so happy as to have thy gracious presence always with me; and by familiar acquaintance and conversation, to be so united with thee, that I may not be ashamed openly to own my love, but look upon it as an honour to make a public profession of my relation to thee. See Annot. [a] 

Ver. 2. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate. ] Whereby I would carry the knowledge of thee from place to place, till I had introduced thee into the acquaintance of my nearest kindred, which would enlarge my knowledge, and make new discoveries to me, and cause no less joy unto thee, and unto all the world, to see them give entertainment to thee. See Annot. [b] 

Ver. 3. His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.] And thanks be to his goodness, I feel him communicating the power of his Spirit to me, which is the greatest token of his love, and then works most strongly in our hearts when he sees them fullest of love to him. See Annot. [c] 

Bridegroom.

Ver. 4. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love until he please.] Who, with his wonted care, or rather with a more earnest concern than ever, repeats his charge to my companions, saying, I conjure you to take heed, lest you discompose or give the least disturbance to this love; but let it enjoy its satisfaction to the height of its desires. See Annot. [d] 

Daughters of Jerusalem.

Ver. 5. (Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?) I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.] And who can chuse but admire at the power of love! which hath advanced her to such a degree of greatness, that it astonisheth those that behold it, and makes them say, Who is this, that out of a low condition is raised to such familiarity with her beloved, that she leans upon his arm, being made one with him, and enjoying all manner of happiness in his love? Which I have excited towards me, saith she, by the pains I took in thy service when I laboured in the country-plantations, (vii. xii. 12.) such pains as thy mother felt when she travailed with thee, and brought thee forth out of her womb. See Annot. [e] 

Spouse.

Ver. 6. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.] Place me, therefore, hereafter so near unto thy heart, that I may never slip out of thy mind, but constantly receive fresh marks and tokens of thy love and favour; deny not this suit, which proceeds from most fervent love,
which can no more be resisted than death, and is as inexorable as the grave, especially when it flames to the degree of jealousy, and is afraid of losing what it loves; then it incessantly torments the soul; if it be not satisfied, it wounds incurably; it burns and rages with such a violent and unextinguishable heat, as if I feel in my breast, now that it is mightily moved by the Lord. See Annot. [f]

Ver. 7. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be discontinued. Though fire may be quenched, yet love cannot, no, not by the greatest difficulties, nay, troubles and sufferings; which, though they come pourring in continually, are so far from being able to suppress it, that they cannot abate it, nor translate it to any other from the person it loves; for as it is inestimable in itself, so it cannot be purchased by money, nor will they who have it possess it with part for the greatest estate that they might enjoy without it, but perfectly scorn and reject such proflers. See Annot. [g]

Ver. 8. If we have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? And as for those that want it, or in whom it is but just kindled, it makes us very solicitous what we shall do for them; particularly for one that is as dear to us as a sister, but of a small growth in this most desirable quality, and therefore not capable of that happiness which we enjoy: what shall we do for her, when it shall be said, The time is come that she should be disposed of in marriage, and yet it shall be said withal, that she is not fit for it? See Annot. [h]

Ver. 9. If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will incorporate her with boards of cedar. We will not despair of her, nor cast her off, but be both patient with her, and do our utmost to make her such as we desire; let her be faithful and constant, and we will do for her as we do for a wall that is low, which we pull not down, but build up higher, and adorn also with fair and goodly turrets; or as we do with the door of a noble house, which if it be too weak or too mean, we spare no cost to mend it, but inclose in a case of cedar. See Annot. [i]

LITTLE SISTER.

Ver. 10. I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour. And our labour, I foresee, will not be lost, for I hear her say, I am such a wall, and my breasts rise and grow big like such turrets: I am no longer of a low and despisable stature, nor unmeet for his love, but from this time forth I shall be acceptable unto him, and find such favour with him, as to enjoy all the happiness which he imparts to those that are most dear unto him. See Annot. [k]

Ver. 11. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-Hammon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers: every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. Which I will endeavour to answer by my best diligence in his service, and from hence still promise myself a greater increase of happiness; for though great persons let out their lands to others, as king Solomon doth the vineyard he hath in Baal-hammon unto several tenants, from every one of which he receives a vast revenue, besides the gain which they have to themselves as a reward of their labour, (ver. 12.) See Annot. [l]

Ver. 12. My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred. Yet I will not commit the vineyard which I am entrusted withal to the care and management of other persons, but cultivate it myself with my utmost industry; my own eye shall be ever upon it, and I will let nothing be wanting for its improvement; and therefore, if he receive so much profit, beside the benefit that accrues to others, what fruit may I not expect from a far better soil than his, and from far greater pains and providence than I will use about it. See Annot. [m]

BRIDEGROOM.

Ver. 13. These that dwell in the gardens, the companions bearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it. Which coming to the ears of her beloved, He said to her, in the presence of all that waited on her, Thou hast taken up a worthy resolution, nothing can be more acceptable to me than that thou fix thy habitation in thy vineyard; nor canst thou possibly be better employed, to thy own as well as my content, than about the gardens (vi. 2.) committed to thy charge; and therefore ask what thou wilt of me, and I will tell thee before all thy companions, who are witnesses of what I say, I will do it for thee. See Annot. [n]

SPOUSE.

Ver. 14. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices. I have nothing to desire but this, that thou, who art my only beloved, wouldst come and accomplish all these things; make all the speed that is possible to come and save us, and perfect thy loving-kindness to us, such speed as the swiftest creatures make to save themselves from danger; let nothing hinder this, but by thy love, which makes all things sweet and easy, overcome the greatest difficulties in thy way to us, See Annot. [o]

ANNOTATIONS.

[a] Ver. 14. This verse, at first sight, looks like a repetition of the same desire wherewith he began this book, that they might be so happy as to see the Messiah appear, though it were but in his infancy, which would transport them with joy, &c. And thus the Chaldee Paraphrast interprets it, of the time when the Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel.

But if we consider what follows, it will be more reasonable to connect it with what went before, and to take it for a most ardent expression of love to the person before spoken of, with a desire to have more intimate familiarity with him, such as a sister hath with a brother, when he is a stranger, or whom, if she met in the street, she would not be
ashamed to take out of the nurse's arms into her own, and openly kiss, and not imagine she should thereby incur any reproach or contempt.

This seems to be the most literal sense of the words, which may be applied to the open profession of Christianity, with the greatest confidence and security, nothing being more innocent and harmless than the love and service wherein it engages its disciples to their Lord and Master, Christ. Who, the more obedient any person is to God's commands, holds that man or woman the dearer to him, even as dear as a brother, sister, or mother, Matth. xii. 50. Which (said Grotius upon that place) is the mystical sense of the Song of songs. See more in my preface.

[b] Ver. 2.] This dear Lord (i.e. the knowledge of him) she desires here to carry still farther, till she had brought him into the house, that is, into the family of her mother. Which may be applied unto the design of God, to awaken the Jews to believe in Christ, by bringing in the fulness, that is, a vast number, "of the Gentiles," Rom. xi. 25. Which the apostle saith there, ver. 15. would be "life from the dead," unto which the last words of this verse may be accommodated.

For after she had said she would lead him, or bring him down, and then bring him into the house of her mother, she adds, Thou shalt teach, or instruct me. Which agrees with what the apostle there writes, ver. 12. that if the fall of the Jews was "the riches of the Gentiles," that is, enriched them with the treasures of divine wisdom and knowledge, how much more would their fulness enrich them? If we refer this clause (as we do) to mother before named, the best sense I can make of it is this, By whom I was educated and instructed. And then follows her making him "drink of spiced wine," (that is, making a great feast for him, Prov. i. 2. where the most excellent wine made the chiefest part of the entertainment), such wine as makes those who are asleep to speak, vii. 9. Which effect the receiving of the Jews again will produce, as the apostle tells us, when he saith, "It shall be life from the dead!" i.e. a most powerful argument to enliven the most stupid souls, and move them to believe in Christ.

Certain it is, that berakah, spiced or aromatic wine, denotes its fragrancy or delicious odour, whereby the best wines are discerned, as much as by their taste; and the word we translate juice, signifies every where, muste or new wine; whereby the prophets set forth something that works with greater power and efficacy than ordinary, Zach. ix. 17.; and here, I doubt not, relates to something new and unusual; and in the mystical application, may signify a greater fulness and power of the Spirit, than had been in former days, working like new wine in the hearts of those that received the gospel.

And this it need to be done to him, because, as Theodore noted before, what is done to his members, he takes as done to himself.

[c] Ver. 3.] Who is here represented as immediate-

ly condescending to her desires, and fulfilling her wishes; vouchsafing a new supply of the power of the Spirit, to support and comfort her in those labours of love for his name's sake. Which were so great, that she is represented here as spent and fainting away; so she had done before, chap. ii. 6. where see the meaning of these words.

d] Ver. 4.] This verse hath also been twice used before, with no difference from what we read here, but that now the mention of hands and roses is left out; and yet he charges them with greater vehemence than ever. For the Hebrew phrase here signifies as much as, what do you do? why do you stir? &c. that is, by no means: take heed how you disturb her. See ii. 7. iii. 5.

e] Ver. 5.] This seems to be the voice of her companions, or "daughters of Jerusalem," mentioned in the verse before, and (begins the last part of his song), admiring the new change they saw in her. For she was represented before as "coming out of the wilderness," (iii. 6.), but not "leaning upon her beloved," as she is here. Which signifies her advancement unto a state of greater dearness to him, and familiarity with him.

The word mitzopencvah is not found elsewhere, and therefore variously translated by interpreters. But most agree that it signifies, either closely adhering, or leaning, relying, and reclining, as they speak; which L. de Dieu hath shown is the use of the word in the neighbouring languages. But there are those who think it imports something of pleasure, (and therefore the Vulgar takes it in that sense with the other, as I have in the paraphrase), and translate it flowing with the delightful. For she having been in the fields and villages, visiting the vineyards and other places, (vii. 11. 12. 13.), is now introduced as coming back from thence into the royal city. Which being seated on high, in comparison with the plains out of which she came, she is said to ascend, or come up; but that she might not be tired with the journey, is represented as leaning upon the arm of her beloved. (or, as some will have it, lying in his bosom, as St John did in our Saviour's), and laden with the delicious fruit before mentioned, (vii. 13.) Which excited the admiration of all that knew her, when they beheld the grace of her Lord towards her, together with her own beauty, riches, ornaments, and happiness.

The latter part of the verse all the Greek Fathers take to be the voice of the bridgroom, and so do many of the Latins. But some of them, and all the Hebrew writers, take them to be the words of the spouse, because she is of the masculine gender. Whichever way we take them, the sense is very hard to find. If we go the first way, the most natural sense seems to be, that he puts her in mind of the poor and mean condition, out of which he had taken her into a state of the greatest friendship with him; that she might not be overly puffed up with the acclamations which were made to her.

But I have followed the Hebrew points in my pa-
rhaphe, and understood the words of "stirring up his love towards her," when they were looking after the plantations mentioned, vii. 11. 12. Which was excited by the care and pains she took in that business, like the pains of a woman in travail; unto which St Paul compares the solicitude and care he had about the Galatians, that "Christ might be formed in them," iv. 19.

Certain it is, that cibbabea is a word which relates to the pangs of travailing women, and therefore the LXX. translate it asimeters, so that if I have not conjectured amiss about the rest, my interpretation of the last words is natural enough. For capb similitudinis, (as they call it), is frequently omitted in the scripture, and to be supplied in the sense. Twice in this very book it is wanting, i. 15. viii. 4. "thy eyes are dotes," that is, as dotes. And in Prov. xvi. 11. and in his father David's psalms very often, Psal. xi. 1. "How say you to my soul, Flee a bird," (i.e. as a bird), "to your hill," and omit other places, cxix. 110. "Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth, dross," i.e. as or like dross.

In like manner I take the last words of this verse, "There (viz. I stirred thee up) as thy mother travailed in birth with thee, there, I say, like her that brought thee forth," i.e. by such pains as these I raised up thy love to me.

As for what is said by many interpreters, concerning Eve's eating the apple in paradise, and thereby ruining all mankind, there is no reason to think, either that she is the mother here meant, or that teppeach denotes an apple, rather than orange, citron, or such like fruit.

[f.] ver. 6.] The words also, according to the Hebrew points, are the words of the spouse, beseeching her beloved to keep her always in his mind, as one very dear to him. For that was the end of having the name, or the picture of a beloved person, engraven on a seal, or jewel, and wearing it next the heart, or upon the arm, that it might testify their great esteem of such persons, and the constancy of their affection towards them, and that they desired they might never slip out of their memory. See Jer. xxii. 24.

Some think here is an allusion to the high-priest, who carried the names of the children of Israel engraved in precious stones, not only upon his breast, but upon his shoulders also, as may be seen, Exod. xxviii. 14. 17. 21. and this, "for a memorial before the Lord continually," ver. 19. (which interpretation may be confirmed by the words of the son of Syrach, Eccles. xiv. 11. who saith, "Aaron was adorned with precious stones, graven like seals"). And they think withal, that seal upon the heart relates to the inward affection; and seal on the arm, to the outward expressions of love and esteem.

And then follows the reason of this prayer, which proceeded from the vehemence of her love, which was grown to the height of jealousy, (which is nothing but the highest degree of love), lest she should lose him, as she had been in danger before, ver. 6. &c.

This love is said to be as strong as death; which is admirably expressed by Maximus Tyrius, Dissert. x. "Wild beasts are not terrible to it, nor fire, nor precipeces, nor the sea, nor the sword, nor the halter, nihilation, nor the sword, nor the halter, &c. but even the most impassable difficulties are got over by it; the hardest things are presently mastered, the most frightful easily surmounted, &c. it is everywhere confident, over looks all things, overpowers all things," &c. But none express this like St Paul, Rom. viii. 35. 36. 37. &c.

There is no difficulty but in the last clause of the verse, (for as "strong as death," signifies to be insuperable, so "cruel as the grave," denotes it not to be moved by prayers and intercessions, or any thing else). Where the word sequentea should not be translated, "the coals thereof," but, the arrows thereof are arrows of fire; that is, it shoots into the heart, wounds it, and burns there, nay, inflames it vehemently by the wounds it gives; as the reverend and learned Dr Hammond hath observed upon Psal. lxvi. 3. And so the LXX. seem here to understand it, when they translate it asὡς αὐταί, "its feathers, or wings, wherewith it flies, are wings of fire." Which wings or arrows of fire, are said, in the last words of all, to be "a most vehement flame," or, rather, it should be thus translated, Which are the flames of the fire of the Lord. So the Hebrew word seems to signify, being compounded of three words, fire, flame, and the Lord; denoting mighty and exceeding scorching flames. Such compositions are not only to be found in other parts of the Bible, Jer. ii. 31. but in the Punic language also, as Barchartus shows in his Canaan, i. ii. c. 15.

Some translate it, "Such flames are kindled only by the Lord." And then, if there be an allusion to the breast-plate of the high-priest, in the beginning of the verse, I fancy the conclusion may allude to the "fire that went out from before the Lord," Lev. ix. 24. and devoured the sacrifices, as love doth all manner of difficulties. This fire was to burn perpetually upon the altar, and never be suffered to go out, Lev. vi. 12. and therefore the best emblem of love that could be found.

[g.] Ver. 7.] For it is unexquishuishable, as it here follows, "Many waters cannot quench love." Which is a metaphor, whereby profane authors also have set forth the mighty, unexquishuishable power of love; it is more peremptory, &c. What new kind of configuration is this? (saith Plutarchus, in one of his Epistles), I am ready to call for water, and there is none to bring it, "for the inhabitants of the town could not get water, because of the fire." By many waters are sometimes
many affections, (as is very well known), which they that love, frequently endure, before they can accomplish their desire. But though there should be an inundation of them, we are here told they cannot overwhelm or overflow it, as the word we translate 
drowned signifies; but it will still live, and be uppermost, and prevail.

And such is its constancy, and satisfaction also, which it hath in its own pleasures, it regards not riches at all, but will rather be poor with one whom it affects, than enjoy great possessions with another person. Nay, it despires, and that with disdain, the offers of a man's whole estate, if that condition be imposed, of forsaking its love. Others may laugh perhaps at such persons, but it is all one, they smile at them again. So Theodoret and the LXX. understand the latter part of this verse, "If a man give away all his substance in charity, they will extremely despise him." That is, saith he, they that spend all they have, and their very lives, for the love of God, are set at nought by those that want such love. Other interpretations of these words I have expressed in the paraphrase.

[i] Ver. 8.] Here is another property of divine love, which makes us solicitous for those that want it, or have but the beginnings of it, and may be in danger to lose them. And this seems to be the speech of the spouse to her companions, who were all troubled for a sister, (that is, some church), which was of a small growth, and had no breasts, that is, was not ripe for marriage. For all have breasts, but they do not rise and swell, till they are of such an age, that they may be called women, Ezek. xvi. 7. "They inquire there what they should do for her, "in the day when she shall be spoken for?" that is, demanded in marriage; or "when there shall be speech concerning her," that is, concerning this defect of hers.

[i] Ver. 9.] Here he returns an answer to that question; which is, that he and they will take greater care for her to raise her stature, and to bring her to perfection. For where there are good beginnings, we are not wont to forsake them, but rather to add to them, and improve them. As for example, the wall of a building which we esteem, we do not suffer to fall to the ground, but strengthen and raise it; nay, adorn it sometimes and beautify it with towers and pinacles, which we stick not to gild, that they may appear more gloriously. Or if it be a door of a house, which we value, we let it not decay, but rather case it with boards of cedar, to make it more durable as well as neat and handsome; for cedar is not apt to putrify.

This seems to me the most simple exposition of these words, and I do not think fit to trouble the reader with that vast variety which may be found in interpreters. But only add, that they may very naturally be applied unto a soul, or a church, in a state of imperfection, but built upon Christ the foundation; in this manner, "Let her but be firm and constant, like a wall, in her love to me, and I will not abandon the care of her; let but her exclude all other, and open to me alone, and she shall never want anything necessary to her perfection; for I will richly adorn her, and make her like the house of God himself, which is lined with cedar."

[k] Ver. 10.] And then this verse may be thus applied; (being her answer), "I am resolved to do what thou requirest, (to be steadfast and faithful), "and already perceive the reward of my infidelity," &c. For these words plainly relate to the foregoing, as I have expressed in the paraphrase; unto which I shall add nothing, for if that be admitted, there is no difficulty in them. It being known to every body that shalom, peace, signifies all manner of happiness in the Hebrew language; which is included also in our English word favour, whereby we here translate it. For it signifies all the good thingsthat may be expected from the favour he bears to any person.

[l] Ver. 11.] And being thus favoured by him, she now promises her diligence (in this and the next verse) to do him the best service, and to make the greatest improvements she could of the talents committed to her. For though Solomon (she here saith) let out his vineyard, which he had in Baal hamon, a place near Jerusalem, as Aben-Ezra tells us, (which is followed by most interpreters, few thinking it to be near Engaddi), where abundance of people had vineyards, and he a very large one; for it belonging to several farmers, every one paid him a thousand pieces of silver, i.e. shekels, (as much as we may say, it brought him in a vast revenue yearly; for a thousand is a sum of perfection, Psal. cxxiv. 13. Micah, v. 2 and other places; and the number of farmers or tenants, though not expressed, some think to be ten), yet she takes up another resolution, which she expresses in the next verse.

[m] Ver. 12.] Where she saith she will herself look after the vineyard committed to her trust, and not leave it to the care of others. Which seems to be the meaning of the first phrase in this verse, "My vineyard which I have is before me," i.e. under my eye (as we speak) and special care. Thus God's judgements are said to be before David, Psal. xviii. 22. that is, he took great care never to swerve from them.

It amounts also to the same sense; if we take this phrase to signify as much as "it is in my power," Gen. xvii. 5. Jer. xi. 4. For then the meaning is, she kept it in her own hand, or occupation, and did not farm it out to others.

And then the last part of the verse signifies, that if Solomon made such a profit of his vineyard, as that before named, (besides two hundred shekels, which each of the farmers got over and above for their pains), though he did not dress it himself; what would be the increase that she was likely to make by her own care and diligence in the business. That is, it was incredible what fruit she would reap by her pains: according to that of the son of Syraci, Ecclus. xxiv. 31. &c. "I said, I will water my garden, and I will water abundantly my garden-bed; and, lo, my brook became a river, and my river became sea," &c.
This seems to me the most natural sense of these two difficult verses, which Almonazir suggested to my thoughts. And that Solomon, not any other person, is here intended, Maimonides himself agrees; who, in his Treatise of the Foundation of the Law, c. vii. hath these words: "Whereover you meet with the name of Solomon, in the book of Canticles, it is holy, as the rest of the names there are; save only in that place, A thousand are to thee, O Solomon," &c. Others also add that place, Cant. iii. 7. "Behold the bed which is Solomon’s," &c. Where the Masters say it is a common name, as well as here.

These two verses are ingenuously applied by some to the far greater increase of knowledge and goodness in the church, than in the synagogue; that is, by Christianity, than by Judaism.

[a] Ver. 23.] This verse, according to the Hebrew points, is the voice of the bridegroom; who seems to commend the resolution she made in the foregoing verse. And he calling her "the inhabitant of the gardens," (which are the same with the vineyard before-mentioned,) it signifies her perpetual care about their prosperity. In recompence of which, he bids her, before they finish this interview, to ask what she will of him, and it shall be done for her. Which, in short, is the sum of what the same Almonazir hath long ago conjectured to be the sense of this place.

[b] Ver. 14.] Unto which she returns her answer, in these words, and so shuts up this song. Which seems to me to conclude as it began, with a desire that the Messiah would come, and make good all those things that had been represented in these raptures.

The word berach, which we translate make haste, is twice translated by the LXX. ἀνίψευσε, go or run thorough, to the very end, Exod. xvi. 28. xxxvi. 33. And no doubt denotes here most vehement and restless endeavours in a speedy course; like that of a roebuck, or wild goat rather, whose agility, both in running and jumping, is celebrated by all authors, and said to be such as is scarce credible.

The young hart, (called here ὁμήρος,) is still more swift and nimble than the old; the exceeding great fear wherein it is, adding wing (as we speak) to its feet. Whence Xenophon saith, there is nothing comparable to their swiftness, when the old ones are absent, and they are pursued by dogs, ὅν ἐπροπώθηκαν ἅπαν ἑν ἅτα, &c.; then there is no speed like to that of such young harts, as his words are quoted by Boehartus.

Who well observes, (I. iii. c. xvii. part i. de Animal,) that the sense of the last words, (upon the mountains, &c.) is to be made out by adding one word, in this manner, "Be thou like the young harts, running, (or when they run,) upon the mountains of spices," i.e. the mountains where spices grow; such as those mentioned, iv. 6. Such perhaps was Bethsar, ii. 17. (where we meet with these words before,) and I have sometimes thought they should be so translated here; "the mountains of Besamin;" as these the mountains of Bethar.

But what these mountains were, we are now ignorant, though this is certain, that the creatures here mentioned were bred in the highest mountains of the country; as Aelian testifies in the latter end of his fifth book: "The harts in Syria are bred in their highest mountains, Amanus, Libanus, and Carmel." For there they were safest and most secure from danger; there it was difficult to pursue them, especially when they climbed up the steepest places. And therefore the psalmist, and the prophet Habakkuk, when they would represent themselves as in a state of perfect security, say, God had "made their feet like hinds feet, and made them to walk upon their (bamosb), high places." Psal. xviii. 33. Hab. iii. 16. Which words allude to the inaccessible mountains, which those creatures frequented, especially the females, that they might there secure their young ones. Besides, as there they could feed and bring forth their young most securely, so there was the sweetest feeding.

In short, Solomon here seems to long for the first coming of the Messiah, as St John doth for his last; who concludes his book of the Revelation, in the same manner as Solomon doth this; saying, "Come, Lord Jesus," Rev. xxii. 20.

There are those who fancy, that in the foregoing verse, the bridegroom asks her consent, for the perfecting their love in marriage; and desires her, in the audience of her companions, to lift up her voice and sing the nuptial hymn; which she now, say they, in this verse, professes herself to be ready to do, if he would but be present with her, and assist and direct her to do it aright. And then it is thus applied, and paraphrased by the fore-named Almonazir:

"Thou comfortest me, that I should, with morning and evening hymns and songs, celebrate thy omnipotent wisdom and goodness, &c. Voschabae then speedily to adjoin the eternal force and flame of thy Holy Spirit unto my voice; that in spirit, and in truth, and sanctity of heart, I may sing thy praises; and not only with my mouth, and sound, but in my mind and heart especially, worthily worship thy incomprehensible Majesty."

Whence it is, that the church, being moved by a divine inspiration, saith thus in all her prayers:

"O Lord, open Thou our lips: And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise. O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us."

Amen.