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VOLUME I.

HENGSTENBERG'S COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS.

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MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,  
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

COMMENTARY  
ON  
THE PSALMS,

BY  
E. W. HENGSTENBERG,

DOCTOR AND PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN BERLIN

VOL. I.

FOURTH EDITION, CAREFULLY REVISED.

EDINBURGH:  
T. & T. CLARK, 38, GEORGE STREET.  
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.; SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.  
DUBLIN: JOHN ROBERTSON AND CO.

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## THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

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### PSALM FIRST.

THE Psalmist begins by extolling the blessedness of the righteous, who is first described negatively, as turning away from the counsels of the wicked, ver. 1, and then positively, as having his thoughts engrossed with the Divine law, ver. 2. He proceeds next to delineate under a pleasant image the prosperity which attends him in all his ways, and places in contrast to this, the destruction which is the inseparable concomitant of the wicked, vers. 3, 4. He grounds upon these eternal principles the confidence, that God will take out of the way whatever, in the course of events, appears to be at variance with them; that by His judgment He will overthrow the wicked, through whose malice the righteous suffer, and free His Church, which must consist only of the righteous, from their corrupting leaven; and, as it was declared, in vers. 3 and 4, that the Lord interests Himself in the righteous, and hence could not leave them helpless, while destruction is the fate of the wicked, the former must in consequence be exalted above the latter, vers. 5, 6.

According to this order, which alone secures to the "therefore" at the beginning of ver. 5, and the "for" in ver. 6, their proper meaning, the Psalm falls into three strophes, each consisting of two verses.

The Psalm is primarily of an admonitory character. What it says of the prosperity which attends the righteous, and the perdition which befalls the wicked, cannot but incite to imitate the one, and shun the other. In reference to this Luther remarks: "It is the practice of all men to inquire after blessedness; and there is no man on earth who does not wish that it



might go well with him, and would not feel sorrow if it went ill with him. But he, who speaks in this Psalm with a voice from heaven, beats down and condemns everything which the thoughts of men might excogitate and devise, and brings forth the only true description of blessedness, of which the whole world knows nothing, declaring that he only is blessed and prosperous whose love and desire are directed to the law of the Lord. This is a short description, one too that goes against all sense and reason, especially against the reason of the worldly-wise and the high-minded. As if he had said: Why are ye so busy seeking counsel? why are ye ever in vain devising unprofitable things? There is only one precious pearl; and he has found it, whose love and desire is toward the law of the Lord, and who separates himself from the ungodly—all succeeds well with him. But whosoever does not find this pearl, though he should seek with ever so much pains and labour the way to blessedness, he shall never find it."

The Psalm has, besides, a consolatory character, which comes clearly out in the last strophe; for it must tend to enliven the hope of the righteous in the grace of God, and fill them with confidence, that everything which now appears contrary to their hope, shall come to an end; that the judgment of God shall remove the stumbling-blocks cast in their way by the temporal prosperity of the wicked, and the troubles thence accruing to them.

The truth contained in this Psalm is as applicable to the Church of the New Testament as to that of the Old. It remains perpetually true, that sin is the destruction of any people, and that salvation is the inseparable attendant of righteousness. Whatever, in the course of things, seems to run counter to this, will be obviated by the remark, that a righteous man, as the author delineates him,—one whose desire is undividedly fixed upon the law of God, and to whom it is "his thought by day and his dream by night,"—is not to be found among the children of men. Just because salvation is inseparably connected with righteousness, an absolute fulfilment of the promise of the Psalm cannot be expected. For even when the innermost bent of the mind is stedfastly set upon righteousness, there still exist so many weaknesses and sins, that sufferings of various kinds are necessary, not less as deserved punishments, than as the means of improvement, which, so far from subverting the

principles here laid down, serve to confirm them. The sentiment, that "everything he does, prospers," which is literally true of the righteous, in so far as he is such, passes, in consequence of the imperfect nature of our righteousness, which alone can be charged with our loss of the reward that is promised to the perfect, into the still richly consolatory truth, that "all things work together for good to them who love God." Those who are blinded by Pelagianism, who know not the limited nature of human righteousness, and consequently want the only key to the mystery of the cross, do apprehend the truth of the main idea of the Psalm, but at the same time escape from it only by surrendering themselves to a crude Dualism. It is unquestionable, say they, that the internal blessedness of life has no other ground than genuine piety; but as for outward things, "which depend upon natural influences, the relations and accidents of life, and the violent movements of the populace," one can make no lofty pretensions to them. Who can but feel that natural influences and such like things are here placed in complete independence of God, are virtually raised to the condition of a second God, and that we are at once translated from a Christian into a heathen sphere, in which latter, accident, fate, Typhon, Achriman, play a distinguished part, and all on the same ground, to wit, the want of that knowledge of sin, which peculiarly belongs to revelation? Such masters must not take it upon them to instruct the Psalmist, but must learn of him. Whoever really believes in one true God, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the world, cannot but accord with the doctrine of the Psalmist. It is impossible to disparage in the least the doctrine of recompense, without trenching closely upon the truth of one God. *Internal* good, as the perfect, is contrasted with *external*, as the imperfect. But where, in reality, is the man, who enjoys complete inward blessedness—who, even though labouring under the greatest delusion regarding his state, can spend so much as one day in perfect satisfaction with himself? Besides, is it not natural, that the external should go hand in hand with the internal? And have we any reason, on account of the troubles which befall us, to doubt the omnipotence and righteousness of God, and the truth of that doctrine of Scripture, which pervades both economies, and appears in every book from Genesis to Revelation, that God will recompense to every one according to his works? Instead of running into such

mournful aberrations, it behoves every one, when he reads what the Psalmist says of the righteous—"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 doeth shall prosper"—and finds that his own condition presents a melancholy contrast to what is here described, to turn back his eye upon the first and second verses, and inquire whether that which is there affirmed of the righteous will apply to him; and if he finds it to be otherwise, then should he smite upon his breast, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and thereafter strive with all earnestness to realize the pattern there delineated, by employing the means which God has appointed for the purpose.

The subject of the Psalm is, as might be judged from the previous remarks, quite general, and it is an error in several expositors to refer it to particular times and persons. There is great probability in the opinion of those, who suppose with Calvin, that this Psalm, originally occupying another position, was placed by the collector of the Psalms, as an introduction to the whole. Basilus calls it a "short preface" to the Psalms; and that this view is of great antiquity, may be gathered from Acts xiii. 33, where Paul, according to the reading agreed upon by the most approved critics (Erasmus, Mill, Bengel, Griesbach, etc.), quotes as the first Psalm that which, in our collection, occupies the second place. If the first was considered only as a sort of introductory preface, the numbering would begin with the one following, as, indeed, is the case in some manuscripts. The matter of the Psalm is admirably suited to this application of it. "The collector of these songs," says Amyrald, "seems to have carefully placed before the eye of his readers, at the very threshold, the aim at which the actions of men should, as so many arrows, be directed." The position of the Psalm at the beginning appears peculiarly suitable, if, along with its admonitory tendency, the consolatory is also brought prominently out. In the latter respect, it may be regarded as in fact a short compend of the main subject of the Psalms. That God has appointed salvation to the righteous, perdition to the wicked—this is the great truth, with which the sacred bards grapple amid whatever painful experiences of life apparently indicate the reverse. The supposition is also favoured, or rather seems to be demanded, by the circumstance, that the Psalm has no super-

scription. As from Psalm third a long series of Psalms follows, with titles ascribing them to David, it cannot be doubted that the collectors intended to open the collection therewith. So that there must have been a particular reason for making our Psalm an exception from the general rule, and it is scarcely possible to imagine any other than the one already mentioned.

It is justly remarked, however, by Koester, that the supposition in question by no means requires us to hold that the Psalm is a late production, and probably composed by the collector himself. The simplicity and freshness which characterize it are against this. That it must have been composed, at any rate, before Jeremiah, is evident from his imitation of it. A more determinate conclusion regarding the time of its composition, can only, since the Psalm itself furnishes no data, be derived from ascertaining its relation to Psalm second.

It has often been maintained, that the two Psalms form but one whole,<sup>1</sup> and this opinion has exercised considerable influence upon various manuscripts (De Rossi mentions seven, and even Origen in his Hexapla by Montfaucon, p. 475, speaks of having seen one in his day). But this view is obviously untenable. Each of the Psalms forms a separate and complete whole by itself. Still, several appearances present themselves, which certainly point to a close relation between the two. First of all, there is the remarkable circumstance, that Psalm second stands in this place, at the head of a collection, to which, properly, only such Psalms belonged as bore the name of David in their superscription. We can hardly explain this by any other reason than its inseparable connection with the first Psalm, which being placed, for the reason above given, at the commencement, required the second to follow immediately after. There is, further, a certain outward resemblance between them: the number of verses in Psalm second is precisely the double of those in the first; and in both Psalms there is a marked and singularly regular construction of strophes, the first Psalm falling into three strophes of two verses, and the second into four strophes of three. In regard to the subject, the first is admirably fitted to be an introduction to the second, for which it lays a general foundation. What is said in the first Psalm generally, of the different taste and destiny of the righteous and the wicked, the

<sup>1</sup> See the opinions of the Jews and the Fathers in Wetstein, on Acts xiii. 33.

second repeats with a special application to the Messiah and His adversaries. The first Psalm closed with the announcement of judgment against the wicked, and at that point the second begins. On the other hand, the latter Psalm concludes with a benediction, as the former had commenced with it—compare “blessed is the man,” with “blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” The expression in Psalm ii. 12, “Ye shall perish in your way,” remarkably coincides with that in Psalm i. 6, “The way of the ungodly shall perish.” Finally, the words, “The nations meditate vain things” in Psalm second, acquire additional force, if viewed as a contrast to the meditation of the righteous on the law of the Lord, mentioned in the first Psalm.

These circumstances are by no means satisfactorily explained and accounted for, on the supposition that the collector had joined the second Psalm to the first, from certain points of connection happening to exist between them; and nothing remains for us but the conclusion, that both Psalms were composed by the same author, and were meant by him as different parts of one whole. This conclusion may be the more readily embraced, as we have elsewhere undoubted specimens of such pairs of Psalms (as Psalm ix. and x, xiv. and xv, xlii. and xliii.), and as similar things are not wanting in Christian poets, for example, Richter’s two poems, “It is not difficult to be a Christian,” and “It is hard to be a Christian.”

Now, as there are important grounds for ascribing the second Psalm to David, we should be entitled to regard him as the author also of the first; nor can any solid objection be urged against this conclusion. In its noble simplicity, its quiet but still extremely spirited character, it presents a close resemblance to other Psalms, of which David was unquestionably the penman, and in particular to the xv. xxiii. viii. Psalms.

Ver. 1. *Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, and stands not in the way of sinners, and sits not in the seat of the scornful.* That the righteous should first be described negatively, has its ground in the proneness of human nature to what is evil. From the same ground arises the predominantly negative form of the decalogue. As there the thought of something, to which our corrupt heart is inclined, is everywhere forced on our notice, so also is it here. עצה never signifies what Stier and Hitzig here understand by it, *disposition, spirit*, but always *counsel*, as in Job xxi. 16, xxii. 18.

"The counsel of a man" signifies, in some passages, the counsel given by him; for the most part, however, it is the counsel which he adopts himself—his plans and resolutions. This latter is invariably the meaning of the expression, "to walk in any one's counsel," which uniformly means, "to adopt his plans, to share the same designs,"—comp. 2 Chron. xxii. 5, where "walked after their counsel," corresponds to, "he walked in the ways of the house of Ahab," ver. 3, and "he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab," ver. 4; only with this distinction, indicated by the "also" in ver. 5, and the clause following, "and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab to war," that while there a general agreement in thought and action is spoken of, here it is referred to particular plans and undertakings. In Micah vi. 16, to "walk in one's counsels," is taken as parallel with "observing one's statutes and doing one's works." In Psalm lxxxi. 12, "they walked in their own counsels," means, they walked in the counsels they themselves took, in the plans they themselves devised. Consequently, the exposition of Gesenius and others, who render the first clause of our Psalm: "who lives not according to the counsels of the ungodly," must be abandoned, and this the rather, that in what follows, the discourse is not of a dependence upon the influence of the wicked, but of one's personally belonging to them. To walk in the counsel of the wicked, is to occupy oneself with their purposes, their worthless projects.

Olshausen, in his emendations on the Old Testament, would read עִירָה for עֵצָה, "in the company or band of the ungodly." He appeals to the strong parallelism, which the author of this Psalm employs, and, indeed, pre-eminently in this first verse. The parallels here fall into three members: who walks not, stands not, sits not. In each member there is a preterite, as predicate, with the preposition ב following it, a noun as its complement, and a completely appropriate dependent genitive. Two of the nouns which serve to limit the preposition, to wit, *way* and *seat*, may be local designations, as then they would most fitly accord with the sense of the particular verbs. In the first noun alone, no such local designation is to be found. Rightly viewed, the word עֵצָה has of course this meaning. The proposed change is certainly needed to make out this signification. For the *counsel* undoubtedly refers to the spiritual by-way, into which he wanders, who follows it. But the second

term, *the way of sinners*, must also be spiritually understood. To speak of standing in their way can only refer to their manner of acting,—to follow with them the same moral paths, or to act like them. כִּרְסָב, “the seat,” is the only term that implies an external locality. The difference is, however, of little moment, since here also the outward companionship comes into view, only as the result of an internal agreement. If we examine the matter more closely, it will be found that the alteration proposed is not only quite unnecessary, but also unsuitable. For עִרְתָּ is excluded on the very ground which Olshausen presses against עֲנֵת. According to the analogy of בִּירֵךְ and בְּכִרְסָב, the preposition ב must admit of being rendered by *on*; it must designate the sphere in which the conduct is exhibited. Now, the expression: “on the counsel,” is quite suitable; but the expression: “on the *company*,” is senseless.

According to the common acceptance, כִּרְסָב must mean here, not “seat,” but “session.” Of the few passages, however, which are brought forward in support of this meaning, Psalm cvii. 32, so far from requiring, does not even admit of it. If the translation be adopted: “in the session (assembly) of the elders they shall praise Ilim,” we must decide on adopting the perfectly groundless supposition, that the elders had instituted separate meetings for the praise of God, apart from the rest of the people. None but *general* religious assemblies are known in history. If it be rendered: “upon the seat, or the bench of the elders,” then everything will be in order; “they shall extol Ilim in the congregation of the people, and praise Ilim on the bench of the elders,” namely, first the whole, and then the most distinguished part thereof. The only meaning which is certain, is here also quite suitable. To sit in the seat of the scorers, is, in other words, to sit as scorers, just as, in the preceding clauses, the discourse was of such as stood, not beside sinners, but among them, who not merely follow, but also cherish for themselves the counsels of ungodly men. Luther has given the meaning correctly: “nor sits where the scorers sit.” It is, perhaps, not an accidental thing, that the attitude of sitting is distinctively ascribed to the scorers. A mocking disposition unfolds itself chiefly in the company of those who are like-minded, who are inflamed with wine and intoxicating drink, which we elsewhere find mentioned in connection with mockers.—as in Isa. v. and Prov. xx. 1, where wine itself is called a

mockers. So, in reference to social meetings, the act of sitting is frequently alluded to; for example, in Jer. xv. 17, "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced;" in Psalm l. 20, "Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother, thou slanderest thine own mother's son;" Psalm lxix. 12, "They that sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards." It is proper to add, however, that in Psalm xxvi. 4, 5, sitting is attributed to men of deceit, and evil-doers.

יִצְחָק (scorner), marks one who scoffs at God, His law and ordinances, His judgment and His people. In Prov. ix. 7, 8, the scorner is placed in opposition to the wise, whose heart is filled with holy reverence toward God and Divine things. In opposition to De Wette, who would here exclude the strictly religious scoffers, we can point to such passages as Isa. v. 19, "They say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it;" Jer. xvii. 15, "Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now,"—where the words of such scoffers are expressly given. Religious mockery is as old as the Fall. The admonition in 2 Peter iii. 3, regarding scoffers, as appears to me, has some respect to the passage before us.

Men have often sought to discover a climax in the verse. But there is no foundation for this, either in the nouns or in the verbs. In reference to the former, it was already remarked by Venema, that "they distinguish men as exhibiting different appearances, rather than different grades of sin." The רָעָה, from רָעָה, denotes in Arabic, magna cupiditate et concupiscentia fuit, and in Syriac, perturbatus es animo; hence it properly signifies "the passionate, the restless man" (Isa. lvii. 20, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest"); it is descriptive of the wicked, in respect to their internal state, their violent commotions within, the disquietude, springing from sinful desires, which constantly impels them to fresh misdeeds. The word חַטָּאִים, "sinners," designates the same persons in respect to the lengthened series of sinful acts which proceed from them. Finally, the word לְצַח, "scornful," brings into view a peculiarly venomous operation and fruit of evil. But in the verbs we can the less conceive of a climactic gradation being intended, as Stier's assumption, that the middle verb עָמַד signifies not, to stand, but to continue, to persevere, destroys the



evidently intentioned combination of the three bodily states of waking men. The verse simply declares in the most expressive manner possible, the absence of all fellowship with sin.

Ver. 2. The fellowship with unrighteousness, which the godly man zealously shuns, is here placed in opposition to God and His law, which he zealously seeks. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.* תורה never has the general signification often ascribed to it here by expositors—*doctrine*; but always the more special sense of *law*. That this is the import here, is perfectly obvious from a comparison of the parallel passages, which show also, that the law meant here, is that, written, according to Psalm xl. 8, in the volume of the book or roll, called the law of Moses, which is always to be understood wherever the law is spoken of in the Psalms. The writer does not mean the *natural* law spoken of in Isaiah xxiv. 5, and throughout the entire book of Job, and which, being darkened and disfigured by sin, could be but little regarded and seldom mentioned by those who walk in the clear light of revelation. These parallel passages are, Deut. vi. 6, 7, where Moses says to the people: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them," etc. (xi. 18 ff.); and Joshua i. 8, where the angel says to him: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous." This last manifestly stands in a very near relation to ours, not merely from the meditation spoken of, but also from the prosperity connected with it. Just as what the angel speaks to Joshua rests on the ground of those passages of the Pentateuch, and points to it (comp. also Deut. xvii. 19, which contains a like word of exhortation to the future king of Israel); so the author of our Psalm points to the exhortation addressed to Joshua, who stood forth there as a worthy type of the fulfilment of what is here required, and in whose experience, the reward here promised found a sure guarantee for its realization. How De Wette could think that the love and study of the law being enjoined, is a proof of the later production of the Psalm, can scarcely be imagined, since a profound investigation into the nature of the law, the converting of it into juice and blood, might be proved

by many passages to have been even held by believers of the Old Testament, to be the highest end of their life. How much David fulfilled this condition, how intimate a knowledge he had of the law, even in its smallest particulars, and how constantly it formed the centre of his thoughts and feelings, the delight of his heart, will be placed beyond all doubt, by this exposition. Indeed, the fifteenth Psalm, which the dullest critic must ascribe to David, may serve, notwithstanding its limited compass, for ample proof; for it contains close and continued verbal references to the Pentateuch. Comp. also Psalm xix. Besides, what is here meant, is not that habit of speculating and laborious trifling upon the law which was quite foreign to the practical turn of the Old Testament saints, but a meditation referring directly to the walk and conduct. This follows, as is well remarked by Claus, from the whole context, which is throughout practical. The subject in ver. 1 is, "fellowship with sin:" in vers. 3-6, "the different portions of the righteous and the wicked." How, in such a connection, could ver. 2 refer to the theoretical study of the law, and not rather to the occupation of the heart with the subject and matter of the Divine Word? To this result we are led also by a comparison of the parallel passages, in which the reading and meditating are expressly mentioned as means to the keeping and doing. Luther remarks on the words, "His delight is the law of the Lord:" "The prophet does not speak here of such an inclination, or liking as philosophers and modern theologians talk of, but of a simple and pure pleasure of heart, and a particular desire toward the law of God, which possesses him whom this Psalm pronounces blessed, and who neither seeks what the law promises, nor fears what it threatens, but feels that the law itself is a holy, righteous, and good thing. Therefore, it is not merely a love for the law, but such a sweet pleasure and delight in it, as the world and its princes can neither prevent nor take away by prosperous or adverse circumstances, nay, which shines triumphantly forth through poverty, reproach, the cross, death, and hell; for such desire shows itself the most in necessities and distresses, in adversity and persecution. Now from all this it seems manifest, that this Psalm (unless it should be understood of Christ alone) is nothing else than a mirror and goal, toward which a truly pious and blessed man must strive and labour; for in this life there is no one, who is not conscious of lacking to some extent

this delight in the law of the Lord, by reason of *the lust and the law* in his members, which decidedly and wholly oppose this law of God ; as St Paul complains, in Rom. vii. 22, 23, saying : ‘I delight in the law of God after the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.’ ”

It is a great thing, therefore, to have one’s delight in the law of the Lord. The natural man, even when the consciousness of the holiness of the law is awakened in him, and he anxiously strives to satisfy it, never gets beyond the region of fear. Even the regenerate, although delight in the law predominates in them, yet have constantly to struggle with their sinful propensities. Perfect delight in the law presupposes a perfect union of the human with the Divine will, perfect extirpation of sin—for the measure of sin is the measure of dislike to the law—perfect holiness. And since this is not to be found in the present life, what man can complain if he does not experience a perfect fulfilment of the saying, “Everything he doeth prospers?” Christ alone, who was the only righteous one on earth, could have laid claim to such a fulfilment: He, however, freely renounced it and bore the cross, when He might well have sought to rejoice. Those who are *compelled* to suffer, receive a testimony that they are sinful ; and the fact, that none experience uniform prosperity, is a declaration on the part of God, that there is sin still dwelling even in His saints.

On the “day and night,” J. H. Michaelis remarks : “Indefesso studio, ut cessante etiam actu, nunquam tamen cesset pius affectus.” Instead of *meditating*, Luther has *speaking* ; but he remarks at the same time that “the speaking here meant, is not the mere utterance of the lips, which even hypocrites are capable of, but such speaking as labours to express in words the feelings of the heart.” The construction with ב, however (yet, compare דבר with ב in Deut. vi. 7), and especially the mention of *night*, recommends the first signification. Such meditation day and night, he only practises who, as Luther puts it, “has, through desire, become one cake with the word of God ; as, indeed, love is used to reduce him who loves, and that which is loved, to one substance.”—The construction of the הנה with ב, implies, that the person who meditates, loses himself in his object.

Ver. 3. *And he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season, and whose leaf does not wither, and whatsoever he does he prosperously executes.* The *ו*, and, is not to be translated *for*. For the verse does not contain the reason, but the carrying out of the *אשר*. The meaning was perceived quite correctly by Luther: "After the prophet has described, in vers. 1 and 2, the man who is blessed before God, and painted him in proper colours, he goes on here to describe him still further, by means of a very beautiful image." *על*, *by*, properly *upon*. A thing is said to be upon one, if it projects over, or generally rises higher. Hence this preposition, which in common use is rendered *by*, *beside*, when the discourse is of a lower object, in juxtaposition with a higher, is very frequently employed in reference to streams, springs, and seas.—The comparison of a prosperous man to a tree planted beside a river, which is peculiarly appropriate in the arid regions of the East, occurs also in Jer. xvii. 8. There, however, it is only the imitation and further extension of our passage.<sup>1</sup> Nothing but the greatest prejudice could have inverted the relation of these two passages to each other. The sentence in Jeremiah has all the appearance of a commentary or paraphrase. In Psalm xcii. 12, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree," the particular is put instead of the general. With the expression "in his season," compare that in Mark xi. 13, "for it was not the time of figs." Most of the older expositors refer the words, "bringeth forth his fruit," of good works; but the connection shows, that fruitfulness here is considered merely as a sign of joyful prosperity. The figure was embodied in an appropriate symbolical transaction by Christ, when He cursed the fig tree. Because the Jewish people did not answer the conditions laid down in vers. 1 and 2, they could no longer be as a tree yielding its fruit in its season: to the tree, therefore, by which the nation was represented, the evil word was spoken, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," Matt. xxi. 19. In the words: "Whatsoever he doeth he successfully accomplisheth," the author returns from the image to the object, explaining the former. The word *העלה* is to be taken here, not as many expositors do, in an intransitive sense, for then we should have expected *על*, but transitively, to

<sup>1</sup> See Kuper Jerem. libr. sacr. interp. p. 162.

*accomplish successfully*; so generally; see, for example, 2 Chron. vii. 11. The intransitive signification, when more closely considered, does not occur even in the *single* passage which Winer has referred to as an example of it, Judges xviii. 5. The *hiphil* everywhere retains its own meaning. There appears to be an allusion to Gen. xxxix. 3, 4, where the same expressions are used of Joseph, whose prosperous condition was a pledge of like prosperity to those who resemble him in disposition.

Ver. 4. *The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff, which the wind drives away.* Luther: "When Scripture speaks of the ungodly, take heed not to fancy, as the ungodly are prone to do, that it refers to Jews and heathens, or to any other persons whatever, but do thou thyself shudder before this word, as respecting and concerning also thee. For an upright and godly man fears and trembles before every word of God." For the understanding of the figure, to which John the Baptist makes reference in Matt. iii. 12, as also to that of the tree in ver. 10 (which occurs moreover in Job xxi. 18), we may remark, that, in the East, the threshing-floors are placed upon heights. They throw aloft the corn that has been threshed, until the wind has driven the chaff away.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.* The *בִּלְי*, *therefore*, occasions great difficulty to those who fail in perceiving aright the relation between vers. 5, 6, and 3, 4. Some, as Claus, have been led thereby to adopt instead, the meaning, *because*, which the phrase in the original is alleged frequently to have. That the ungodly stand not in the judgment, they consider to be the reason why, according to ver. 4, they fly away as the chaff. But it has already been proved by Winer, what is indeed self-evident, that *בִּלְי* never bears this meaning, which is precisely the reverse of its usual one; that it always indicates the consequence, never the cause. Those who adopt the common signification, cannot properly explain how that should be here described as a consequence flowing from the statement in the preceding verse, which appears to be simply co-ordinate with it. Amyrald alone, of all expositors, seems to have got upon the right track, and thus paraphrases: "But although the providence of God, whose ways are sometimes unsearchable, does not always make so remarkable a distinction between those two kinds of men, still the future life (he erroneously understands by the judgment, only the *final* judgment) shall so distinguish them, that

no one shall any longer be able to doubt who they are that followed the path of true prosperity." In vers. 3 and 4, the idea expressed was one which holds for all times in respect to the lots of the righteous and the wicked. And from this truth, which can never be a powerless and quiescent one, is here derived its impending realization: so certain as salvation is to the righteous, and perdition to the wicked, the judgment must overthrow and set aside the latter, and exalt the former to the enjoyment of the felicity destined for them. That the *therefore* refers, not simply to ver. 4, but also to ver. 3, is clear from ver. 6, where the subject of both verses is resumed, and is advanced as the ground of what is said in ver. 5. When the narrow view of the *therefore* is adopted, it is impossible to tell what to do with the first clause of ver. 6, "for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous," and we are driven to the interpolation of some such word as *only* or *indeed*. The universality of the conclusion, and its reference to both the classes of men with which the Psalm is occupied, are quite lost. Ver. 5 forms quite a suitable deduction from vers. 3 and 4, if we only consider that judgment against the wicked involves also the deliverance of the righteous who had suffered under their oppressions and annoyances. Indeed, ver. 6 requires us to view it in that light, as it can only then form a suitable continuation.

The whole context shows, that by *the judgment* we are to understand God's; in particular, it appears from the following verse, where the fact that the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, is founded on the truth that the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous. The reference to a human judgment, which has again been lately maintained by Hitzig, is altogether objectionable. De Wette narrows the expression too much, when he would understand it only of general searching, theocratic judgments. Ewald justly refers the words to the process of the Divine righteousness, which is perpetually advancing, though not every moment visible. All manifestations of punitive righteousness are comprehended in it. "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. xii. 14.

*And sinners* (shall not stand) *in the congregation of the righteous*; i. e. those who, by turning away their hearts from God, have *internally* separated themselves from the kingdom of God, shall also be outwardly expelled by a righteous act of judgment.

The *external* church or community can only for a time be different from the company or congregation of the righteous. For God will take care that it shall be purified from the leaven of the ungodly, which, however, will not be fully accomplished before the close of this present world. That the congregation of God, in its true idea, is the congregation of the righteous, embodies a prophecy of the excision and overthrow of sinners. An allusion is kept up through the whole verse to the expression used in the Pentateuch, regarding the transgressors of the Divine law, "That soul shall be cut off from his people," that is, it would be *ipso facto* separated from the community of God; and the declaration is commonly followed by an announcement of the particular manner in which the judgment, already pronounced, should be outwardly executed, or would be executed by God. We understand, therefore, the community or congregation of the righteous to be a designation of the whole covenant-people, according to its idea, in reference to which the Israelites are elsewhere (for example, Numb. xxiii. 10, Ps. cxi. 1) called יְשִׁירִים, *upright*, or even *holy* (comp. "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy," Lev. xix. 2; Numb. xvi. 3). That this idea shall one day be fully realized, is intimated by Isaiah in ch. ix. 9, liv. 13. עֵדָה, *congregation*, is a standing designation of the whole community of Israel (see *Gesen. Thes.* on the word). The whole people are referred to in the parallel passage, Ezek. xiii. 9, "And My hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of *My people*, neither shall they be written in the writing (book) of the *house of Israel*, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel." Accordingly, "sinners in the congregation of the righteous" may be regarded as equivalent to "sinners in the congregation of Israel," it being the congregation of the righteous. An example of this reaction of the idea against a state of things at variance therewith, is to be found in the overthrow of the company of Korah, of whom it is said, Numb. xvi. 33, "They perished from among the congregation." Then, also, in the fate of Saul and his party. The more careless men are in wielding the discipline of the Church, the more vigorously does God work. De Wette and others understand by the *righteous*, the elite, the fortunate citizens of the theocratic kingdom who stand the test. But this is inadmissible, for the one reason, that the words, "they shall not stand," that is, "they shall not remain

among the righteous," presuppose that they had belonged to the community of the righteous up to the judgment, which was to throw them off, like morbid matter from the body in the crisis of a disease.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but, the way of the ungodly shall perish.* According to various expositors, the two members of the verse do not correspond exactly, and something must be supplied in each. God knows the way of the righteous, and therefore they cannot fail to be prosperous; He knows the way of the wicked, and therefore they cannot fail to perish. But this exposition is not to be approved. The figure of "the way" is used in the Psalms in two senses, first of the *conduct*, and then of the *portion*, the lot or destiny. The latter signification is by far the most common; comp. Psalm xxxvii. 5, 18, 23; Isa. xl. 27. Now, according to the above exposition, the first signification must be taken; but the second clause shows that the other ought to be preferred. The *perishing* applies only to the circumstances of the wicked. They who would refer it to the moral walk, must torture the word with arbitrary meanings (אָפּוֹר always means "to perish"), or cloak the difficulty by periphrases which introduce new thoughts. And where the parallelism is so marked, the *way* must be taken in the same sense in the first clause. For understanding it of the affairs, the corresponding passage in Psalm ii. 12 may be regarded as a confirmation. Indeed, it would never have been viewed otherwise, if only the relation between this verse and verses 3 and 4 had been rightly perceived, in which the things befalling the righteous and the wicked are alone discoursed of: the righteous are prosperous, the wicked are unprosperous; *therefore* the wicked shall not stand, etc. As here it is said of the way of the wicked, that it perishes, so of his hope, in Job viii. 13; Prov. x. 28. The *knowing* here involves *blessing*, as its necessary consequence. If the way of the righteous, their lot, is known by God as the omniscient, it cannot but be blessed by Him as the righteous. Hence there is no necessity, in order to preserve the parallelism, which exists otherwise, to explain יָדָע by "*curæ cordique habere*," a meaning which it properly never has. It is enough if only God is not shut up in the heavens with His knowledge; the rest flows spontaneously from His nature, and needs not to be specially mentioned. How little the יָדָע in such connections loses, or even modifies its common



signification, appears from the parallel passage, Psalm xxxi. 7. "Thou considerest my trouble, Thou knowest my soul in adversities," where the *knowing* is parallel with *considering* or *seeing*. It is justly remarked by Ewald, that the issue in vers. 5 and 6 is truly prophetic, perpetually in force, and consequently descriptive of what is to be for ever expected and hoped for in the course of the world. To limit it to peculiarly theocratic affairs, is as certainly false as God's righteousness which is inherent in His nature, and consequently the moral order of the world, is unalterable. Luther: "At the close of this Psalm, I would admonish, as did also many holy fathers like Athanasius and Augustine, that we do not simply read or sing the Psalms, as if they did not concern us; but let us read and sing them for the purpose of being improved by them, of having our faith strengthened, and our hearts comforted amid all sort of necessities. For the Psalter is nothing else than a school and exercise for our heart and mind, to the end, that we may have our thoughts and inclinations turned into the same channel. So that he reads the Psalter without spirit, who reads it without understanding and faith."

## PSALM II.

The Psalmist sees with wonder, vers. 1-3, many nations and their kings rise against Jehovah and His Anointed, their rightful King. He then describes the manner in which Jehovah carries Himself toward this undertaking,—how He first laughs at, then terrifies them with an indignant speech, and declares their attempt to be in vain, because they revolt against Him, whom He Himself has set up as His King. In vers. 7-9, the Anointed proclaims,—detailing at length, what the Lord had briefly thrown out against the insurgents,—that the Lord had given Him, as His Son, all the nations and kingdoms of the earth for a possession, and along with these, power and authority to punish those who rebelled against Him. The Psalmist finally turns, vers. 10-12, to the kings, and admonishes them to yield a lowly submission to the anointed King and Son of God, who is as rich in mercy towards those that trust in Him, as in destruction toward those that rise up against Him. In few Psalms is the strophe-arrangement so marked as in this. One perceives at a

glance, that the whole falls into four strophes of three members each. The verses, again, generally consist of two members: the last verse only has four, for the purpose of securing a full-toned conclusion.

There are the clearest grounds for asserting, that by the King, the Anointed, or Son of God, no other can be understood than the Messiah. It is generally admitted, that this exposition was the prevailing one among the older Jews, and that in later times they were led to abandon it only for polemical reasons against the Christians. In support of this position may be urged, not only the express declaration of Jarchi and a considerable number of passages in the writings of the older Jews, in which the Messianic sense still exists, and which may be found in those adduced by Venema in his Introduction to this Psalm, but also the fact, that two names of the Messiah which were current in the time of Christ,—the name of Messiah itself, the Anointed, and the name, Son of God, used by Nathanael in his conversation with Christ, John i. 49, and also by the high-priest in Matt. xxvi. 63,—owed their origin to this Psalm in its Messianic meaning. The former is applied to the coming Saviour only in another passage, Dan. ix. 25, the latter in this Psalm alone. But though this is certainly a remarkable fact, we could not regard it as, by itself, constituting a ground for the interpretation in question. Neither would we rest upon the circumstance, that the New Testament, in a series of passages, refers this Psalm to Christ (it is so by the assembled Apostles in Acts iv. 25, 26; by Paul in Acts xiii. 33, as also in Hebrews i. 5, v. 5; while the same Messianic sense lies at the basis of the plain allusions to the Psalm which occur in Rev. ii. 27, xii. 5, xix. 15). Inasmuch as typical Messianic Psalms are not unfrequently in the New Testament referred to Christ, and the Psalm really contains an indirect prophecy respecting Him, even though it be primarily referred to some individual living under the Old Covenant, the two contending interpretations are not so far asunder from each other as at first view they might seem; and, consequently, we cannot build with perfect confidence upon those declarations, though undoubtedly the fact, that the authors of the New Testament followed the direct Messianic view, renders it very probable that it was the prevailing one among their contemporaries. But the proper proof we base on *internal grounds alone*, in regard to which we remark at the outset, that we can

have no interest in deceiving ourselves about their meaning, since, in our opinion, the Messianic kernel of the Psalm, and its application to the present, would remain quite unaffected, even though the internal grounds should speak for its referring primarily, for example, to David. What assured him of the fruitlessness of the revolt of the peoples whom the Lord had subjected to him, to wit, his Divine installation, and the nearness of his relation to God, must be applicable with far higher force to Christ's relation to His rebellious subjects. But the internal grounds speak so loudly and so decidedly for the Messianic sense, that we can only ascribe the disinclination manifested towards it to causes, the investigation of which is foreign to our present purpose.

Many traits present themselves in our Psalm which are applicable to no other person than Messiah. Superhuman dignity is attributed to the subject of the Psalm in ver. 12, where the revolvers are admonished to submit themselves, in fear and humility, to their King, since His opponents shall be destroyed by His severe indignation, while those who put their trust in Him shall be made blessed. The remark of Venema: "*Ira regis eo modo metuenda proponitur, v. 12, qui creaturæ minus convenit et fiducia in eo ponenda commendatur ibidem, quæ a creatura abhorret,*" is too well grounded to be capable of being rebutted, as the fruitlessness of all attempts to refer to the Lord, what is there said of His Anointed, abundantly shows. Against every other person but Messiah speaks also ver. 12, where the King is distinctly called the Son of God, and vers. 6, 7, where the names "His King," and "His Anointed," are given Him in a sense which implies His dominion over the whole earth. († Vers. 1-3, and vers. 8-10, are decisive against all earthly monarchs; for they declare that the people and kings of the whole earth are given to be the possession of this King, and that they strive in vain to shake off His yoke. The extent of His kingdom is here described to be what the Messiah's kingdom is always described in those passages which are generally admitted to refer to Him;—comp., for example, Zech. ix. 10; Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1. De Wette endeavours to support himself here, appealing to the pretended "liking of the Hebrew poets for hyperbole, and the disposition of the enthusiastic members of the theocracy to conceive magnificent hopes." But in all circumstances, hyperbole has its limits, and exaggeration could scarcely, in this case, have referred to

pictures of the present, but only to the premises of the future. Hofman, in his work on Prophecy and its Fulfilment, p. 160, thinks that the words, "Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession," mean no more than that "whatever people, whatever distant lands he desires to have for a possession, these Jehovah would subject to him." But David was modest; he only besought for himself some small territories in the neighbourhood of Canaan. Besides, it is overlooked, that this Divine appointment and plenipotence are held out against the kings of the earth, who have revolted against the King, their rightful Lord; and that, on the same ground, the judges of the earth, in ver. 10, are admonished to return to their allegiance to their proper King. And then, where shall we find in the history, even the smallest intimation that the Lord made such an offer to David, as if it had been in his option to decide whether he would be ruler over the whole world? Not even the sovereignty of a single people was offered in that manner to David. He never waged a war of conquest; he merely defended himself against hostile attacks. († It is further to be regarded as conclusive against an earthly king, that the revolt here mentioned against the Son, and the Anointed of Jehovah, is so completely represented as a revolt against Jehovah Himself, that the nations are exhorted to yield themselves to Him with humility and reverence. It would be quite a different thing if enemies who aimed at the overthrow of the kingdom of God were spoken of; the enemies, who stand forth here, have no other end in view than to free themselves from the yoke of the king. Although we would not absolutely maintain the impossibility of such a view, there are still no parallel passages to show that any such design would have been regarded as a revolt against Jehovah. The validity of this ground, which was already advanced in the first part of my Christology, is admitted by Hitzig. He denies still more decidedly than we would be disposed to do, that heathen nations, which had been subdued by the people of God, might simply on that account be regarded as Jehovah's subjects, and that every attempt to regain their freedom would be a revolt against Jehovah. To serve a deity, says he, is either to profess a religion, or at least includes this, and presupposes it,—the Moabites served David, 2 Sam. viii. 2, not God. On this account, though he will still not declare himself for the Messianic inter-

pretation, which reconciles all difficulties, he has felt himself obliged to ascribe the composition of the Psalm to the time of the Maccabees, when the attempt was first made to incorporate vanquished heathens with the people of God, by subjecting them to the rite of circumcision,—a supposition in which he will certainly have no followers. Finally, the Messianic sense is supported by the same grounds which prove that of Ps. xlv. lxxii. ex., which so remarkably harmonize with the Psalm now under consideration, that, as far as the Messiah is concerned, they must stand or fall together. These grounds are so convincing, that we find here among the defenders of the Messianic interpretation many even of those whose theological sentiments must have disposed them rather to adopt a different view,—in particular, Eichhorn, Bertholdt, Rosenmüller, Koester. Sack, also, in his *Apolog.*, and Umbreit in his *Erbauung a. d. Psalter*, p. 141, have advocated the same opinion.

Though the Psalm has no superscription, yet that David was its author, as indeed he is expressly named in Acts iv. 25, may be gathered from the undoubted fact, that the relations of David's time evidently form the groundwork of the representation which is given,—comp. the closing remarks, as also the resemblance to Psalm ex. The general character of Psalm first, suitable for an introduction, would scarcely have warranted the compilers in placing it, and this second one so closely related to it, at the head of a long series of Davidic Psalms, unless they had felt convinced of David's being their author. Besides other characteristics of the first, this Psalm shares its ease and simplicity of style; and that the discourse is of a more spirited character, arises from the different nature of the subject.

Ver. 1. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* The *why* is an expression of astonishment and horror at the equally foolish and impious attempt of the revolt-ers. The *הנה* is here taken by some in the sense of *being in commotion, blustering*; but in that sense the word does not elsewhere occur in the Hebrew; and as little does it occur in that of Koester, *to murmur*. The common meaning is here quite suitable. *רֵק*, not an adverb, *in vain, to no purpose*, but a noun, *vanity, nothing*. The vanity or nothing is that which, being opposed to the Divine will, and, therefore, nothing, also leads to nothing, reaches not its aim, to wit, the revolt against the King, which, at the same time, is revolt against the Almighty

God. The *why* at the beginning, and the *vain thing* at the end of this verse, are what alone indicate, in the otherwise purely historical representation of vers. 1-3, the point of view from which the transaction is to be considered. But these two little words contain in germ the whole substance from ver. 4 to ver. 12, in which is unfolded the reason why the project of the insurgents is a groundless and vain one.

Ver. 2. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers sit with one another against the Lord and His Anointed.* It is unnecessary, and destructive to the sense, to repeat, with De Wette, Koester, and others, the *wherefore* at the beginning of this verse. The word *החיצו* means simply, "to set oneself, to come forward, to appear;" and the hostility is not expressed in the word, but is indicated by the context, and by the addition of the words, "against the Lord." The word *על* expresses "the oppressive, the inimical." *The kings of the earth*,—the huge mass of tumultuous revolters draws upon itself so much the eye of the prophet, that he overlooks the small company of subjects who still remained faithful. The word *יסד* means to *found*, in Niph. *to be founded*, Isa. xliv. 28, Ex. ix. 18; then poetically to *sit down*. This is the only legitimate exposition of the word *נוסדו*. The idea of combination and common counsel is not contained in the verb itself, but only in the adverb *יחד*, *together*, with which the verb is connected also in Psalm xxxi. 13. *Against the Lord and His Anointed.* Calvin remarks, that this does not necessarily imply that the revolt was publicly avowed to be against God; indeed, they could not revolt against Him otherwise than indirectly, that is, by seeking to withdraw themselves from the supremacy of His Son; and in that respect, to use Luther's expression, the ungodly often do terrible deeds for God's honour against God's honour. The *anointing* in the Old Testament, whether it occur as an actually performed symbolical action, or as a mere figure, constantly signifies the communication of the gifts of the Holy Spirit,—see Christol. P. II. p. 445. This is evidently the meaning in the account given of Saul's anointing, 1 Sam. x. 1, and David's, xvi. 13, 14. The kings of Israel were said pre-eminently to be *anointed*, because they received a peculiarly rich measure of Divine grace for their important office. From them was the expression transferred to Him who is absolutely THE KING, the one in whom the idea of royalty was to be perfectly realized. That he should be endowed, with-

out measure, with that Spirit which was given only in limited measure to His types, is mentioned by Isaiah, chap. xi., as an essential feature. Luther remarks, making a suitable application to the members, of that which is here said concerning the Head: "Therefore God decrees that the ungodly shall boil and rage against the righteous, and employ against them all their devices. But all such attempts are like the swelling waves of the sea, blown up by the wind, which make as if they would tear down the shore, but before they even reach it, again subside, and melt away in themselves, or spend themselves with harmless noise upon the beach. For the righteous is so firmly grounded in his faith upon Christ, that he confidently scorns, like a beach, such vain impotent threatenings of the wicked, and such proud swellings, which are destined so soon again to disappear."

Ver. 3. The enemies are introduced speaking: *We will break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* The plural suffix has reference to Jehovah and His Anointed. *Their bands*,—that is, the bands which they have laid upon us. The prophet speaks as from the soul of the insurgents, to whom the mild yoke of the Lord and His Anointed appears as a galling chain. Calvin: "So even now we see that all the enemies of Christ find it as irksome a thing to be compelled to submit themselves to His supremacy, as if the greatest disgrace had befallen them."

Ver. 4. The prophet looks away from the wild turmoil of enemies, from the dangers which here below seem to threaten the kingdom of the Anointed, to the world above, and sets over against them the almightiness of God. Calvin: "However high they may lift themselves, they can never reach to the heavens; nay, while they seek to confound heaven and earth, they do but dance like grasshoppers. The Lord meanwhile looks calmly forth from His high abode, upon their senseless movements." *He who is throned in the heavens laughs; the Lord mocks them.* God is here emphatically described as being enthroned in heaven, to mark His exalted sovereignty over the whole machinery of earth, and, in particular, over the kings of the earth. "Laughter" and "derision" are expressive of security and contempt. Calvin: "We must therefore hold, that when God does not immediately punish the wicked, it is His time to laugh; and though we must sometimes even weep, yet

this thought should allay the sharpness of our grief, nay, wipe away our tears, that God does not dissemble, as if He were tardy or weak, but seeks through silent contempt, for a time, to break the petulance of His enemies." Expositors generally suppose that the לֹא is to be supplied to אֵין. This is not necessary, though it is certainly supported by Psalm xxxvii. 13, lix. 8. Luther gives a course of admirable remarks upon this passage; some of these, we feel it our duty to quote, not for the sake of answering practical purposes independent of exegesis, but in the interest of exegesis itself. "All this is written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope. For what is here written of Christ, is an example for all Christians. For every one who is a sound Christian, especially if he teaches the word of Christ, must suffer his Herod, his Pilate, his Jews and heathens, who rage against him, to speak much in vain, to lift themselves up and take counsel against him. If this is not done now by men, by the devil, or, finally, by his own conscience, it will at least be done on his death-bed. There, at last, it will be in the highest degree necessary to have such words of consolation in remembrance as—"He who sits in heaven laughs: the Lord holds them in derision." To such a hope we must cling fast, and on no account suffer ourselves to be driven from it. As if He would say—So certain is it, that they speak in vain, and project foolish things, let it appear before men as strong and mighty as it may, that God does not count them worthy of being opposed, as He would needs do in a matter of great and serious moment; that He only laughs and mocks at them, as if it were a small and despicable thing which was not worth minding. O how great a strength of faith is claimed in these words! For who believed, when Christ suffered, and the Jews triumphed over and oppressed Him, that God all the time was laughing? So, when we suffer and are oppressed by men, when we believe that God is laughing at and mocking at our adversaries; especially, if to all appearance we are mocked and oppressed both by God and men." Upon the expression, "He that is enthroned in the heavens," Luther specially remarks—"As if it were said, He who cares for us dwells quite secure, apart from all fear; and although we are involved in trouble and contention, He remains unassailed, whose regard is fixed on us; we move and fluctuate here and there, but He



stands fast, and will order it so, that the righteous shall not continue for ever in trouble, Psalm lv. 22. But all this proceeds so secretly that thou canst not well perceive it, unless thou wert in heaven thyself. Thou must suffer by land and sea, and among all creatures; thou mayest hope for no consolation in thy sufferings and troubles, till thou canst rise through faith and hope above all, and lay hold on Him who dwells in the heavens—then thou also dwellest in the heavens, but only in faith and hope. Therefore must we fix and stay our hearts, in all our straits, assaults, tribulations, and difficulties, upon Him who sitteth in the heavens; for then it will come to pass that the adversity, vexation, and trials of this world, can not only be taken lightly, but can even be smiled at."

Ver. 5. The words of contempt are followed by others of indignation and threatening. *Then He speaks to them in His wrath, and affrights them in His sore displeasure.* *is, then,* namely, when He has first laughed at and mocked them; others improperly, *at the time of this revolt*, or when they believe that they have broken the chains. The laughter directing itself upon the impotence of the revolt, is the first subject; the wrath excited by their criminal disposition to revolt, is the second. Many expositors, as Calvin, think that here is a reference to God's speaking by deeds, to the judgments which He decrees against the insolent revolt, after having previously manifested His contempt of them; but without foundation. Ver. 6, where the speech of God follows, shows that the second member here is to be expounded by the first; and in His rage He affrights them with the succeeding words, not the reverse. The actual punishment of the revolt, who even to this day have got no further than the speech, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," lies beyond the compass of this Psalm. In it, the Lord, the Anointed, and the Psalmist, come forth one after another against the rebels, and endeavour to turn them from their foolish purpose. It is not till they have shut their ear against all these admonitions and threatenings that the work of punishment properly begins. With a thundering voice of indignation, before which impotent sinners quail to their inmost heart, the Psalmist represents the Lord as speaking to them what follows in ver. 6.

Ver. 6. *And I have formed My King upon Zion, My holy hill.* Few of the expositors take notice of the *1* at the beginning,

which yet well deserves to be noticed. It is never used without meaning, nor ever elsewhere than where we can also put our word *and* (Ewald, p. 540). The discourse, as is appropriate to a very excited state of mind, here begins in the middle. The commencement, “*Ye rise in rebellion,*” is naturally suggested by the existing circumstances. The *I* here, the Lord of heaven and of earth, stands with peculiar emphasis in opposition to *you*. Luther: “They have withdrawn themselves from Him; but I have subjected to Him the holy hill of Zion, and all the ends of the earth. So that it will become manifest how they have been objects of laughter and scorn, and have troubled themselves, and taken counsel in vain.” The נִסְכָּחִי is commonly rendered, *I have anointed*; and of the more recent expositors, Stier alone has raised doubts against this rendering, without, however, decidedly substantiating them. But it has been strikingly rebutted by Gousset. The supposition that נָסַךְ, besides its ordinary meaning *to pour*, had also the sense *to anoint*, is supported only by Prov. viii. 23, and by the derivation נָסַךְ, *a prince*, though to signify “an anointed one.” But in the passage from Proverbs, all the old translations express the idea of creation or preparation (to pour out = to form); and this idea is decidedly favoured by the context: “From everlasting was I *formed*,” is followed by, “from the beginning, or ever the earth was, was I *born*.” But נָסַךְ cannot possibly have the meaning *an anointed one*, since it is pre-eminently and specially used of princes, who hold their dignity in fief of a superior, and in whose case anointing was out of the question. See the decisive passage, Josh. xiii. 21; and Micah v. 4. The word נִסְכָּחִים rather means strictly, *those who are poured out*, then *those who are formed, invested, appointed*, and refers, as Gousset justly remarks, to “*productio principis per communicationem influxumque potentia*,” with an allusion either to generation, or to the relation between an artist and his statue or picture. In the case before us, the signification *to form* is confirmed by the corresponding words, “I have begotten Thee,” in ver. 7. The expression, “*My King*,” is also deserving of special remark. If its peculiar emphasis is not considered, if it is merely expounded as if it were “I have appointed Him to be King,” the speech of God will then be unsuited to the end which it is meant to serve, that, namely, of representing the vanity of the revolt of the kings of the earth. For one might possibly have been set by God as king

on Zion, without having any proper claim to the lordship of the heathen world. Then, in opposition to every exposition which weakens the force of the words, we have the corresponding words in ver. 7, "Thou art My Son;" through which, as the conclusion drawn from them in ver. 8 shows, a much more intimate relation to God is indicated than if He had been an ordinary king. The words, therefore, "I have formed My King," can only mean, "I have appointed a King (as Luther renders נִכְנַחֵי much more correctly than our recent expositors) who is most closely related to Me." In the setting up or appointing of such a King, for whom nothing less than the whole earth could be a sufficient empire, there was given a proof of the nothingness of all attempts at insurrection which were now made against the King, and in the King against the Lord. עַל is most naturally regarded as indicating the place where the Lord's King was constituted and set up by Him, implying of course that this place is at the same time the seat of His supremacy. The expression עַל צִיּוֹן, "upon Zion," occurs in Isa. xxxi. 4. Hoffmann's explanation—"I have appointed My King (that He be King) upon Zion," is too remote; and entirely to be rejected is the other, "I have appointed My King (that He be King) *over* Zion, My holy mountain," as in 1 Sam. xv. 17, Saul was anointed king over Israel. Zion can here be only the seat, the residence of the King, not the sphere of His rule—which is rather the whole earth. Zion, the holy *mount* of the Lord, is an appropriate seat for His King; for as it had been the centre of Israel from the time of David, who fixed his own abode and transferred there the ark of the covenant, so was it destined one day to be the centre of the world; for "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem," Isa. ii. 3. The Lord is to govern the whole earth from there. The thought is there expressed in Old Testament language, that the kingdom of God should one day break through its narrow bounds, and bring the whole world under its sway. הַר קֹדְשִׁי, not the mountain of My holiness, but My holiness-mountain, My holy mountain, see Ewald, p. 580. Zion was raised to this honour by its having had the ark of the covenant transferred to it by David. From that period it became the centre of the kingdom of God.

Ver. 7. The speech of the Lord, in proper adaptation to His majesty and indignation, is but short. Next appears the King

appointed by God, reiterating, to the astonished rebels, what has been said by God, and further developing it: *I will declare the statute: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.* Rosenmüller explains, "*narrabo secundum, juxta decretum;*" but there is no ground for this, as the word כִּפֵּר is elsewhere coupled with the preposition אֶל, indicating the object of the narrative, Psalm lxix. 26; as also the similar verbs יָדַע, "to make known," אָמַר, דָּבַר, and שִׁמַּע; see, for example, Isa. xxxviii. 19; Jer. xxvii. 19; Job xlii. 7. We may not, however, on the ground of such constructions, explain אֶל by *of*. They are explained by the circumstance of the relater's or speaker's mind being *directed* to the matter—the narrative or speech goes out upon it. Ewald, p. 602. As it is clear that אֶל may mark the thing to be announced, the exposition of Claus: "I will declare for a statute," *i.e.* something which shall become an irrevocable law, is to be rejected as less simple, and hence less suited to the character of the Psalmist, who dislikes whatever is hard or artificial. But Claus is right in giving to the word חֹק its common signification of *statute, law*, for which most of the modern expositors substitute the arbitrary sense of *decree, sentence*, and then, in opposition to the accents, conceive that they must bring over to this member the word יָדַע. "I will declare a law," contains more than "I will declare a decree or sentence." It intimates, that the sentence of the Lord just to be announced, has the force of law, and that it was perfectly in vain to undertake anything which wars against it. Since the Lord has spoken this, "Thou art My Son," He has at the same time laid upon the heathen the law of serving His Son. Obedience is due to the laws of the Almighty, and punishment inevitably overtakes him who transgresses them.

The question now arises, what determination or sentence of Jehovah, having the force of an unchangeable law, is here meant? Rosenmüller, Ewald, and others, conceive, that the reference is to the Divine promise in 2 Sam. vii. But this supposition must be rejected. For then the words, "Thou art My Son," would be spoken, not in the sense in which they occur here, as implying an investiture with dominion over the heathen. And, besides, this exposition would destroy the obvious connection between ver. 6 and ver. 7. What the Son here throws out against the revolvers, can only be the further development of

that which the Lord had advanced against them; the *to-day* becomes quite indeterminate, if it do not refer to the precise day on which the Lord had set His King on Zion; and the expression, "Thou art My Son," can only point to the subject contained in the words, "My King." So that the discourse here can only be of a determination of the Lord, which was issued to the Anointed at the time of His appointment: "I will declare the law," which the Lord *then* gave; when He made Me His King on Zion, He said to Me, Thou art My Son, etc. The Psalmist has only in a general way before him, the terminus of the setting up as King. When Paul represents, in Acts xiii. 33, the words of our text as spoken to Christ, in consequence of His resurrection from the dead, he does but define them more closely from the fulfilment. The resurrection of Christ was the key-stone of His redemption-work, the starting point of His setting forth as the Son of God, and of His establishment in the kingdom.

The Lord addresses the King on the day of His installation as His Son. Where God, in the Old Testament, is represented as Father, where the subject of discourse is sonship to God, there is always (apart from a few passages not in point here, which speak of Him as the author of external existence, the giver of all good, Deut. xxxii. 18, Jer. ii. 27, and perhaps Isa. lxiv. 7) an allusion, involving a comparison, to His tender love, as being similar to that of a father toward his son,—see, for example, Psalm ciii. 13, where the comparison is fully stated. In this sense, Israel is in a whole series of passages named God's son. As in Ex. iv. 22: "Israel is My son, My first-born"—where the expression, "My first-born," points to the abridged comparison, as if it had been said, "Israel is as dear to Me as a first-born son;" Deut. xiv. 1, 2, where the words, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God," are more fully explained by the following, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself above all nations;" Deut. xxxii. 6, where the question, "Is He not thy Father?" is followed by declarations testifying, in various particulars, to His fatherly love and carefulness; Isa. lxiii. 16, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting;" where the name of Father is used to de-

note what is related at large in vers. 7-15, the things He did in His great goodness towards the house of Israel; Hos. xi. 1, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt;" Mal. i. 16, "If I be a Father, where is My honour?" the theme from vers. 2-5 being this, "I have loved you"—in considering which, some have started with the false idea that the words, "Have we not all *one* Father," were in synonymous parallelism with, "*One* God hath created us," Jer. xxxi. 9, 20. With a just perception of what is implied in the abbreviated comparison, the Apostle, in Rom. x. 4, gathers up what is said of Israel's sonship in the Words, "whose is the adoption into the position of children," *υιοθεσία*. In the same sense the relation of David's family to God is, in two passages, described as one of sonship. In 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15, the declaration, "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son," is followed by the promise of His ever-abiding love as a sort of interpretation; and in Ps. lxxxix. 26, etc., which is based on the passage in Samuel, the words, "My Father," stand in parallelism with "My God, and the rock of my salvation," and is explained by, "My mercy I will keep for him for evermore," in ver. 29. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the idea of God's sonship handled with reference to a generation through the Spirit, which Hoffmann would have to be the case in all the passages. Nowhere, also, does this expression proceed upon an identifying of creation with generation; and it is an entire mistake for Hitzig to maintain concerning Ex. iv. 22, that all men or peoples are there considered as God's sons, because made by Him. Nowhere does the expression, "Jehovah's son," as used of kings, point to the Divine origin of the kingly authority, or to the administration of the office according to the mind of Jehovah. Finally, nowhere in the Old Testament is the sonship spoken of as a production out of the nature of the Father, as the greater part of the older expositors think they discover here. Now, as we cannot isolate the passage before us from all others, we must here also understand the words, "Thou art My Son," as denoting the inwardness of relation which subsists between the Lord and His Anointed. How inward this relation is, how emphatically sonship is here predicated of the Lord,—which is never, on any other occasion, done of any individual king in Israel (for, in the two passages before noticed, it is spoken of the whole line of David), and far less still of heathen kings,—is

shown by ver. 7, where the sovereignty of the whole earth is announced as a simple consequence of the sonship. In that sense no earlier king of Israel, not even David, the man after God's own heart, was the son and darling of Jehovah. Such an inward relationship cannot properly exist between God and a mere man.

When the sense of the words, "Thou art My Son," is fairly settled, no great difficulty can be found with the parallel clause, "This day I have begotten Thee." If the King is named the Son of God, not in a proper but in a figurative sense, then the reference here cannot be to a proper begetting, against which the word *to-day* also testifies (which word at the same time confirms the non-literal interpretation of the expression, "Thou art My Son"), but only to a begetting in a figurative sense—not a begetting which calls the person into existence, but one merely in which originates the intimate relationship between the Anointed and God. "I have begotten Thee to-day," spiritually understood, exactly corresponds to "Thou art from henceforth, spiritually understood, My Son;" both alike imply that He was brought into the relation of sonship, or received into the innermost fellowship of life. This non-literal, temporal begetting, has certainly the essential and eternal one for its foundation, which is found here by the older expositors and theologians. Figuratively, of the appointment to the dignity of Son of God, the expression is taken by Paul in Acts xiii. 3; so also in Heb. v. 5.

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.* For the King, and the Son of the Lord, nothing less than the whole earth is a proper dominion. Vers. 1-3 show, that He had *accepted* all, which the love of His Father here freely offered.

Ver. 9. If the nations will not obey Thee, My Son, as their rightful Lord and King, I give Thee the right and the power to chastise them for their disobedience. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* The LXX. render the first clause, "Thou wilt feed them with an iron sceptre,"—deriving the form *תִּרְעֶם* from *רָעָה*, to feed. So also the Syriac, Vulgate, and many later expositors. Then, either the present punctuation is held to be incorrect, and they read *תִּרְעֶם*, or the form is considered as *Poel*. But the paral-

lelism requires that the form should be derived from שבר, "to break or shiver to pieces," as is done by the Chaldaic. At the same time, we may perhaps suppose with Stier, that the word carries a sort of ironical allusion to מטה, which is so frequently used; comp. 2 Sam. vii. 7, P's. lxxxii. 16, Mic. vii. 14. שטט, "sceptre," was anciently the sign of the dignity of ruler. The objections which Rosenmüller and others have brought against the application of this meaning here, are of little weight. It is true, indeed, we do not hear of iron sceptres having been actually used, but such only as were of wood, silver, gold, or ivory. But iron is here selected, as being the hardest metal, to indicate the strength and crushing force with which the Anointed would chastise the revolvers; and it is perfectly allowable to use it in this figurative sense, although there actually existed no such thing as an iron sceptre. The comparison with the vessels of the potter, which occurs also in Jer. xix. 11, expresses at once the ideas of *without trouble*, and of *entireness*. It is, besides, to be remarked, what is omitted by De Wette, who argues from this expression, against the application of the Psalm to Christ, and by Umbreit, who labours to make that denote grace, which is manifestly said of punitive righteousness, that as the Messiah has here to do with impudent revolvers, only one aspect of the power committed to Him by God is displayed. That He is as rich in grace to His people, as He is in overwhelming power against His enemies, is evident from vers. 11 and 12. That, in like circumstances, the same aspect of power which is spoken of here, is also brought to notice by Christ in the New Testament, needs no proof. Those on His left hand, the compassionate, but still righteous Saviour, banishes into everlasting fire; he who treads under foot the Son of God, must endure infinitely sorer punishment than he who broke the law of Moses; and the destruction of Jerusalem is constantly represented by the Lord as His work. What alone suffices, is the circumstance, that, in the place referred to in Revelation, the punishment which Christ is going to execute upon His enemies is described in the very words of this Psalm. The question, whether what is here said of Christ be worthy of Him, resolves itself into this, whether God's righteousness be an actual reality, and, consequently, to be continued under the New Testament. For what is true of God, is true also of His Anointed, to whom He has given up the whole administration of His kingdom. But, that



this question is to be answered in the affirmative, will be shown in our excursus upon the doctrine of the Psalms.

Ver. 10. An admonition to the revolvers to consider what had been said, and submit themselves to the King set up by the Lord. Here it comes clearly out, that the object aimed at in the reference to the punitive omnipotence of the Anointed, was to induce the revolvers to flee from coming wrath by embracing His offers of grace and compassion. *And now act wisely, O ye kings; be warned, ye judges of the earth. And now, since the case is as I have said, since the supremacy of the Anointed over you rests upon so immoveable a foundation, a severe punishment is ready to alight on the revolvers.* הַשִּׁבִּיל properly signifies, *to make wise*, namely, the actions, the behaviour, then to *act wisely*, finally, *to be wise, to understand, discern*. יִסֹּר, “to instruct, direct aright, warn,” in Niph. “to be warned,” and then “to let one’s self be warned, to lay the warning to heart,” and act according to it. *The judges of the earth*, corresponding to kings in the first clause, the men of authority and rule, because the office of judgment is considered as one of their chief functions. *Judging* is used in a wider sense. All *governing* is, in a certain sense, a judging. Various interests, claims, and rights, come before the ruler for decision.

Ver. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* The serving stands opposed to the resolution in ver. 3 to revolt. The admonition to serve the Lord involves a call on them to subject themselves to His Son and Anointed. Following the LXX. and Vulgate (*gaudeatis cum tremore*), some explain נִלֵּן בְּרִעְרָה to mean: “Rejoice that you have found so glorious and good a King; but along with this joy, think always of the terrible punishment which must overtake you, if ye withdraw yourselves from His benignant sway.” It is well remarked, however, by Stier, that this construction neither agrees with the parallelism nor with the prevailing tone of the whole context. The kings had scarcely got so far yet, that they could be called on to rejoice, even with the addition of trembling. But still more objectionable is the exposition approved of by De Wette, Stier, Gesenius, and others, “shake with trembling.” נִלֵּן never signifies anything but to *rejoice*, occurring very often in this sense in the Psalms; never, however, to *tremble* or *shake*, not even in Hos. x. 5, where, before the expression וְעַלֵּי יִלֵּן, the relative is to be supplied, and the rendering should be: “who rejoice

thereat." Besides, the *shaking* does not correspond to the *serving* and *doing homage*, which require that יָלַל, also, should express some mark of subordination. Now, this is the case if we refer the "rejoice" to the acclamations by which subjects testify their fealty to their sovereigns, to the "shout of a king," spoken of in Numb. xxiii. 21. In that case it is only the outward subjection which is primarily demanded for averting the threatened punishment. What rich blessings internal subjection and allegiance brings along with it, is first gently indicated at the close.

Ver. 12. *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry.* The *kiss* was, from the earliest times, the mark of subjection and respect in the East. Such a kiss was given for the most part not upon the mouth, but upon the kisser's own garment, or upon the hand of the person kissed.<sup>1</sup> That this custom prevailed also among the Hebrews, appears from 1 Sam. x. 1, where Samuel, after he had anointed the king, as a mark of respect, gave him a kiss. The throwing of the kiss was also a religious usage, as appears from 1 Kings xix. 18, Hos. xiii. 2, Job xxxi. 27. Hence Symmachus translates here, explaining the figure: "adore." כִּסּוּ is found also in Prov. xxxi. 2, for כָּן. It prevails in the Aramaic, and seems to have belonged to the loftier poetic dialect in Hebrew, which has much in common with the Chaldaic; and this explains why the higher style delights in old words which no longer occur in common life. These words were handed down from the primeval times, when the Hebrews stood in closer connection with the people who spoke the Aramaic tongue. The reason why it is used here instead of כָּן, many suppose to be a wish to avoid the cacophony which would arise from the juxtaposition of כָּן and כָּן. Others conceive that כִּסּוּ is chosen as being the more dignified and significant expression. Various other explanations which have been tried have partly usage against them, and partly the circumstance that the mention of the Son of God here is quite natural after ver. 7. This rendering is, in consequence, approved by most modern interpreters, not excepting those who find the sense thus given not quite convenient, as Rosenmüller, De Wette, Gesenius, Winer, and Hitzig. Ewald's explanation, "Take counsel," is quite arbitrary, since נָטַק has in Pi. invariably the sense of kissing, and, though כִּסּוּ may signify "pure,"

<sup>1</sup> Rosenmüller, A. u. N. Morgenland, Th. 3, Nr. 496, Th. 4, Nr. 786.

it could not possibly mean "good counsel," without some further reason. The *second* arbitrariness is shunned by Koester, who renders, "embrace purity," but the *first* still remains. Besides, in all these expositions the close connection is overlooked between our verses and vers. 1-3. To "the raging and imagining a vain thing," corresponds the exhortation, "Be wise and warned." It is in reference to the *revolt against the Lord*, that the injunction, to "serve the Lord," is uttered. But there is still wanting a special hortative reference to the Anointed, which is the main point of the whole; and this must be lost unless בר is rendered *son*. That this cannot possibly be wanting, becomes more evident still when we compare the entire exposition in vers. 6-9, which prepared the way for it. Koester's objection, that בר must then have the article, is of no force, as בר, here signifying absolutely "the Son," is in a state of transition to becoming a nomen proprium. Comp. Ewald, 659. The King, who is the subject of this Psalm, appears here as Son of God in a sense as exclusive as that in which God Himself is God. One God and one Son of God. Even though the title, "Son of God," according to what was remarked above, be much the same as the beloved of God, and we are not to regard it as conveying directly the idea of unity of nature with God, yet the distinct and peculiar dignity here ascribed to the Anointed, points indirectly to distinctness and peculiarity of nature.

The words וְחַצְבוֹתָיו, though perfectly plain in themselves, have occasioned much trouble to expositors, and have had many false renderings. Every intransitive or passive idea may, in Hebrew, find an immediate limitation, if it is relative; that is, if it admits of being extended to many particular cases. For example, he was sick, his feet; he was great to the throne. This concise manner of speech is easily explained, if we only expand it a little more: he was sick, and this sickness affected his feet, etc. So also here, "perish the way," must mean, "perish as to the way." *The way* is used here, precisely as in Ps. i. 6, as an image of "state, condition." *For soon will His wrath be kindled. Blessed are all they who put their trust in Him.* כִּמְעַט *shortly, soon.* The כ, when denoting limitations of time, retains in some measure its common signification as a particle of comparison. The time up to the beginning of the punishment, when repentance is too late, is like a *short* period.

חֹסֶה *stat. constr.* for *absol.* This can only take place when the preposition serves merely as a description of the *stat. constr.* relation; so that, instead of the verb being followed by the preposition and pronoun, it might simply have been חֹסֶה חֶסֶד, with ב signifying, from the first, “to confide in some one;” never “to fly to any one”—which has been taken as its import, only in consequence of a false interpretation of the phrase, “trusting in the shadow, *i.e.*, in the support of any one.” Scripture constantly admonishes us to place our confidence in the Lord alone; on which account the verb before us is in a manner consecrated and set apart; and also warns men against confiding in earthly kings; comp. Psalm cxviii. 9: “It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes;” Psalm cxlvi. 3: “Trust not in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.” In the words, therefore, “Blessed are all they who put their trust in Him,” an allusion is made to the superhuman nature and dignity of the Anointed. Many expositors, opposed to the Messianic interpretation, are driven to such straits by this, that they would refer the suffix in בו, with great violence, not to the Son, of whom mention had been made immediately before, and of whom it is said in this verse itself, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,” but to the Lord—which is an unwilling testimony to the Messianic character of this Psalm, as well as to the superhuman nature of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Others, as Abenezra, De Wette, Maurer, would refer even the words, “lest He be angry,” to Jehovah; overlooking, however, while they do so, the relation in which these words stand to ver. 9, according to which, not Jehovah, but the Son, is to break the revolvers with an iron sceptre, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel—a manifestation of wrath which they are here exhorted to flee from.

In conclusion, we have a few general remarks to make upon this Psalm. The Messianic predictions in the Psalms cannot so far coincide in character with those in the Prophets, that the distinction between Psalmist and Prophet here at once ceases to exist. We rather expect this distinction to manifest itself here. The essential nature of the distinction is, that the Prophets for the most part communicate the objective word of God, as that had been imparted to their internal contemplation, while the predominating character of the Psalms is subjective,

the subject-matter taken from some earlier revelation being set forth in a vivid and perceptible form by means of the events and circumstances of the Psalmist's own life, or of those of his time, yet all in such a way that the earlier revelation is often, through the special working of the Spirit of God, carried forward and advanced to a higher degree of clearness. The Messianic interpretation of a Psalm, then, can only be fully justified when we are both able to point to a revelation, through which the writer was incited to give a subjective representation of its contents, and can find a substratum for the writer's mode of representation, either in his own circumstances, or in those of his time. But both conditions meet in the case before us. In regard to the first, David was incited to this and other Messianic Psalms, by the promise given to him by God of a perpetual kingdom in his family, 2 Sam. vii. 7, which he could not but feel, after careful reflection, referred, in its highest sense, to Christ. In regard to the second, David found in the circumstances of his own life ample occasion to express, in the way and manner he has here done, the hope of the triumph of the promised King his successor, which the Spirit of God had stirred up within him. He had too frequently experienced, on the one hand, the contumacy and rebellious disposition of his domestic and foreign subjects; and on the other hand, the help of God in subduing them, to find it at all strange for him to transfer these relations in a more enlarged form to his antitype, which he probably did at a time when his experience in this respect was fresh and lively, about the period of his second great victory over the Syrians, 2 Sam. viii. 6: "And the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts; and the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went;" chapter x. 6, where the Syrians are said to have joined with the Ammonites against David, and verse 19, where we are told, that after David's victory over them, "all the kings that were servants to Hadar-czer, when they saw that they were smitten before Israel, made peace with Israel, and served them." In regard, finally, to the progress made in this Psalm as regards the proclamations concerning the Messiah, it consists mainly in this, that there here dawns upon the Psalmist the superhuman nature and dignity of the Messiah, which is brought out still more distinctly in Psalms cx. and xlv. It deserves to be noted, that the expositors who oppose the Messianic sense, are driven hither and thither,

and can nowhere find solid ground for their feet to stand upon. Ewald has disputed the reference to David advocated by most writers, and yet has decided upon applying it to Solomon. But against his view we have to set, besides the positive grounds already adduced for the Messianic interpretation, the force of which he unwittingly acknowledges by violent explanations, such as that of verse 12, not merely the silence of the historical books, of which he would make very light, but their most express and unequivocal declarations. The posture of affairs alluded to here, is one of general revolt. Now, if we place that at the commencement of Solomon's reign, we shall be driven to pronounce the descriptions contained in the historical books entirely mythical. Hitzig has endeavoured to bring down the application to Alexander Jannæus, a supposition which Koester, in his mild way, pronounces a make-shift. Maurer, again, would carry it up to the time of Hezekiah. He conceives, that by the people and kings of the earth, might very well be understood the Philistines. In Hoffmann, the non-Messianic interpretation has again arrived at David, only, however, after a very short time, once more to begin its wanderings.

### PSALM III.

The Psalmist complains of the multitude of his enemies, who mocked at his confidence in the Lord, vers. 2, 3. He comforts himself by calling to remembrance the support which the Lord had hitherto afforded him, the dignity to which He had raised him, and the manifold deliverances and answers to prayer which he had experienced, vers. 4, 5. He closes with an expression of his elevated joy of faith, vers. 6, 7; and with a supplication to the Lord to help him, as He had been wont to do in times past, and to bless His people, vers. 8, 9. The Psalm consequently falls quite naturally into four strophes, each consisting of two verses, the first of which describes the distress, the second the ground of hope, the third expresses the hope itself, and the fourth contains the prayer prompted by the hope. With this division of strophes corresponds also the position of the Selah, which in each case is placed at the end of a strophe.

The superscription of the Psalm—"An excellent song of David, when he fled before Absalom his son"—declares it to

have been composed when David fled from his son Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 16. It is alleged by De Wette against the correctness of this supposition, that the Psalm itself contains nothing in support of it. Would not the tender heart of David, says he, have manifested in the presence of Jehovah, to whom he made his complaint, the deep wound it received from the conduct of his son? In a similar way, De Wette very commonly argues against the Davidic authorship of the Psalms, and the correctness of the superscriptions, from the absence of any definite historical allusions. Now, it is here first of all to be remarked, that a prolix and detailed description of personal circumstances is a thing impossible for a living faith, which, convinced that our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask Him, is satisfied with mere allusions and general outlines. It is otherwise where the prayer is only in form a meditation of the heart before God, but is in reality a conversation of the supplicant with himself. Then we are very prone to dive into the particulars of suffering, and run on in sentimental descriptions of our circumstances. But still more is it to be considered that the sacred authors of the Psalms, and most of all David, had not themselves primarily in view in their Psalms, and only afterwards devoted that to general use, which in its origin was throughout individual as is commonly thought; but rather from the first their design in exhibiting their own feelings, was to build up the Church at large. The Psalms which arose out of personal transactions, are distinguished from the didactic Psalms, properly so called, by a fluctuating boundary. The former also possess, in a general way, the character of didactic Psalms. If we could imagine the sacred authors of them cast upon a desert island, with no prospect of again coming into contact with men, they would certainly, in that case, have lost both the desire and the impulse to utter their complaints and their hopes in the form of Psalms. For lyric poetry is not in such a sense subjective, that all reference to those placed in like situations, and agitated by like feelings, can be considered as shut out. David, in particular, was so closely connected with the Church, and recognised so thoroughly his Divine mission, to give it a treasure of sacred poetry for instruction, edification, and comfort, that he distinctly regarded all the events of his own course, from the first, as a type of similar ones in that of his brethren the righteous;—he considered himself to be their

mouth and representative, and the consolation primarily administered to him, to be equally destined for them. Herewith was necessarily connected a tendency to subordinate the particular to the general, and to give only slight hints of the one upon the ground of the other. But such hints as confirm the truth of the superscription, are found in this Psalm. That there is a general resemblance between the position of the Psalmist and David's, there can be no doubt. As, according to 2 Sam. xv. 13, the report was brought to David that the hearts of all Israel were after Absalom, and as, according to chap. xvi. 18, Hushai said to Absalom, "Whom the Lord, and *this people*, and *all the men* of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide;" so the Psalmist complains, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me; many that say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." In both cases alike the distress is connected with a state of war. And as in 2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2, Abithophel said to Absalom, "I will arise and pursue after David this night, and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-banded, and will make him afraid; and all the people that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only;" so David says here, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about."

That a high dignity belonged to the Psalmist, appears from ver. 3, where he calls the Lord "his glory," and speaks of Him as having "lifted up his head." He is not afraid of myriads of people; the Lord has often already vanquished all his enemies,—both which indicate greatness of character in the oppressed. The mention of the people also, in his prayer, ver. 9, agrees well with his being a king, as their destiny might be represented as intimately connected with his own. But if the writer is a king, of whom can we think, but David, since, excepting him and Solomon, who is here out of the question, his government having been quite peaceful, history makes mention of no other crowned bard; while the dignified simplicity and freshness of the composition bespeak his hand, and its place, also, among the Psalms of David, confirms the supposition? Then, if David is the author of it, we have only to choose between the troubles occasioned by Saul, and those occasioned by Absalom. Hitzig decides in favour of the former. For the refutation of this view, we have no need even to call to our aid the superscription. During the



persecutions he sustained from the hand of Saul, David was not yet king. And a still stronger proof is afforded by ver. 4, where David says that the Lord had often before heard him from His holy mountain. This implies, that the seat of the sanctuary had some time previously been fixed in Jerusalem. But it was not removed there till David had ascended the throne, after Saul's death. Hitzig's attempt to escape from this ground by understanding the mountain to be Horeb, scarcely deserves a serious consideration. The whole phraseology of the Psalms repels this supposition, for these know no other holy mountain but Mount Zion. There is not a single passage in all the Old Testament where an Israelite is found looking for help from Mount Horeb, which was only hallowed by ancient reminiscences, and not ennobled by the presence of the Lord in later times. In fine, the past deliverances, on which the Psalmist, in vers. 3, 4, 7, and 8, based his hopes of escape from present trouble, are, manifestly, chiefly those which occurred in the reign of Saul. Indeed, David had experienced no such continued series of deliverances in this latter. So that we are led by internal grounds to the very same result, which the superscription had from the first announced. And from this we deduce, at the same time, a favourable conclusion for the superscriptions generally. The internal grounds lie here, as the aberrations of recent expositors show, so concealed, that the superscription could not possibly have been derived from a subtle combination of them,—a thing foreign to antiquity. Ewald maintains very decidedly, both that David was the author of the Psalm, and specially that it was composed at the time of Absalom. In regard to the former, he says, David's elevation, colouring, and style, are unmistakeable; in regard to the latter, he says, the author had already stood long upon the pinnacle of human power, had long experienced the highest favour from God, and often already poured forth the feelings of his heart in song. In ver. 8, we plainly recognise the noble spirit of David in that flight, by which he sought to allay the threatening storm, and avert from the people the burden of a new civil war. But we can still more nearly determine the situation of the bard, though only, it may be, with the highest degree of probability. The Psalm was, according to vers. 5 and 6, an evening hymn. He there expresses his confidence, that, though surrounded by the greatest dangers, he could quietly sleep, and be certain of beholding the light of the following day.

Now, this circumstance accords only with the first night of David's flight, which he spent in the desert, after he had gone weeping, barefooted, and with his head covered, over the Mount of Olives, 2 Sam. xvi. 14. Comp. ver. 20. This first night was the most dangerous one for David; nay, it was the only night during the whole period of the insurrection, in which the danger was so very urgent, as ver. 6 states it to have been. David's life hung then by a single hair: had God not heard his prayer, "Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," he had actually perished. Consequently, when the counsel of Ahithophel, to fall upon the king that very night, was rejected by Absalom, the strength of the rebellion was completely broken, and the danger in a manner past, as is manifest from this one circumstance, that Ahithophel, in consequence of that rejection, went and hanged himself.

Two objections have been raised against this conclusion. First, David was then still quite uncertain whether the Lord would again grant him the victory, and restore to him the kingdom; whereas he speaks here at the close with the greatest confidence. The passages referred to in support of this are 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26: "The king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and His habitation. But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do what seemeth good to Him." And chap. xvi. 12: "It *may be* that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." But these passages by no means indicate a complete uncertainty, and are mainly to be regarded as a simple expression of the humility which scarcely ventures to declare, with perfect confidence, the still never extinguished hope of deliverance, because feeling itself to be utterly unworthy of it; indeed, to give utterance to this latter feeling is their more special object. That David, in the midst of his deepest grief, did not abandon his trust in the Lord, appears from his confiding prayer, "Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," and from his conferring on Ziba the goods of Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. xvi. 4. And then it is not to be forgotten, that those expressions and our Psalm, according to the situation we are defending, were still separated from each other by a certain interval, great enough to admit of the relatively not great change of mood, which often takes place

in a moment. It is expressly said, that David *refreshed* himself that first night in the wilderness; which is certainly to be understood, not in a mere bodily sense, but also spiritually, since, in troubles of that nature, a mere bodily refreshment is inconceivable. But it is again objected, that, in such a state and condition, men do not write poetry. We might, however, appeal to the poems of the Arabians, which have been composed amid the very turmoil of action; to the fact, that the poet Lebid was writing verses in the very article of death, etc.; but we would rather admit, that there is a certain degree of truth in the objection. The artificial construction of this Psalm, and others composed in similar situations (it is far from correct to regard the Psalms in general as the simple poetry of nature); the circumstance that a number of Psalms not unfrequently refer to one and the same situation, as this, for example, and the fourth,—these and other things render it very probable, that in such cases, the conception and the birth of the Psalm were separated from each other; that David did not immediately express in manifold forms what he had felt in moments of pressing danger; that he only afterwards, and by degrees, coined for the Church the gold of consolation bestowed upon himself in such moments. This opinion was long ago held by Luther in regard to the present Psalm; but he, on insufficient grounds—"for it is against all experience, that, in the midst of the cross, no decided joy should be able to be felt"—adjudges the *matter* of the Psalm also to a later period: "It is not probable that he should have composed it at the time of his flight and distress. For the Holy Spirit will have a calm, happy, cheerful, select instrument, to preach and sing of Him. In the conflict, moreover, man has no understanding, but becomes capable of this only after the conflict is over—reflects then aright upon what has occurred to him under it. Therefore, it is more credible that David composed this Psalm long after, when he came to quiet reflection, and understood the secrets of his life and history, which had variously happened to him."

As in the first and second Psalms, so here again, in this and the fourth, we have a pair of Psalms inseparably united by the inspired writer himself. The situation in each is exactly the same; comp. iii. 5 with iv. 8. The thoughts which agitated his heart in that remarkable night, the Psalmist has represented to us in a whole with two parts. In Psalm iii. his earlier experiences of Divine aid form the chief point; while in Psalm iv. he

looks to his Divine appointment as to the rock upon which the waves of revolt must dash themselves to pieces.

It is certainly not to be regarded as an accident, that Psalms third and fourth immediately follow the first and second. They are occupied, as well as Psalm second, with a revolt against the Lord's Anointed; and Psalm fourth especially shows a remarkable agreement with it, first in thought, and then also in expression—comp. “imagine a vain thing” in ii. 1 with “love vanity” in iv. 2. In this third Psalm the personal experiences and feeling of David are most prominent, and they formed the basis on which he reared the expectation of the events which were to befall his successor, the Anointed One absolutely.

Ver. 1. *O Lord, how are mine enemies so many! Many are they that rise up against me.* The קוֹם with עַל is used of enemies generally in Deut. xxviii. 7, and does not specially indicate revolt as such.

Ver. 2. *Many say to my soul, There is no help for him in God.* The greater part of expositors consider לַנְּפִשׁ as a mere periphrasis for the pronoun. The words “my soul,” indeed, occur in that sense among the Arabians, with whom many words have been clipt and pared so as to lose their original impress; but not so among the Hebrews, with whom the words still always express the thoughts and feelings. There is always a reason why the נֶפֶשׁ rather than the pronoun is used. Here the discourse of the enemies is described as one which wounds the heart and soul—comp. Ps. lxi. 20, “Reproach hath broken my heart;” also Isa. li. 23. If we explain, “of my soul,” or “to my soul,” the word “soul” is used because David’s very life was in question, because his enemies thought they had it already in their power. No support for that rendering is to be drawn from the following words: “no help to him in God.” What the enemies say of David is so painful to him, that he considers it as spoken personally to himself. It is his soul that is affected by the discourse. It is further to be objected to that rendering, that אָמַר with ל for the most part signifies, “to speak to some one,”—comp. also the opposite declaration in Ps. xxxv. 3, “Say to my soul, I am thy salvation.” In the form יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה the ה is added, as the poets not unfrequently did with nouns, which already had the feminine termination, to give the word a fuller and better sound; Ewald, p. 323. Before this ה the preceding ה fem. becomes hardened into ח; Ewald, p. 37.

*no* is always negation of being, always signifies, "it is not." By the expression, "in God," God is described as the ground and source of salvation. The enemies denied that God would help him, *either* because, in utter ungodliness, they excluded God altogether from earthly affairs, or at all events thought that matters had gone too far with David, even for God's power to help him, Ps. x. 11; *or* because they considered David as one cast off by Him, unworthy of His protection, Ps. xlii. 3, 10, lxxi. 11, xlii. 7, 8; Matt. xxvii. 43; and this pained him most deeply. The last mentioned view of David's case was that taken by Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi. 8. He sought to rob David of his last, his dearest treasure: "The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man." This kind of attack was the most painfully affecting. The denial, that God is *our* God, finds an ally in the believer's own consciousness of guilt, however strongly he may be convinced of his innocence in regard to particular charges, and it requires no small measure of faith to gain here the victory. Luther: "As if he would say, They not only say that I am abandoned and trodden upon by all creatures, but also that God will not help me, who assists all things, sustains all, cares for all; that for me alone of all things He has no care, and will minister to me no support. Though every possible assault, the assaults of a whole world, and of all hell to boot, were combined, it were still nothing to the assault of God, when He thrusts at a man. It made Jeremiah tremblingly beg and pray, xvii. 17, 'Be not a terror unto me, O Thou my Hope in the day of evil.'"

But while the words, as is evident from the analogous ones used by Shimei, and also from 2 Sam. xvi. 18, principally refer to the *will* of God to help the Psalmist, a reference to His *power* also is not entirely to be excluded. This is clear from the closing words, "Salvation belongeth to the Lord," which plainly refer to the taunt, "no help for him in God," and which vindicate to the Lord, not the will, but the power to help. The *general* name of God, Elohim, is used on account of the contrast that is silently implied to human means of help: everything is against him on earth, and in heaven too there is no longer any resource for him. The speakers are not, as De Wette supposes, the

Psalmist's despairing friends, but his enemies. Only then could it justly be said, that there were so many of them. De Wette's allegation, that the speech is not godless and spiteful enough for enemies, rests on a misapprehension of its real meaning. For to the man, who with his whole being throws himself upon God, it is even as "death in his bones" to hear his enemies saying, "Where is thy God?" This is the most envenomed arrow which they could shoot into his heart.

The *selah* occurs here for the first time. It is found seventy-one times in the Psalms, and thrice in Habakkuk. It is best derived from נָחַץ, *to rest*, of frequent use in Hebrew, as well as Syriac. The change of the harder נ to the softer ס is very common; see Ewald, p. 29. It can either be taken as a noun, *rest, pause*, or, with Gesenius in his *Thes.*, as the imperative with the *parag.* and in the pause. Primarily, indeed, it is a music-mark. But as the pause in music always occurs where the feelings require a resting-place, it is of no little importance as regards the sense, and the translators who leave it out, certainly do wrong. This view acquires great probability, by a particular consideration of the places where the *selah* occurs. It generally stands where a pause is quite suitable. Others suppose that the word is an abbreviation of several words. But there is no proof that the practice of such abbreviations prevailed among the Israelites. Koester is inclined to regard the *selah* as marking the division of strophes. But that it should in many places coincide with such a division, is easily explained by the circumstance that the resting-place for the music must generally coincide with a break in the sense. And that *selah* is not strictly the mark of the strophe-divisions, is evident from its frequently not coinciding with the end of a strophe; for example, Ps. lv. 19, lvii. 3; Hab. iii. 3, 9, in which places it is found in the middle of a verse. Besides, if the *selah* had indicated a poetical, rather than a musical division, the prophets, in whose writings there are traces of the beginnings of a division into strophes, would have employed it. Habakkuk forms only an apparent exception. For the third chapter of this prophet, in which alone the *selah* occurs, embodies the feelings which were stirred in the Church by the announcements of God, those, namely, of judgment in ch. i., and of deliverance in ch. ii., so that it is really of the nature of Psalmic poetry, and is adapted for singing and playing as a Psalm; as, indeed, both its superscription and

conclusion are borrowed from the Psalms. Our view of the matter is confirmed also by Ps. ix. 16, where the  $\text{לָהּ}$  stands along with  $\text{הִנֵּן}$ , "reflection" (see our remarks there). This juxtaposition decides against Ewald's notion, that *selah* was a summons to particularly loud playing, deriving the word from a substantive  $\text{לֵד}$ , and that from  $\text{לָל}$ , professedly signifying *to mount*; properly, "to the heights," "up," which in matters of sound, must be synonymous with *loud, clear*. In a philological point of view, also, this opinion is open to many objections. For remarks against this and other divergent explanations, see Genesius' *Thes.* The right view was substantially given by Luther. The *selah*, says he, tells us "to pause and carefully reflect on the words of the Psalm, for they require a peaceful and meditative soul, which can apprehend and receive what the Holy Spirit there cogitates and propounds. Which we see, indeed, in this verse, where the Psalmist is deeply and earnestly moved to feel and understand this heavy trial of the spirit, wherein also God seems to take part, as well as the creature."

Ver. 3. While, according to vers. 1 and 2, the earth presented to the Psalmist nothing but trouble and danger, an helper in the heavens appears to his eye of faith. He comforts himself in God, to whom he looks as his Saviour in all troubles and dangers, to whom he owed his high elevation, and who always hears his prayers. Man may deny him His help, but yet he sees in what God had already done for him a sure pledge of what he might still expect. Luther: "Here he sets, in opposition to the foregoing points, three others. Against the *many enemies* of whom he had spoken, he places this, that God is his *shield*. Then, as they had set themselves against him, thinking to put him to shame before the world, he opposes the fact, that God had given him honour. Finally, he complains of the slanderers and scoffers, and against these he boasts, that it is the Lord who lifts up his head.—To the people, and to his own mind, he may seem forsaken and alone; but before God, and in his spirit; he is encompassed with a great host, neither forsaken, nor alone, as Christ said to His disciples, John xvi. 32, 'Lo the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.'—However impotent and oppressed he might seem in the eyes of men, before God, and in the spirit, he is the strongest and the mightiest; inso-

much that he boasts of God's power with the utmost confidence and security, like St Paul, who could say, 'When I am weak, then I am strong.'—Whoever understands, or has experienced such assaults, will, at the same time, understand how foolishly and wickedly they speak, who say that man by nature can love God above all things. Thou shalt find no one who will bear such displeasure from God; and yet, if the love of God does not overcome that, He is not loved above all things. Therefore the words of this verse are not words of nature, but words of grace,—not of man's free will, but of the Spirit of God,—of a very strong faith, which can see God through the darkness of death and hell, and can still recognise Him as a shield, though He seems to have forsaken,—can see God as a persecutor, and yet recognise Him as an helper,—can see God apparently condemning, and at the same time recognise Him as blessing. For he, who has such faith judges not by what he sees and feels, like the horse and mule, which have no understanding, Ps. xxxii. 9, but clings fast to the word, which speaks of things that man sees not."

*And Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me; my glory, and He who lifts up my head.* God is Abraham's shield, according to Gen. xv. 1, and Israel's shield, according to the closing words of the law, Deut. xxxiii. 29. David has an especial predilection for this designation: Psalm vii. 10; xviii. 2; xxviii. 7. The כסא corresponds entirely to the German *um* (Anglice, *about*), and to the Gr. ἀμφί Ew. p. 613, *around me*, giving me protection.—*My glory.* Because David's glory, viz. the high dignity which he possessed, was derived from the Lord; he names Him his glory—comp. Psalm lxii. 7, "In God is my salvation and my glory." Many expositors falsely render: *the vindicator of my glory*, by metonymy of the effect for the cause. The parallel passages to which reference is made, such as Psalm xxvii. 1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation," are brought in support only by a wrong exposition. The vindication of glory is a consequence of the Psalmist's having his glory from God and in God. What has its ground in God, that he will not suffer to be taken away. The *lifting up of the head* marks the deliverance of a man from a position of humiliation, from great dangers, from the state in which he goes mournful and dispirited with drooping head. The discourse here, however, is not of the deliverance to be hoped for in this danger, nor of



any particular transaction whatever, but of all the events in the life of David, in which he had found that the Lord was his deliverer. Upon the circumstance that the Lord had generally been the lifter up of his head, he grounds the hope that in this distress also He would be the same; and from God's having been the source of his glory, he derived the hope that God would not suffer the impious attempts of those now to go unpunished, who sought to rob him of it.

Ver. 4. *I cry unto the Lord with my voice, and He hears me out of His holy hill.* The verbs in this verse mark a *habit*, not a single action, just as in Psalm xviii. 3, "When I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and am saved from mine enemies." Because the Lord is, in respect to David, the one who hears prayer, the surest mark of a gracious condition, He cannot leave him now, without also hearing him. Luther: "He speaks here chiefly of the voice of the heart; still I conceive that the corporeal voice is not excluded, and hence, that the voice of the heart and feeling, when it is vehement, cannot be restrained, but must break forth into the literal voice. For Christ Himself upon the cross cried with an audible voice, teaching us to cry in straits and necessities, and that with all our power, inward and outward, we should call upon the Lord.' The answer follows in a *sermo realis*. The Fut. with *vau* conv. simply denotes the consequence from the preceding; hence, if we render אָקַרָה *I call*, it is to be translated, not He *answered*, but He *answers*. The holy hill is Mount Zion; from thence the servant of the Lord derives his help. This faith is very often expressed in the Psalms. It had its ground in the promise, that the Lord would dwell among His people, and would sit on a throne in the sanctuary above the ark of the covenant. This promise was given to help the weakness of the Israelites, which made them desire a *præsens numen*, an incorporation of the idea that God is, in a peculiar sense, their God. When the faithful seek help from the sanctuary, they declare that they expect it, not from Elohim, but from Jehovah—that they hope for that power of the covenant with Israel, upon which alone they could rest with proper confidence. For the Christian, Christ has come into the place of Jehovah, and the holy hill. In regard to the *Selah* here, Luther remarks: "The word means, that we should here pause, and not lightly pass over these words, but reflect further upon them. For it is an

exceedingly great thing to be heard, and to expect help from the holy-hill of God."

Ver. 5. *I lay me down and sleep; I awake, for the Lord sustaineth me; i.e.* the assistance of the Lord, which is assured to me, by what He has formerly done, makes me soon fall to sleep, and brings me a pleasant awakening. In this part also, many expositors think the Psalmist speaks of what is still going forward: Often already have I laid myself quietly down in the midst of danger, and found sleep. I have not, like those who live in the world without God, tossed about with uneasy cares upon my bed, and the issue has always corresponded with my hopes. I have constantly awoke without any evil having befallen me, for the Lord is my stay and help. By this construction, however, according to which this verse would be closely united to vers. 3, 4, the strophe-division is entirely destroyed, and the Selah at the end of the preceding verse appears then unsuitable. The expression of confidence in regard to present distress, limited in such a case to ver. 6, is too short, and the setting forth of the Psalmist's hope ceases to bear a due proportion to the setting forth of the *ground* of his hope. But if, with Venema and others, we refer ver. 6 also to the past, we put out the eye of the Psalm. It is therefore better to refer the words to his present danger, and regard them as the expression of a joyful confidence, which enabled him, even in such circumstances, to lay himself down and sleep, and to expect also to awake in security and peace. The *הקצותי* is consequently to be taken as the pract. proph. Faith sees what is not as if it were, the awaking just as surely as the lying down. The verse shows that the Psalm was an evening hymn, as was also the following one, the eighth verse of which remarkably agrees with that now under consideration; and the pract. *שנבתי* implies that the Psalmist had already betaken himself to rest. It happened to David according to his faith. Abithophel made no way with his counsel to attack by night, and David withdrew before break of day beyond Jordan. "Quod non omnibus æque feliciter accidit," remarks J. II. Michaelis, adducing 1 Sam xxvi. 7-15, where David surprised and could have slain Saul while sleeping in his tent. It is only to the righteous that the promise is given in Prov. iii. 24, "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." The *וְ* is emphatical, in opposition

to the vain expectation of the enemy : I, the very person, whom ye imagine to be beyond the reach of deliverance.

Ver. 6. *I am not afraid of ten thousands of people, which they set against me round about.* The רבבות has reference to רבו and רבים in vers. 2 and 3. There is as little reason here, as in Isa. xxii. 7 (where it may with propriety be rendered, "The Horsemen, place they, towards the gate"), for taking שׂוּת intransitively, *set themselves*, in which sense it never occurs.

Ver. 7. The Psalmist prays the Lord to justify the confidence which he had expressed in the preceding strophe, and to fulfil the promise substantially given in the earlier deliverances he had experienced, and on which he grounded his expectation of present aid. *Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God. For Thou didst smite all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou didst break the teeth of the ungodly.* That is, I cannot but expect this from Thee, as Thou hast hitherto so uniformly stood by me. The words "save (or deliver) me," have reference to those in ver. 2, "There is no help for him in God." לֹא־יִשְׁעוּ is in the accusative. By the smiting on the cheek, as a piece of insulting treatment, the power and energy is broken; comp. 1 Kings xxii. 24; Micah iv. 14; Lam. iii. 30. We must not, because of the following clause, limit the design of the smiting on the cheek merely to the knocking out of the teeth, with which the wicked, like so many wild beasts, were ready to eat the flesh of David, Psalm xxvii. 2. That clause only specifies a particular result of the smiting in question. The ungodly are parallel to the enemies in the preceding clause. This is explained by the fact, that David's adversaries were, at the same time, the ungodly, and that their hatred was directed against him as the representative of the principle of good. This is confirmed also by history. In particular, and there is no question, that, in the wearisome persecutions he endured at the hands of Saul, to which he specially refers, individual was not opposed to individual, but principle to principle. The ungodly principle, thrown down in Saul, sought afterwards to regain the ascendant in Absalom, who is only to be considered as an instrument and centre of the unrighteous party. The more, therefore, did the earlier deliverance experienced by the Psalmist, form a ground for his present supplication.

That הִבִּית and שִׁבַּרְת are not to be regarded as *præterita prophetica*, as some think—that David rather grounds, according

to custom, his prayer to the Lord for deliverance upon his earlier deliverances, which arose from his general relation to the Lord, as his present deliverance was to be a result thereof, is manifest from the causative particle *ו*, which the expositors referred to seek in vain to render by *yea*; also from the parallel passage, Psalm iv. 1; and most of all, from a comparison of vers. 2-4, the substance of which is only concisely repeated here. As in vers. 5, 6, he rested his hope upon the general relation, so here also his prayer. That relation also of David to the Lord which warranted him to seek help from Him, is alluded to in the expression, "my God." But it is not absolutely necessary to translate, "Thou smotest," "Thou didst break:" we may also correctly translate with Luther, "Thou smitest," "Thou breakest in pieces;" and this rendering is confirmed by vers. 3, 4, where, not so much what the Lord had already done is represented as a ground of hope, as what He is constantly doing. The preterite not unfrequently denotes a past, reaching forward into the present: see Ewald's *Small Gr.* § 262. In perfect accordance with the spirit of the Psalms, which always treat a particular danger, threatening the righteous, as representative of the entire class, Luther remarks: "This Psalm is profitable also to us for comforting weak and straitened consciences, if we understand in a spiritual sense by the enemies, and by the teeth of the ungodly, the temptations of sin, and the conscience of an ill-spent life. For there indeed is the heart of the sinner vexed, there alone is it weak and forsaken; and when men are not accustomed to lift their eyes above themselves, and to cry to God against the raging of sin, and against an evil conscience, there is great danger; and it is to be feared lest the evil spirits, who, in such a case, are ready to seize upon poor souls, may at last swallow them up, and lead them through distress into despair."

Ver. 8. *Salvation is the Lord's.* He is the possessor and sole dispenser thereof—He can give it to whom He pleases, even to the most helpless, whom the whole world considers to be in a desperate case. "Though all misfortune, all tribulation and evil, should come at once, still there is a God who can deliver, in His hand is help and blessing." This thought must have been peculiarly comforting to David when deserted by human helpers and means of deliverance. Since salvation belonged wholly to the Lord, he might rest secure, for the Lord was his God. *Thy*

*blessing upon Thy people!* The royal Psalmist shows by these words that his own person lay less upon his heart, than the people committed to him by the Lord—that he claims deliverance for himself only in so far as it could do good to his people. The declaration in the first clause forms the necessary foundation for the prayer uttered in the second. To be able truly to pray from the heart, we must firmly believe that God is really in possession of the treasure, from which He is to communicate to us. In the preceding verse the order is reversed.

### PSALM IV.

Encompassed by enemies, the Psalmist calls upon the Lord for help, ver. 1. He turns then to his enemies, and admonishes them to cease from their attempts to rob him of his dignity, and from their vain purposes; exhorts them to reflect that the dignity which they sought to take from him was conferred on him by God, and that this fact gave the Psalmist sure ground for expecting the fulfilment of the prayer which he utters at the commencement; for what the Lord has given He must also preserve, vers. 2, 3. He warns them not to sin further by giving way to passionate emotions; urges them to meditate upon this admonition in their silent chamber, upon their bed; to cease from their noise and bluster; and instead of hypocritical offerings, with which they thought to make the Lord favourable to them, to present righteous sacrifices; to put their trust in the Lord, instead of boasting of their own power, and of the superiority of their means to those of the Psalmist; for only these two things, righteous sacrifices and confidence in God, can afford a well-grounded hope of a prosperous issue, and those to whom these conditions fail, flatter themselves with vain hopes, vers. 4, 5. In vers. 6 and 7 the Psalmist declares how much the confidence in the Lord, which his enemies wanted, was possessed by himself. He despairs not in his distress, as many do, but is firmly persuaded that the Lord can and will help him; and this persuasion, wrought in him by the Lord Himself, makes him more blessed than his enemies are in the very fulness of their prosperity. In conclusion, he again expresses the firmest trust in the Lord, in which he gives himself to sleep, ver. 8.

The strophe-division has been correctly made by Koester

thus : 1. 2. 2. 2. 1. He remarks, that the first verse obviously stands by itself ; then follows the address to the enemies in two strophes, a third expresses David's delight, and the last verse again stands alone, as a "good night." Koester's remark, however, that the *selah* is twice placed a verse too early, is not correct. On the contrary, it forms a most appropriate break in the sense, in the middle of the two strophes, which are directed toward the enemies. The first verse of both strophes contains the dissuasion, the second the exhortation ; in both instances there is a pause in the middle, as if to give them space for reflection, to make them thoughtful. We need only conceive a dash to occupy the place of the *selah*.

The Psalm begins with a prayer, and concludes with an expression of confidence in its fulfilment. In the middle, the Psalmist seeks to make himself acquainted with the grounds which assured him of this. It is only when we take vers. 2-7 so, viewing it as an address to the enemies merely in form, that the Psalm appears in its real internal connection. The pillars of the bridge, which in vers. 2-7 is laid between the distress and the deliverance, between the prayer and the confidence, are, 1. The Psalmist's election, and the circumstance, that his enemies were striving against this Divine decree, and seeking to rob him of what God had given him. 2. The Psalmist's sincere and fervent piety (the חסיד, in ver. 3), the enemies' hypocritical and outward religiousness, implied in their needing to be called on to "offer sacrifices of *righteousness*," in ver. 5. 3. The Psalmist's lively trust in God, vers. 6, 7, while his enemies were placing their confidence not upon the Lord, but only upon human means of help—comp. ver. 5, "put your trust in the *Lord*."

Expositors for the most part refer this Psalm also to Absalom's conspiracy ; and that they are right in doing so, appears from the following considerations :—1. The Psalmist charges his enemies, vers. 2, 3, with seeking to rob him of the dignity conferred on him by God. On this ground alone, we cannot refer the Psalm, with some, and in particular Calvin, to the persecutions of Saul. It presupposes a domestic revolt against the Psalmist, after he had actually ascended the throne. 2. The Psalm so remarkably agrees with the preceding one, which is connected with Absalom's conspiracy, that it must of necessity be referred to the same period—comp. בכורי, "my glory," in ver.

2, with iii. 3, and ver. 8 with iii. 5. The objection of De Wette, that the Psalmist does not address a faithless son, but only men generally, apart from what was remarked on Ps. iii., is obviated by the consideration that Absalom was the mere tool of an unrighteous party dissatisfied with David, which made his vanity subservient to its own purposes; hence David, who so willingly regarded his son as the seduced, rather than as the seducer, directs his speech mainly to these. The other objections proceed upon a false view of vers. 5, 7. So also Hitzig's opinion, that the Psalm must have been composed after the danger spoken of in the preceding one had passed away, is founded upon a false exposition. Claus endeavours to show, that all the apparently individual allusions in the Psalm might possibly also be viewed as general; but he has proved nothing that is not understood at a glance, namely, that the individual always has at the same time a general aspect, and is only sketchily indicated on the ground of the general. We have already seen how this structure of the Psalms arises from the nature of the case—out of the living faith of their authors, which did not allow them to narrate at length their own circumstances, and also from their keeping always in view the wants of the whole community. How much this peculiarity of the Psalms fits them for the general use of the Church, is easily perceived. Only glance for a moment at this Psalm. How much less edifying would it have been, had David, in place of *glory*, which can be taken in the most extended sense, so that the very least can possess and lose it, put his *kingly* honour and supremacy; or in place of *vanity* and *lies*, by which each one can understand, according to his situation, every kind of calumny and deception to which he may possibly be exposed, had substituted the foolish counsels of Absalom, and his companions in particular! Ewald, following many of the older expositors, properly concludes from ver. 8, that the Psalm was composed as an evening hymn and prayer. Night is the season when painful feelings are most apt to stir up and inflame the hearts of those who are far from God. That this night was the first of David's flight, is probable from ver. 7, in addition to the reasons already adduced in our introduction to the preceding Psalm.

*To the chief musician.*—The word לַמְנַצֵּחַ (comp. Delitzsch *Symb.* p. 25), which stands at the head of fifty-three Psalms, is considered by many as an Aramaic form of the infinitive. They render it, either “for singing,” or as Claus more definitely, “for

singing through," with reference to that kind of music, of which the same melody is continued through different strophes, in contrast to a composition embracing the whole Psalm. Both renderings, however, are quite arbitrary, and not less arbitrary is the explanation given of the form. The Aramaic form of the infinitive is never found in Hebrew; and even if it were, it would not be as it is here. Against this explanation may lastly be urged, that with that word is always joined the article. The form can only be the partic. in Piel with the article prefixed. Now לְכַנֵּס occurs frequently in the books of Chronicles and Ezra, in the sense of "preside," and, as has been remarked by Ewald, is used only of the ordering and directing which were committed to the chiefs of the Levites—uncertain whether incidentally, or whether the word is a Levitical technical term—and in 1 Chron. xv. 2, it is specially used of the directing of the musical performance. What could be more natural then, in the superscriptions to the Psalms, than to remember the leader of the music? לְכַנֵּס signifies merely a "president," and we gather only from the context, that a director of music is specially meant. From the article, which may with perfect propriety be understood generically, we are not to conclude with Ewald, that the directorship of music was a standing office in the temple. The title, "to the chief musician," is of importance in so far, as it affords a proof that the Psalms which contain this in the superscription were intended for public use in the temple. It is only with a reference to this that the word could hold the place it does in the superscriptions. This place must have been assigned it by the authors themselves of the Psalms, thereby begetting a very favourable prepossession in behalf of the originality of the other information contained in the superscriptions. Ewald, in order to neutralize this testimony for the superscriptions, would fain translate לְכַנֵּס: *of the chief musician*. In his view, the word indicates that the Psalm had actually been set to music, and performed by the chief musician. But for the other rendering: *to the chief musician*, meaning that it was to be delivered up to him to be prepared for performance (in which case the word must have been prefixed by the author himself, before the musical performance actually took place), a decisive proof is afforded by Hab. iii. 19, the more important in its bearing on our exposition here, as the prophet manifestly imitates the superscription of the Psalms. The words לְכַנֵּס בְּנִינְתִּי, with which the song of the Church is



there closed, can be no otherwise explained than as meaning, "to the chief musician upon my (Israel's, for it is the Church that speaks through the whole chapter) stringed instrument;" which is as much as, assigned to the chief musician, that he might have it publicly sung in the temple with the accompaniment of sacred music: this might be considered to be the national music. *Negionoth* is the general name for all stringed instruments. The whole superscription, then, of the Psalm, is to be paraphrased thus: A Psalm of David to be delivered to the music director, that he may arrange for its performance with the accompaniment of stringed instruments.

Ver. 1. *When I call, answer me, Thou my righteous God, who givest me help in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.* The "my God" is here rendered more definite, by an additional word. The Psalmist indicates that he expected help, not on account of any partial predilection entertained for him by God, but from his God being the Righteous One, who could not but afford aid to His righteous cause. In this he supplies a rule for every prayer in like extremities. To beg help, without being able thus to designate God, is equivalent to blasphemy. For, instead of wishing God to act according to His nature, one then wishes Him to deny His nature. The suffix refers, as it very frequently does, to the compound idea; Ewald, p. 580. It is used precisely in the same way, for example, in Psalm xxiv. 5, "The God of his salvation," = his salvation-God. The explanation adopted by several, which takes "Thou God of my righteousness," as equal to "Thou who takest the part of my righteousness," can find no parallel to justify it.—בצר הרחבת לי, properly, *in straits Thou makest me large, wide*. Narrowness is a figurative term for misfortune, as broadness for prosperity. The meaning is, "Full of confidence, I call on Thee for help, who hast already given me so many proofs of Thy goodness, hast so often already delivered me from trouble, whose proper business it is to do this." The verb may be rendered either, "Thou hast enlarged,"—in which case David would ground his prayer for help merely upon past deliverances,—or, "Thou dost enlarge," David being then understood to comfort himself with the thought, that God stood ordinarily to him in the relation of a helper in the time of need. This latter view, which is Luther's also, "Thou who comfortest me in distress," is to be preferred on this account, that the words, according to it, briefly compre-

hend what had been set forth in detail in vers. 3 and 4 of the preceding Psalm, which stands so closely related to this. The Psalmist shortly resumes in these words what in Psalm iii. had been the foundation of his hope of deliverance, and raises himself up in the following verses, by means of a new ground of hope, even his Divine election. The words have suffered a false exposition in two ways. First, by De Wette, who explains the pret. imperatively. Grammatically, this is inadmissible, for in such cases the *vau relat.* never fails; Ewald p. 554; Small Gr. § 621. The parallel passages, Ps. vii. 7, lxxi. 3, adduced by De Wette are to be explained differently. And, granting that a single passage might be found, in which an exception occurs to the general rule, yet we should not be justified in adopting here an usage which is certainly very rare, and only to be admitted in a case of necessity; since the exposition we prefer gives an easy and natural sense, and is confirmed by the parallel passages in the preceding Psalm. Comp. Psalm xxvii. 9, where "Thou who art my helper" corresponds to "Thou God of my salvation."—Then by Hitzig, who finds here a deliverance from a certain particular distress, the same that was spoken of in Psalm third. But that this still continued, is evident from the extraordinary agreement between the whole substance of this Psalm and that of the preceding one. And still more decidedly is this supposition rebutted by a comparison of our Psalm with iii. 2-4, and especially ver. 7. .

Ver. 2. *O ye sons of men, how long shall my glory be for shame?* or be a matter of reproach; i.e. when will ye at length cease wantonly to attack my dignity? According to De Wette, the expression, *sons of men*, must be viewed as standing simply for men. But in that case it would certainly have been, not בני אדם, but the more common expression, בני אדם. The correct view was perceived by Calvin, who says: "It is an ironical concession, by means of which he mocks their insolence. They conceived themselves to be noble and wise, whilst it was only a blind rage that impelled them to their shameful undertakings." The word אדם, when used emphatically, conveys the idea of strength, as *man* does in every language. That the expression is "of the *man*," and not "of the *men*," obviates the objection, that it is difficult to see why it should be "sons of the man," and not simply "men." The revolvers considered themselves as sons of the man in and for himself, as *normal-men*. In reference to

this foolish self-confidence, the Psalmist admonishes them, in ver. 5, to put their trust in God. To the same haughtiness, indicated in the first address, the subject-matter of the remainder of this verse, and of the next one, points; for it was pride which made the glory of him whom God had chosen intolerable to them. Agreeably to the character of the whole Psalm, the description of pride is as mild and gentle as possible. The expression, by itself, properly marks no more than power and might. It is all the milder that the secret blame has for its basis an open recognition, a free acknowledgment of their power and strength. Besides, the expression, "sons of man," is in many places used unquestionably in an emphatical sense. So, for example, in Psalm xlix. 2, where "the sons of man," and "the sons of men," stand in opposition to each other, as denoting rich and poor; Psalm lxii. 9; Prov. viii. 4. If this emphatical sense is rejected here, instead of a very significant address, which carries us into the inmost heart of the subject, opens up to our view the ultimate ground of the behaviour charged in what follows upon those here addressed, there remains only a meaningless form of speech. The question, "how long," might appear, in opposition to what we conceive to have been the situation of the Psalmist, to import that the improper conduct of the enemies had already continued a long period. But in so wicked a project as that of Absalom's revolt, such a question is not out of place, at the very commencement. That the words, "my glory," are not a mere circumlocution for his person, is obvious from the contrast in which it stands with "shame."

*How long will ye love vanity, and seek after lies!* By the vanity and lies, Kimchi understands the sovereignty of Absalom, which is so called because it was to have no continuance, and would disappoint the hopes of the rebels. To the same effect, also, Calvin. He remarks, that the revolt was very truly named a *lie*, on this account, that the persons concerned in it deluded themselves and others regarding the real nature of their attempt, which they decked out in the most splendid colours. But a comparison with such passages as Psalm xxxiv. 14, "seek peace," Zeph. ii. 3, "seek righteousness," "seek meekness," shows that the *seeking*, in parallelism with *loving*, is best taken to mean pains with, to go about a thing,—and a comparison with such passages as Psalm lxii. 4, "They only consult to cast him down

from his excellency; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouths; but they curse inwardly;" Isa. xxviii. 15: "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." Psalm v. 6, renders it probable, that by *lies* is to be understood the mass of falsehoods through which the rebels sought to help forward their bad cause; and if this be the case, then by *vanity*, as in Psalm ii. 1, is primarily to be understood, vanity in a moral sense, worthlessness. How important a part lies played in the revolt of Absalom, may be seen from 2 Sam. xv. 7, 8, by a signal example. Without the lie of Absalom, which is there recorded, the whole rebellion would have been strangled at the first.

Ver. 3. *But know that the Lord hath set apart him His pious one for Himself.* The meaning is, "Think not that I have been appointed king by men: God Himself has chosen me, whom He knew to be a pious worshipper, to that honour, from among the people; and ye who presume to fight against me really fight against Him, who also will take the management of my cause." The close connection between this verse and the preceding one is marked by the ו at the commencement. This is to be explained by considering the "how long," etc., as virtually saying, "Cease now at length to defame my glory." If this be the reference to the preceding verse, we cannot think of explaining הפלה by "*to distinguish*," and of discovering an allusion in it to the manifold proofs he had received of Divine favour. It can only denote his separation to that which the revolvers strove to take from him, viz. to glory, to royal dignity. פלה, besides, constantly has in Hiph. the sense of *singling out* or *separating*; comp. Ex. viii. 18, and especially xxxiii. 16, where Moses says to the Lord, "And we are separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." As the Lord there separated Israel from all nations, so here His godly one out of Israel; and that this is the meaning also here, and not the one received by many commentators of *distinguishing*, is specially manifest from the following לו—God has set apart for Himself. It is an arbitrary assumption, that לו חסיד stands for חסידו. Luther translates: But know that the Lord wonderfully guides His holy ones. He has combined לו with חסיד, and taken הפלה to mean the same as הפלא = הפלאה, the Hiphil of פלה, "to be wonderful," which is also found in a number of MSS. Hitzig, too, gives a similar exposition: that

God does wonders for His holy one. The reading *הַפֶּלֶא*, however, is not sufficiently confirmed; and *פֶּלֶא* and *פֶּלֶה* are never interchanged; nor does the latter lose its ordinary signification of *separating* in Psalm xvii. 7: Separate Thy grace from the number of common acts of grace, show me singular grace. Parallel to this mode of expression, according to the only correct explication, is the passage Psalm lxxviii. 70, 71: "He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young, He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance." When the Psalmist designates himself *חַסִּיד*, the "pious one," he declares the ground on account of which God had selected him, or had called him out of the mass of the people to be His highest servant in His kingdom. Venema: "Ut quem cognosceret, cum erga se, tum erga homines optime affectum." Comp. 1 Sam. xv. 28, where Samuel says to Saul, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *who is better than thou*;" also 1 Sam. xvi. 7. *חַסִּיד* signifies love, and is used not merely of the love of God, but also of human love, of man's love to God in Hos. vi. 4: "Your goodness (love) is as the morning cloud," and Jer. ii. 2; of love toward men in Hos. vi. 6, "I have desired mercy (love) and not sacrifice;" and in Isa. xl. 6, where the love of the flesh is the love which men show to their fellow-men. *חַסִּיד* is one who has love toward God, and toward his brethren. The form with Chirek has not only, arising out of the passive form *כָּתַבְתִּי*, a purely passive signification, but it also frequently forms, arising out of the form with Zere, adjectives of intransitive signification (Ew. p. 234), so that there is scarcely need for saying with Winer that a passive form is here taken actively. That one of the standing titles of the righteous should specify love as one of his characteristic marks, is important from the bearing it has on the religious moral standpoint of the Old Testament, as showing how little a service of dead words accorded with its spirit. The Psalms, in this respect, may be said to rest upon the law; for there already appeared the two commands of love to God and to our neighbour, as those in which all particular ones are included, and the fulfilment of which carries along with it obedience to all others, while without that, this is not possible. The command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is delivered in Lev. xix. 18; love to God is expressly announced

in the Decalogue as the fulfilment of the law, Ex. xx. 6; and the precept of love to God constantly returns in Deut., agreeably to its design of forming a bridge between the law and the heart, and is expressly described as the *ἓν καὶ πᾶν*, the one thing needful, the fulfilling of the whole law, Deut. vi. 8, x. 12, xi. 13. Hupfeld (in De Wette) has revived an older view, according to which *חסיד* signifies, not one who has love to God and his brother, but one who participates in the love of God. But for the refutation of the assertion on which this view is grounded, that *חסיד* is never used of love to God, the passages already cited are sufficient; and that such a view has of late years been rightly abandoned, is clear from the fact that *חסיד* is used of God Himself, Jer. iii. 12; Psalm cxlv. 17; and from *הסירה*, “the loving one,” *avis pia*, as a name of the stork.

It is a good conclusion which David here draws: The Lord hath chosen me, therefore will He hear my prayer against those who seek to rob me of the honour conferred by Him. This conclusion may be appropriated by all those who are assailed in the particular station and calling which God has bestowed on them; they may confidently expect the Divine help to stamp all the projects directed against them as vanity, and the reasons by which these may be justified as lies. But everything depends on the major premiss being right; and therefore were our fathers so extremely careful and conscientious in the inquiry, whether their call were truly a Divine one. In David's case, it was a matter of great comfort that he could be perfectly certain of his election—that he had not arrogated to himself his calling, but had quietly waited till it was conveyed to him by God. All his cheerfulness during Absalom's insurrection was founded on that. What could he well have said to the rebels, if he had himself, at an earlier period, rebelled against Saul, and driven him from the throne? Besides, the unquestionable relation which the words, “The Lord will hear when I call to Him,” bear to those in ver. 1, “Hear me when I call,” renders it manifest that the address to the enemies is a mere form, by which the Psalmist endeavours to make clear to himself the grounds he had for thinking their project vain, and expecting deliverance;—it is as if he had said, “Lord, hear my prayer; yea, Thou wilt do it, for Thou Thyself gavest me the glory of which my enemies try to rob me.”

Ver. 4. *Be angry and sin not; say it in your heart upon your*

*bed and be silent.* After the example of the LXX. ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε, it is to be taken in the sense of *being angry*. The exhortation "to be angry" passes into its opposite, in consequence of the condition thereto annexed, as in such a case as theirs anger was inseparable from sin. It is substantially as if he had said, Sin not through anger. The choiceness of the expressions employed, accords with the mild character of the whole Psalm, and conveys this meaning: I would indeed permit your anger, if the only effect were the injury which might thereby alight upon me; but since you cannot be angry without sinning, I must warn you to abstain from it. The turn given to it by Augustine, Luther, and others, is inadmissible: "Be angry if you please, but see that ye do not proceed so far as to think, say, or do what is hurtful to your souls, and so sin against God, yourselves, and your neighbours." In the supposed case, to be angry and to sin were one and the same thing. "Be angry and sin not," is taken as an unconditional command in Eph. iv. 26, which is a quotation from this verse, as is manifest not only from the literal correspondence between the words of the Apostle and the LXX. here, but also from the allusion made in the succeeding words, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath," to the clause, "commune with your own heart upon your bed." The separation between being angry and sinning, is there also only an apparent one, meant to bring out more distinctly the internal connection. The exposition of Harless: Be angry in the right manner, so as not to be guilty of sin, has against it, not only the words, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath," which he does not find it easy to dispose of, but also the whole context, which, both before and after, contains nothing but express and positive prohibitions, and then particularly the command in ver. 31, to put away all bitterness and anger. The exposition adopted by several, *tremble*, gives a very tame sense, as compared with the one received by us. The *trembling* is also too bald, and to the being angry, the proper contrast is being silent or still. The whole verse refers to the blustering passion of the enemies. Besides, the *trembling* does not accord with the tone of this Psalm, which is throughout full of soft expressions; neither would it suit the character of these revolvers, to say, "We will tremble and not sin," while it would, to say, "We will not commit sin by being angry;" nor, finally, does the *trembling* agree with the dis-

suasive character which is peculiar to this verse and ver. 2, while it would destroy the boundary line between it and ver. 5, which, along with ver. 3, contains the exhortation.

*Say it in your heart upon your bed.* In the retired chamber, upon their couch, in the lone silence of night, are the revolvers to meditate the affair, which hitherto they had discussed only in their uproarious meetings, at which the better voice of the heart was suppressed by the tumultuous outbreak of the passions. מִיְּנִיב never signifies the sofa or divan, on which Orientals sit at their conferences. By imagining this, Michaelis and Dereser have both given a false meaning to the passage. To a contrast of actual silence points also רַמּוּ, not "rest," "desist from your sinful projects," as De Wette and others would have it, but according to the usual and radical signification, "be silent" (which is here required by the obvious reference it carries to the אָמַר), "leave off the debates and wild cry of rebellion." It is to be remarked, however, that אָמַר (rendering in Eng. Ver. *commune*) differs always from דָּבַר as our *say* from *speak*. אָמַר can never stand alone: it must always be followed by that which is spoken; see Gesen. *Thes.* In many cases, where the thing spoken is easily gathered from the context, it is left to be supplied by the reader. So, for example, in Ex. xix. 25, "And Moses went down to the people, and said to them." The sacred writer does not expressly say *what*, because it had just been mentioned in ver. 24 as God's commission to Moses. In like manner, Gen. iv. 8, "And Cain said to Abel, his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field." What Cain said, "Let us go into the field," is not expressed, as any one can easily gather it from the following words, "when they were in the field;" comp. also 2 Chron. ii. 9; xxxii. 24. Now, here the deficiency is to be supplied from what immediately precedes: "Let us not sin through anger." Upon *such* saying there necessarily follows silence. For when one is fairly driven into himself, external noises and tumults cease of themselves. Besides, a peculiar light is thrown on the admonition to the revolvers by the circumstance that the Psalm, as was remarked in the introduction, is an *evening hymn*. David exhorted his enemies to do that which he had just been doing himself, and from which he was deriving a rich blessing. In the stillness of the night he employs himself, when lying on his bed, with his God; and hence is it that everything is so clear to him, so full of



light. Had his enemies but an experience of the same blessing! What they would thus gain is shown by our Psalm, which is the result of David's lonely night's meditation. The tone is so calm, so mild, expressing no bitterness against the proud rebels, but a tender pity and compassion for them, that they should rush so heedlessly on destruction. The *selah* leaves them time, as it were, to take to themselves the admonition to be angry and sin not, and then the *dehortation* is followed by an *exhortation*.

Ver. 5. *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.* Expositors generally are at a loss regarding the matter of this verse. Thus Ringeltaube remarks: "It is difficult to account for such a transition, and to understand why wicked blasphemers should so suddenly be called to confidence in God." Venema thinks, that an admonition to repentance and conversion might rather have been expected. The key to a right understanding of it is the remark, that what here is spoken in the form of an exhortation, like ver. 4, really contains, as to its matter, a dissuasive from evil. The stress is to be laid upon "righteousness," and "the Lord:" Bring not your hypocritical, present a righteous offering; confide not upon your human resources, but confide in the Lord. It is as if he had said, The victory cannot belong to my enemies, since they want the necessary conditions of Divine aid, righteousness and confidence in God. Many understand by sacrifices of righteousness, such sacrifices as men were by the law bound to present. Others take the expression figuratively, as importing sacrifices consisting in righteousness, or in righteous actions. The unsuitableness of the former view is apparent from the parallel member, "trust in the Lord," which leads us to expect here also not an external, but an internal requirement; it appears, further, from the entire religious character of the Psalms, in which, as well as in the Prophets, the inward disposition is constantly brought out in bold relief, in contrast to everything outward; and, finally, from the character of David's enemies, who wanted not an hypocritical, but a true piety. The relation of this verse to the preceding one comes also in confirmation of the same. For if there the dissuasion relates to moral guilt, the exhortation here cannot relate to something merely external. However, we must reject the second exposition, not less than the first. Such passages as Ps. li. 18, 19, do not justify us in considering the sacrifices here mentioned as spiritual ones. For the opposition expressed there

between spiritual and fleshly sacrifices, does not exist here. To us, sacrifices of righteousness are neither legal offerings, nor offerings consisting of righteousness, but *righteous offerings*, such as were presented by a righteous man, or on a principle of righteousness—see Ewald, p. 572. So, unquestionably, is the expression used in Deut. xxxiii. 19, “They shall call the people to the mountains, there shall they offer sacrifices of righteousness;” where to take a figurative spiritual view of the sacrifices, is out of the question. The quality here demanded was not found in the sacrifices of the enemies of David, as may be clearly perceived by looking to the sacrifices of Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 7, etc., which were most truly offered in the service of unrighteousness. The passage is correctly expounded in the Berleburg Bible: “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness; therefore must ye desist from your sin and anger, and fulfil your obligations. For otherwise your faith will be vain, and your whole service unprofitable, even though ye sacrifice ever so much. It is not enough to bring sacrifices, but they must also have a righteous ground. Whosoever hates his brother, he can bring no acceptable gift to the altar; his very prayer is sin. The Lord hates the religious services which are connected with unrighteousness, enmity, injury to neighbours, and neglect of the obedience owing. A penitent and contrite heart is required to a right sacrifice, Ps. li. 17; and a humble and thankful faith, Ps. l. 14, 23, that one may present himself to God as a living sacrifice, and his members as instruments of righteousness, Rom. vi. 13, xii. 1.” The *righteousness* sought here as a basis for the sacrifices, must take the place of that sinful anger, which was directed against the Lord’s chosen one, and from which the Psalmist had dissuaded the rebels in the preceding verse. The exhortation “to trust in the Lord,” rests also on an implied contrast. The rebels, intent in their fleshly state of mind on what was visible, believed their cause to be sure, because, while they possessed all human means of support, David, on the contrary, was bereft of all. David discloses to them the deceitfulness of their hope, and the danger which belonged to their condition, by calling on them to “put their trust in the Lord.” The same contrast, which is here silently implied, is expressly marked in Ps. xii. 5, xlix. 7; that it is really made here, is manifest from a comparison of vers. 3 and 8.

Ver. 6. *Many say, Who will show us good? Lord, lift Thou*

*up the light of Thy countenance upon us.* According to the common interpretation, there is no connection between this verse and the preceding one. So, for example, De Wette remarks: "Without further connection the Psalmist passes on to the thought, etc." But merely to state this, is to produce an evidence against the soundness of the interpretation. The Psalmist had said in the preceding context, that his enemies lacked the indispensable prerequisite of salvation, confidence in the Lord; and here he declares, that he had this prerequisite himself. While in times of distress many said, Who will show us what is good? he replies, in firm confidence on God, Lord, lift on us the light of Thy countenance. The words, "Who will show us good?" (*i.e.* "give us to possess it,") several expositors regard as a kind of wish, as equivalent to "Would that some one would cause us to see good." But the words are rather the expression of hapless, wretched despair, which gives up all hope, because it can find no ground for this in the visible aspect of things. Whence can we expect help? Neither in heaven, nor on earth, is there any one who is willing and able to impart it to us. In opposition to this despair of unbelief, David in the second clause places the hope of faith: I despair not, as many do, when earthly things afford no ground of hope; I know that a single gracious look from Thee, O Lord, can turn away our distress. To the "many say," he silently opposes: "but I say." He does not ask, who? He knows the man, who can help. Perhaps David, while he speaks of many, has especially in his eye his companions in misfortune, who had remained true to him, and who, because they stood not upon the same high ground of faith, might partly have given way to despair. This supposition, however, is not absolutely necessary. The words, *upon us*, are intelligible if we merely suppose that David contrasts himself with the many who do generally despond in adversity. Only grant, O Lord, that on me, and on all who may, like myself, find themselves in troubles above the reach of human counsel, the light of Thy grace may shine, that so help may be afforded us. נִקָּה is to be taken, with most Hebrew expositors, for a different form of writing נִקָּה, imperat. from נִשָּׂא, "to lift up." The expression נִשָּׂא פָנֶיךָ is used in the same sense in the principal passage, Numb. vi. 26, of the Levitical blessing, to which David here unmistakably alludes. This evident reference to the original passage renders it impossible for us to adopt any other explanation of

the form נֶכֶח. David knows, that it was not in vain the Lord had commanded to bless His people with these words, and grasps, with firm faith, the promise which is contained in them. Similar allusions to the blessings of the priests are not rare in the Psalms; for example, Ps. xxxi. 16, xlv. 3, lxxx. 7. "The light of Thy countenance," several explain: "Thy bright serene countenance;" though better, "Thy countenance-light," that is, "Thy countenance which is a light," which, lifted upon us, or directed towards us, dispels like a clear light the thickest darkness of adversity, before which the night of sorrow flies away, as the literal night before the sun. "To lift the countenance on any one," when used of God, who sits enthroned high above us in the heavens, is equivalent to *looking* upon him. But on whomsoever the Lord looks, him He favours; whosoever is an object of displeasure to Him, before him He hides His countenance, from him He turns it indignantly away, and abandons him to wretchedness and despair.

Ver. 7. *Thou givest joy in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.* The Psalmist declares, how blessed he feels in this confidence upon the Lord. The hope, which the Lord Himself had awakened in him, in regard to the return of His grace, makes him more joyful in the midst of his distress, than his enemies were while they reposed in the lap of fortune and abundance. The verse, like the preceding one, with which it forms a pair, is occupied with the setting forth of the Psalmist's confidence in God. How deeply-grounded must that have been, when it could give such peace! The contrast is not between God (apart from His gifts), the only and highest good (which David possessed, and his enemies lacked), and the perishable goods which were in the hands of his enemies; but rather a contrast between the hope of a coming salvation, which rested upon God, and the possession of such an one as is not only without God in the world, but has God for an enemy. Comp. Hab. iii. 18, where, after a description of heavy calamities, it is said, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation."—*More than in the time*, elliptically for, *more than their joy in the time.* The suffix in the two last nouns is to be referred to the enemies. The abundance of corn and wine, is an individualizing description of plenty and success. At first sight such a description scarcely seems to accord with the circumstances of the period of Absalom's revolt, and De Wette

has actually argued from this against the reference of the Psalm to that period. But if we only compare 2 Sam. xvi. 1, 2, we shall be satisfied that this trait is entirely suitable to the period in question. David was entertained in his flight by the beneficence of one of his subjects—Zibah brought forth bread and wine, that he and his servants might eat and drink in the wilderness.

Ver. 8. The faith of the Psalmist draws from all that precedes, the general result. It is this, that he will rest secure amid all surrounding dangers, under the protection of the Lord. *In peace, secure, and without needing to fear anything, I will both lay me down to sleep, and shall go to sleep.* *שָׁנָא* is not to be taken in the sense of *sleeping*, but in the original—as the comparison with the Arabic shows—and the predominating one of *going to sleep*; Gen. ii. 21, xli. 5; 1 Kings xix. 5, etc. Only then is the expression *both, at the same time*, in its proper place; he alone, who feels himself in perfect security, can at once go to sleep when he lies down. The second clause is rendered by many expositors, *For Thou, Jehovah, alone wilt make me dwell in safety*; Thou wilt afford me what the assistance of the whole world cannot do; Thou wilt protect me from mine enemies, and grant me rest and security. David here places his present position in contrast with his earlier one. Calvin: "He reflects with satisfaction on the guardianship of God as so sufficient for him, that he can sleep not less securely under it, than if he had many guards stationed all around him, or was defended on every side by many companions." Others, again, refer the word *alone* not to God, but to the Psalmist: "Thou, O Lord, makest me to dwell alone, (and) secure;" conceiving that the words carry an allusion to Numb. xxiii. 9, Deut. xxxiii. 28, "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be in a land of corn and wine." De Wette takes Sachs to be the author of this latter exposition. But it is to be met with in many of the older commentators; for example, in Venema. Luther, too, brings out very prominently the reference to Deut. xxxiii. 28, although he translates, "For Thou, Lord, alone makest me dwell in safety."—"A saying," says he, "not uncommon among the prophets; as if he would say, Indeed, Lord, in that I dwell safely, Thou art fulfilling what Thou didst promise through Moses, Israel shall dwell in safety alone." Now, that the *alone* is really to be referred to the separation of the

Psalmist from his enemies, and his security against their attacks, the passage in Deuteronomy shows the more decisively, as the corn and wine mentioned in the last verse were an allusion to the same passage, and as the prayer, "Lift upon us the light of Thy countenance," also carries us back to a similar one in the Pentateuch. But if we take this exposition by itself, and to the exclusion of the other, there is something hard in it, since the "alone," and the "in safety," are placed so loosely and unconnectedly together. This difficulty vanishes if, uniting both expositions together, we suppose that the Psalmist had in view a sort of double sense: "Thou, O Lord, makest me alone dwell in safety;" for, "Thou only, O Lord (comp. Deut. xxxiii. 12), makest me dwell alone and in safety." The expression, "Thou makest me *dwell*," by its peculiarity, begets the suspicion of there being some original passage previously existing, from which it is taken, and in Lev. xxv. 18, 19, we find the words, "Ye shall do My statutes and keep My judgments, and *ye shall dwell in the land in safety*; and the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and *dwell therein in safety*." With right does the Psalmist appropriate to himself the promises which originally referred to Israel. What is true of the whole is true also of the individual, in whom the idea of the whole is livingly realized; so that we may again ascend from the individual to the whole.

## PSALM V.

We make our commencement here with an explanation of אל הנחילות in the superscription. This has received a threefold exposition. 1. According to the Chaldee and the greater number of modern expositors, these words denote the *instruments*, with the accompaniment of which the Psalm was to be publicly performed; נחילה is held to be of like signification with חליל, "flute," to which it is supposed to be related. But to this it may be objected, that not a trace of connection is anywhere else to be found between the two roots; further, that the instruments are never in the superscriptions introduced with אל; finally, that the flute, although it is named among the instruments of the disciples of the prophets in 1 Sam. x. 5, yet is never mentioned as a component part of the sacred temple music;

and, in particular, never as one of the instruments with which the singing of the Psalms was accompanied. For the most part, it is only stringed instruments that are spoken of in this latter respect, comp., besides the superscriptions, P's. xcii. 3, xlix. 4, cl.; the trumpets, which were used only in the solemn songs of praise, are mentioned in P's. xlvii. 5, lxxxi. 3, xcviii. 6, cl.; but the flute is never named, not even among the instruments of P's. cl. 2. Others suppose, that the words point to another Psalm, after the air of which this Psalm was to be sung; so Abenezra, Hitzig: "After the inheritance." But a careful examination of the superscriptions establishes the result, that they do not afford one certain example of this sort; and it would require an extreme necessity to shut us up here to a supposition, which is so devoid of all certain analogy. 3. Others suppose, that the words describe the subject of the Psalm. So all the Greek translators, who render the words: *ὑπὲρ τῆς κληρονομίης*, "upon the heiress;" the Vulgate: *Super ea, quæ hæreditatem consequitur*; and Luther: "for the inheritance," which he thus explains,— "According to the title, this is the common purport of the Psalm, that it asks for the inheritance of God, desiring that the people of God may be kept and preserved for their Lord." It is a general confirmation of this view, that, in by far the most dark and difficult superscriptions, the words are found, on close investigation, to give a kind of enigmatical description of the contents and object of the Psalms, of which David in particular was fond. It is a special reason for this signification, that in the only other place where *לְהַלְלוֹת* occurs in a superscription, in P's. lxxx., it, in like manner, introduces the subject. This exposition is therefore to be preferred, provided the word *לְהַלְלוֹת* admits of a sense which can serve as a suitable designation of the subject of the Psalm. *לְהַלְלוֹת* signifies, to *acquire, possess*; the feminine of the adjective with a passive signification can, therefore, only mean the *acquired, the possessed*; in plural, the *possessions, the lots*,—comp. Job vii. 3. Now, the whole Psalm is taken up with a double destiny, that of the righteous, and that of the wicked—the blessing which is appointed by God to the former, and the misery to the latter; and in case of a single word being employed to describe the contents, none more suitable could be found than that here used, "on the lots."

After an introduction in vers. 1 and 2, in which the Psalmist entreats the Lord that He would hear and answer his prayer,

the prayer itself follows in two strophes of equal length, each consisting of five verses, vers. 3-7, and vers. 8-12, which run parallel in point of matter, both treating of the same subject, and their individual parts corresponding to each other. In the first strophe, the Psalmist prays the Lord, that as he made haste to pray to Him—being his first business in the morning—so the Lord might hasten to help him against his enemies, ver. 3; vers. 4-6 grounds this prayer upon the circumstance, that God, as holy and righteous, hates sin and sinners, and dooms them to destruction; and in ver. 7, the hope and confidence is expressed, that he, the righteous, delivered through God's grace, will give thanks to Him in His temple. The second strophe, which is as it were the second table of the prayer, which, as in the Decalogue, is comprised in the number ten, begins anew in ver. 8, with a supplication for the Psalmist's deliverance in his conflict with the adversaries; then follows in vers. 9, 10, the ground of it, pointing to the sinfulness of the adversaries, which called for God's judgments on them, and for their destruction; and the conclusion here again, vers. 11, 12, contains an expression of joyful hope for the righteous, whom God cannot fail to bless.—The only inequality in point of form is, that in the first strophe, the grounding of the prayer, and the delineation given of the lot of the wicked, take up three verses, in the second only two: whereas the hope and the description of the lot of the righteous occupy but one verse in the first strophe, and in the second, two verses. As it is the peculiar aim of the Psalm to elevate the hope of the righteous, it is quite natural that the writer should close with a fuller expression thereof.

Venema justly describes the Psalm as “a distinguished testimony of Divine righteousness and mercy, in defending and blessing the righteous, and in excluding the wicked from His fellowship, driving them away, and destroying them.” But he errs in thinking that these truths are delivered by him, quite in a general way, without any subjective starting point, without any actual oppression of the righteous, by the wicked giving occasion to the unfolding of these truths,—a supposition in which he was already preceded by Luther, who says: “It is certain that this Psalm does not treat of external suffering and opposition, for not a word in the whole Psalm makes mention of that; but all the complaint is directed against the wicked, the ungodly, and workers of iniquity. Hence it appears to me,



that the leading object and characteristic of this Psalm is, that in it the Psalmist prays against hypocrites, against self-righteous seducers and false prophets, who mislead the people of God, and the heritage of Christ, with their human statutes." That the Psalm originated in the oppression of actual enemies, appears from the mention of these in ver. 8, from the "for" in ver. 4, and the same in ver. 9. When the Psalmist grounds his prayer for acceptance and blessing on the abandonedness of the wicked, it is presupposed that the wicked were his enemies. He does not say, as he should have done, according to that hypothesis, Bless the righteous, destroy the wicked; but he says, Discomfit the wicked because of their wickedness, and *thereby* deliver the righteous. What has misled men into that hypothesis, and given it probability, is the Psalmist's here specially bringing out, as a ground of hope for the righteous, that his enemies in general are wicked, while elsewhere, that which they actually do *as enemies* is particularly declared—*there* it is: "Deliver me from mine enemies, for they wrong me;" *here*: "Deliver me from them, for they are evil, but I am righteous; and Thou canst not but, according to Thy nature, destroy the wicked, and bless the righteous." The authors of the Psalms divide the treasure of consolation, which God has given them as householders, into particular gifts, and sometimes they exhibit one, sometimes another. Here, for example, the particular point brought into notice is, that the enemies of the Psalmist are, at the same time, rebels against God, to whom He cannot accord the victory, without denying Himself; while the Psalmist, on the other hand, was a righteous man,—that it was impossible God could interchange or confuse the unalterably fixed, and perpetually separated lots of the righteous and the wicked; while in Ps. vi. the ground of hope is derived from the extremely sad position in which the Psalmist had been placed by his enemies. In brief, the Psalmist raises up the suffering righteous, by pointing to the unchangeable Divine righteousness, which will see to it that the righteous and the wicked shall each receive their respective lots. He points out how his deliverance from the hand of the wicked is as undoubtedly certain, as that God cannot deny and forget Himself.

The superscription ascribes the Psalm to David; and that no exception can be taken against this from ver. 7, where the house and temple of the Lord are spoken of, we shall show in our

remarks on that verse. What Hitzig has advanced against its Davidic authorship, viz., the slow motion and diffuseness of expression, is only, in so far as it is well grounded, of force against those who suppose a particular occasion. The racy style and liveliness of feeling generally to be perceived in those Psalms of David, which originated in particular occasions, we certainly do not find here.

Various defenders of the Davidic authorship have tried to discover some such particular occasion here; usually, it has been attributed to the revolt of Absalom,—but the endeavour has been found to be quite fruitless. Ver. 7, which might be connected with 2 Sam. xv. 25, is altogether general in its subject, and contains only such matter as every righteous man might utter. Not a single trace is to be found in the whole Psalm, of any particular reference. And what is the main point, viz., that the Psalmist speaks, not in his own person, but in that of the righteous, puts the words into his mouth, which he is to use in times of oppression, is clear from the close in vers. 11 and 12, where, instead of saying “*I*,” he brings forward those who “trust in the Lord,” “who love His name,” “the righteous.” The Psalm is, therefore, in the most proper sense, a didactic one.

This Psalm probably owes its place here to the circumstance of its being designed for a morning prayer, ver. 3. On this account it appeared very appropriate to connect it with Psalm iii. and iv., which are evening prayers.

The significant part which the *numerals* play in our Psalm, is worthy of remark. The three which the Israelites accounted peculiarly important and sacred, are found in it. The whole Psalm contains twelve verses; its proper building without the ante-chamber, ten; the delineation of the malice of the wicked twice over, makes up the number seven.

Ver. 1. *Give ear to my words, O Lord; understand my meditation.* הִנֵּנִי, which, excepting this passage, occurs only in Ps. xxxix. 3, is to be derived from the verb הִנֵּן, which is of the same import as הִנֵּה. There is no reason for renouncing here, the common signification, “to meditate,” which is also quite suitable in Ps. xxxix.; indeed, the context favours this. David puts first the general expression, “my words.” This he now divides into two parts, the low and the loud; the silent complaint of the heart, the unutterable sighs, which are understood

by Him who searches the heart, of which Paul also speaks in Romans viii. 26, 27; and the loud cry of the distressed soul for help, in the following verse. *בִּן* is not to be taken with Luther, and most modern expositors, in the sense of *to observe*, *to consider*, which the verb never has, when construed with the accusative, but in the sense of *understanding* or *perceiving*, which, as Muis has remarked, is favoured also by its connection with *meditation*.

Ver. 2. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God!* This address proclaims the ground of the Psalmist's, or the righteous man's right to demand help, and of his hope in regard to it. God is named King here, not on account of His resistless sovereignty over the whole earth, but on account of His special relation to Israel. As King, God cannot permit evil to triumph in His kingdom, and He cannot but defend him, who, as righteous, can address Him as *his* King. This address, therefore, reminds God candidly, as only a believer can, of His obligation to help: it is, at the same time, an exhortation of the Psalmist to himself, to trust in Divine help. Another reminder lies in the words, *for unto Thee do I pray*—where the *for* refers to the preceding imperative. David, as Calvin remarks, “sets out with the general principle, that those who call on God in their necessities, are never cast off by Him. He places himself in opposition to the *unbelieving*, who in misfortune, neglecting God, either consume their grief within themselves, or make complaints of it to men, and are unworthy, therefore, that God should take cognizance of them.”

Ver. 3. *My voice mayest Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I set in order my prayer to Thee, and look out.* Previously, the Psalmist had entreated the Lord generally to render help; now, he desires Him to make haste to perform the same. It is, says he, so soon as I awake, my first work in the day to flee to Thee: do Thou, therefore, hasten also to help me. Comp. in Ps. cxliii. 8, “Cause me to hear Thy favour in the morning,” with that in ver. 7, “Hear me speedily.” That *הַשְׁמַע* is to be taken optat., and is not, with Hitzig, to be translated, *hearest Thou*, is clear from the analogy of the corresponding verse just referred to, where the imperative is found, as also from the words, *I look out*, which, as to matter, equally contains a prayer. *עָרַךְ*, *to set in order*, is used of arranging the wood upon the altar in Gen. xxii. 9, 1 Kings xviii.

33; the bread upon the sacred table, Lev. xxiv. 8, comp. Ex. xl. 23, Lev. xxiv. 6. The matter which is here set in order, are the words of his prayer. Still the expression, "I will set in order," has not merely the force of "I will direct to Thee;" but the prayer, probably with a special allusion to the shew-bread, is described as a spiritual oblation, which the Psalmist prepares for the Lord with the break of day. *And then I look out.* פֶּסַח, speculari, namely, whether the answer, the help, approaches. The Psalmist, having done his own part, waits in faith that God also will do His. The image is taken from those who, during hostile attacks, look out from a high watch-tower, to see whether help is at hand. Comp. Hab. ii. 1, where the same image is more fully expressed. Micah vii. 7, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord (rather, I will look out in the Lord), I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." The Berleb. Bible: "One must keep on the watch, if one would receive anything from God, and wait with longing for the desired answer; also be constantly looking after the help, and giving heed to whatsoever, the Lord may speak." This verse shows that the Psalm is a morning prayer, just as the two preceding Psalms contained prayers for the evening. That the pious in Israel prayed at the same three periods, which the Christian Church has also consecrated to prayer, appears from Ps. lv. 17, "Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice." Of the morning prayer alone is mention made in Ps. lxxxviii. 13, "But unto Thee do I cry, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer surprise Thee."

Ver. 4. *For Thou art not a God whom wickedness pleases; the wicked dwelleth not with Thee.* The *for*, which connects vers. 4-6 with ver. 3, is only satisfactorily explained, when his deliverance from his enemies is considered as the object, though not expressly named, of the Psalmist's prayer, and of his earnest expectation: Hear my prayer for deliverance from mine enemies, for Thou art not a God that has pleasure in wickedness, etc. But mine enemies are wicked; therefore Thou must subdue them, and deliver me. Upon the number seven in the description of wickedness, Luther has remarked: "With seven words does the prophet accuse the ungodly preachers and their disciples, those who seek holiness by works." It is the less likely to have been an accident, as the number seven occurs again in vers. 9 and 10. שֶׁבַע is not to be regarded, with many exposi-

tors, as standing for *נָגַד עִמָּךְ*; nor may we, with Ewald, account for the accus. by saying, that to *dwell with* is here put for *to be confidential*, to know any one as a friend; for in other passages, such as Ps. cxx. 5, where the verb is in like manner joined with the accus., this modification of meaning is inadmissible. There it is used of such as dwell with any one by constraint, and unwillingly. The construction is rather to be accounted for by considering the *person* as comprehending its *property* in itself: "to inhabit the Lord," for, "to inhabit the house of the Lord." This supposition is strongly confirmed by the fact that *נָגַד בְּאֹהֶל* יהוה, "to dwell in the tabernacle of the Lord," usually is *נָגַד יְהוה*, that is, "to inhabit the Lord" (as we explain the words), denoting the near relation to the Lord, and His protection; comp. for example, Ps. xv. 1, lxi. 4. The figure is taken from him who receives a pilgrim, *נָגַד*, hospitably into his dwelling. Whosoever is received to such honour by God, he must take care not to pollute His pure dwelling with unrighteousness. He must be holy, even as God is holy.

Ver. 5. *The proud come not before Thine eyes, Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* They must not appear in His sight; a mark of the deepest abhorrence, taken from earthly kings, near whom none are allowed to come, excepting those who enjoy their favour. De Wette falsely: "They cannot bear Thy presence on account of their evil conscience," instead of: "*Thou wilt not bear their presence on account of Thy holiness.*" Hab. i. 13 is parallel, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity; wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, etc." *הוֹלָלִים*, *proud*, from *הָלַל*, *to shine*, then "to be proud," in Hithp. *to boast*. From the parallelism here and in other passages with "evil-doers" and "ungodly," some would judge the word to have a more general signification. But this is to be admitted only, in so far as pride, together with covetousness and lust, is considered in Scripture as one of the main roots of all sinful corruption, so that every proud and lofty one is, at the same time, an ungodly person, and a worker of iniquity. In regard to the object aimed at by this representation of the hatred of God toward the workers of iniquity, Calvin remarks: "It is an excellent conclusion: God hates unrighteousness, therefore He will take righteous vengeance on all unrighteous persons."

Ver. 6. *Thou destroyest them that speak lies; the Lord ab-*

hors the bloody and deceitful man. Berleb. Bible: "In us are selfish and vain thoughts, which, as liars, only seek after vanity, and would fill our souls therewith; but these, Lord, Thou wilt bring down by the sword and word of Thy mouth, and root out all falsehood in us."

Ver. 7. *And I, through Thy great favour, will come into Thy house, to worship in Thy fear toward Thy holy temple.* In the words *and I*, a contrast is presented to the enemies who are doomed to destruction. So also do the words, *in the greatness of Thy favour*, stand in opposition to the Lord's abhorrence of sinners expressed in the preceding verse. Coupled therewith is a reference to the greatness of the distress, which, irremediable by human means, called for a singular manifestation of Divine help. While mine enemies, whom the Lord abhors, perish, I, whom He loves as His pious worshipper, shall come, not through mine own power, but through the greatness of His favour, etc. This contrast to the Lord's abhorrence of the ungodly, is by itself a proof how falsely some expound: "In the greatness of My love towards thee." This exposition has not the slightest support even from the *usus loquendi*. הסר יהוה is never love to God, but always the grace or favour of God towards His people. It is also opposed by Ps. lxi. 13, 16, where "the multitude of God's tender mercies" is celebrated as the cause of deliverance.

The coming into the house of God, and worshipping toward His holy temple, is mentioned here only in respect to its occasion, only so far as its aim was to give thanks to God for his deliverance, and presupposes this. Comp. Ps. lxi. 13, "I will go into Thy house with burnt-offerings, I will pay Thee my vows." *In Thy fear*, corresponds to *in the greatness of Thy favour*. The fear of God, a reverent regard to Him, is the fruit of the manifestation of His fulness of love, of the display of His glory in the Psalmist's deliverance. As the product of God's manifestations, fear is not unfrequently named; for example, Gen. xxviii. 17, where, after one of God's richest manifestations of grace had been noticed, it is said, "Jacob was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place!" also Hab. iii. 1, "O Lord, I have heard Thy report (the report, viz., of Thy glorious deeds in behalf of Thy people), and was afraid." Completely mistaken is the sense which De Wette and others give to this verse, understanding it thus: "The Psalmist pronounces

himself blessed in opposition to the ungodly, in that he belongs to those who can approach God; he visits His temple and serves Him. But it is of God's great mercy, that he may do this." Against such a view it is enough to compare this verse with the corresponding 11th, which, like this, expresses, according to our view, the hope of deliverance. The manifest contrast to the miserable lot prepared by God for the wicked, vers. 4-6, requires that here the happy condition of the righteous should be described. Access to the outward sanctuary was free also to the ungodly, and it did not require "the fulness of the love of God" to keep open the way. The "fulness of the love of God," as contrasted with His annihilating abhorrence of the wicked, can only be considered here so far as it is the power which delivers the righteous. The expression, "in Thy fear," is, according to the view in question, torn away from its connection with the words, "in the greatness of God's favour." And, what is the main point, this explanation gives the first strophe, which is manifestly complete in itself, an unsatisfactory conclusion. The Psalmist had begun with a prayer for help and deliverance, grounded upon God's abhorrence of sin, in consequence of which He cannot but destroy the wicked, his enemies. The only conclusion we could expect, is the hope and confidence of help. But instead of this, the Psalmist is made to speak of his happiness in being able to visit the temple of the Lord—how, we are not told; and of the result of his prayer we learn absolutely nothing. *אלהיכל קדשך* is not, as many expositors take it, *in*, but "*to* Thy holy temple." The interior of the temple David was not allowed to enter. But he would, according to the custom of the worship then established, turn, at the time of prayer, towards the place where the gracious presence of the Lord had its seat, from whence also his aid had come. *הבית יהוה* was the dwelling-place of the Lord, not so named as being a great building, but from being His residence as King of Israel. The house where a king or prince dwells, is a palace, whether it be splendid or not. Hence the tabernacle bore this name equally with the subsequent temple. Of the former it is used in 1 Sam. i. 9, iii. 3: "And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was,"—passages which, with perfect arbitrariness (for there is no reason to consider *הבית* as exclusively used-for designating the temple), men have sought to get rid of by the remark, that the author

unconsciously carries back to an antecedent period, a word of later origin. But an incontestible proof that the word was applied also to the tabernacle, is furnished by Ps. xxxvii. From that word occurring in ver. 4, De Wette concludes the Psalm not to be one of David's. But he has overlooked the circumstance, that in ver. 6 of the same Psalm, the Psalmist vows to bring an offering to God in the tabernacle or tent-temple. It is undeniable, therefore, that at a time when the temple was still unbuilt, the holy tent was named הֵיכָל; first the old Mosaic tabernacle, then the tent which David erected over the ark of the covenant on Mount Zion. It is, besides, false to maintain, as is usually done, that the word denotes the Holy, in opposition to the Most Holy Place. Those who hold this view are perplexed with this passage, since the person praying could only so far direct himself to the הֵיכָל, as the Lord was throned there,—comp. Ps. xxviii. 2, where David stretches out his hands to the holiest of all; and 1 Sam. iii. 3, where the lamp belonging to the sanctuary is represented as being found in the Hekal. The right view is, that Hekal denotes the Holy and the Most Holy Place together—the temple in the strictest sense, as opposed to the outer courts. Only in a few passages, such as 1 Kings vi. 5, is it used specially to denote the Holy Place, where it is limited by being expressly distinguished from the Most Holy Place,—a relation similar to that of Israel and Judah, Judah and Jerusalem,—so that we cannot properly say, that Hekal of itself denotes the Holy Place, for the more limited idea is only conveyed by the context.

Ver. 8. The Psalmist makes here, as it were, a new onset. Just as upon his prayer joyful hope had followed, so here out of his hope a new prayer comes forth, to which new confidence attaches. The matter from vers. 8–12 runs parallel with vers. 3–7, first a prayer, then its ground, and lastly a hope.—*Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make Thy way smooth before my face.* The Psalmist prays the Lord, that He would display His righteousness in His dealings, and bring salvation to His servant. A great many expositors,—of more recent ones, De Wette, Ewald, Hitzig, Maurer,—translate “in the righteousness” which Thou requirest, which is well-pleasing to Thee. The words, “because of mine enemies,” i.e. from regard to them, that they may not triumph over me, if I should make a false step; “make straight Thy way before me,”



make easier for me the course of action, which Thou lovest. But the whole of this interpretation is certainly erroneous. The righteousness here spoken of is rather the attribute of God, according to which He gives to every one his own—befriends the pious, who confide in His promises, and destroys the ungodly. This is evident from the *for* in the next verse, which assigns the reason. How little this accords with the first exposition may appear from the remark of De Wette in the earlier editions of his Com.: “וְ, dropt out in the translation, is not here a proper logical *for*, and is often an expletive;” and also from the remark made in the fourth edit., on ver. 9, “the ground, on account of which God should uphold him in righteousness, and protect him against his enemies,”—which last words he is obliged to supply, though his exposition of the preceding verse does not justify him in doing so. The meaning is: Because mine enemies are so godless, but my cause and object are righteous, Thy righteousness demands that Thou shouldst guide me, as I can find no other resource,—shouldst make plain to me Thy way, the path by which Thou leadest me, and remove the mountains of difficulty which Thou hast now thrown in the way. This view is confirmed as the right one, by a comparison with ver. 5, where David pleads for help on the same ground, and also with ver. 12, where it is said, “Thou, O Lord, blessest the *righteous*.” It is a further confirmation, that this view alone brings the prayer here into a proper relation to the hope in ver. 11, which concerns not moral preservation, but salvation and blessing. Then, on no other interpretation can our verse be fitly connected with ver. 7, where not moral support, but salvation and deliverance are hoped for—and in particular, the words, “In Thy righteousness,” with “the greatness of Thy favour.” Finally, our interpretation is borne out by a great number of parallel passages in the Psalms, the meaning of which has in no small degree been perverted; for example, Ps. xxiii. 3, “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness;” Ps. xxv. 4, 5, “Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths: lead me in Thy truth, and teach me; for Thou art the God of my salvation;” Ps. xxvii. 11, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.” The expression “*in Thy righteousness*,” is, according both to the parallelism and the parallel passages, to be thus explained, that the righteousness of God is represented as the

way in which the Psalmist desires to be led, by which nothing more is meant, than that it should develop itself in what befell him. When the Psalmist pleads, "because of his enemies," it shows how much, being surrounded by powerful adversaries, he stood in need of help. Through the whole he has only to do with Divine aid against his enemies.

In the word הִיָּשֵׁר there is united a twofold reading. The consonants belong to that of the text, which must be pronounced הִיָּשֵׁר, the vowels to that of the gloss הִיָּשֵׁר. Both forms are the imperative in Hiph. of the verb יָשַׁר, to be straight. The form of the text is here, as always, to be preferred; for in Hiph. the original verbs פִּי almost always borrow their forms from the פִּי; comp. Ewald, p. 393. The Masorites have here, as very often, only substituted the grammatical regularity, to which they were also particularly led by a regard to Prov. iv. 25, where the form הִיָּשֵׁר is actually found. Just as in our text they satisfied their love for regularity and uniformity by substituting הִיָּשֵׁר for הִיָּשֵׁר, so in Isa. xlv. 2, for the same reason, they placed the Piel in the Kri instead of the Hiph. of the text.

Ver. 9. *For there is no uprightness in his mouth; their inward part is wickedness, their throat is an open sepulchre, they make smooth their tongue.* We remarked already, that here also the description of the wickedness of the enemies is completed in the number seven. The four points contained in our verse are obvious; and to these must be added those in ver. 10—their destructive counsels, the fulness of their transgressions, their rebellion against God. Our verse corresponds exactly to the 4th and 5th verses, and ver. 10 to the 7th. In both places, the seven fall into four and three. The *for* shows that vers. 9 and 10 lay the ground of the petition expressed in ver. 8. God must take the part of the Psalmist, and grant him deliverance, *for* his enemies are in the highest degree corrupt, are rebels against God, whom He, as the Holy One, cannot but discomfit. The suffixes refer to the adversaries in ver. 8. The use of the singular suffix at the first, is to be explained by the entire mass of enemies being represented by the Psalmist as one person, as personified ungodliness. The enemies are only *numerically* different; in respect to wickedness, there is no distinction among them. They are as a head with many members. "There is no uprightness in his mouth." They speak nothing but faithless deceit and lies. Comp. Ps. lxii. 4, "They bless with

their mouth, but they curse inwardly." "Their inward part" many explain simply by "their soul." But this is not allowable; for in the whole verse mention is always made of the bodily part that corresponds to the spiritual. So that here also, the *inward* as opposed to the *outward*—the *mouth* as the organ of *words*—denotes the *heart* as the seat of *feelings*. We too speak of the heart in the body. הֵי, from הוּה = הִיה, to be, properly accident, casus; then in a bad sense, an ill accident, misfortune, evil, and not simply such as one *suffers*, but, as here, such also as one *brings*—hurt, wickedness. "Their heart is wickedness," very expressive; it has so completely taken possession of their hearts, that there is no distinction between them. The *throat*, according to several, is introduced here as the organ of swallowing, to denote the insatiable thirst for destruction of his enemies. So Calvin: "He compares them to graves, as if he would say, They are all-devouring abysses; denoting thereby, their insatiable thirst to shed blood." But the throat is commonly used as an organ of *speech*; comp. Ps. cxlix. 6, cxv. 7, etc.; and that it must here also be regarded as the same, appears from the connection in which it stands with the mouth as an instrument of speech, with the heart as the source of speech, and with the tongue. The point of comparison between the throat and an open grave is, that each is pregnant with destruction. Their talk prepares destruction for those who approach them.—*They make smooth their tongue*, speak smoothly and hypocritically. Venema: "They pretend love to God and man, that they may the more easily impose on the credulous, and overwhelm them." Falsely many: *with the tongue*. לִשְׁנָם is accusative, governed by the verb יְחַלְקֵן, which in Hiph. is always transitive; and in connection with the accusative, "the tongue," or "the words," as in Prov. ii. 16, vii. 5, signify "to flatter."

Ver. 10. This verse, as to its matter, continues the plea for deliverance, grounded by the Psalmist on the corruptness of his enemies, which, according to the Divine righteousness, would necessitate their destruction. But in place of: Thou must or wilt hold them guilty on account of their counsels, etc., the imperative is introduced for liveliness of effect: *Hold them guilty, etc. Hold them guilty, O God; let them fall on account of their counsels; on account of the multitude of their crimes, overthrow them, for they have rebelled against Thee.* אָשָׁם signifies in Kal *to be guilty*; hence, in Hiph., in which it occurs only here, *to make*

or *hold guilty*. It is wrong to say, that the word in Hiph. exactly means *punish*. It is perfectly sufficient to take it as meaning "to make guilty," "to represent as guilty," in so far as the guilty is thereby first exhibited before the eyes of men in his real character: comp., for example, Ps. xxxiv. 21, "Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be guilty." Michaelis: *Reos eos pronuntia, ut qui multis modis rei sunt*. Luther: "The word properly signifies such a decision and judgment, as would show and manifest what sort of men they are, when their ungodly nature is disclosed, and is made known to every one." In the expression *יָפֵל מִכְעָצוֹתֵיהֶם*, the preposition is best taken as the causal מ: comp. Hos. xi. 6, where the same compound is used in the same sense; "on account, because, of their counsels." This exposition is confirmed by the analogy of the following clause, "Because of the multitude of their crimes;" and also, "*For* they have rebelled against Thee." Only when thus understood, can the clause fall into the circle of the number seven. The cause of their perdition, and of the Psalmist's deliverance from them, is, that their mouth is without uprightness, etc. These grounds decide against other expositions. Not a few, following in the footsteps of Luther—that they fall from their own plans:—*let them fall, perish from their counsels, i.e.* without their being able to execute them. Others: "Let their counsels become vain," *יָפֵל מֶן* like the Latin, *spe excidere, ausis excidere*. But against this, it is to be urged, that no example can be produced of this signification. Then there is the parallel, "overthrow them," which shows that *יָפֵל* must here mean "fall" in its proper sense. Comp. Ps. xxxvi. 12, "There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise:" Ps. exli. 10. Still others: "Let them fall by their counsels, or through them."—*בָּרַב* signifies *prop. in the multitude of*. The effect rests in its cause. *For against Thee have they rebelled*. The verbs which express an affection, particularly those which mark a hostile feeling, are commonly connected with the object to which the effect adheres, by the prep. ב. Since the Psalm, as already shown, refers not specially to David, but to the righteous generally, we must not expound: "For not against me, but against Thee, have they rebelled;" the contrast is one between enmity toward men, and rebellion against God. The Psalmist's enemies must sustain a defeat, for they are rebels

against God, whose sacred rights they trample under foot. God would not be God, if He should suffer them to go unpunished. The wishes of the Psalmist are at the same time so many predictions; for he prays only for that which God, on the supposition that his enemies do not change—that is expressly stated in Ps. vii. 12, and is always to be supposed in such cases—must, according to His nature, necessarily do; the request, *hold them guilty*, has this for its ground and justification: Thou must hold them guilty. For what God does, and must do, that man not merely *may*, but *should* wish. So already August. Sermo. 22 ad Script.: “The prophet utters in the form of a wish, what he certainly foresees, will take place, showing simply, as appears to me, that we may not be dissatisfied with the known decree of God, which He has firmly and unalterably fixed.” Of a thirst for revenge, there can be no question in cases like the preceding; it is not against personal enemies as such, but only against enemies of God, that the Psalmist pretends to give judgment.

Ver. 11. *And all those that put their trust in Thee shall rejoice; they shall for ever shout for joy, and Thou wilt protect them; and in Thee shall they be joyful, who love Thy name.* The *and* connects this with the announcement indirectly contained in the preceding context, of the overthrow of the wicked. That the Futures of the verbs are not, with Luther and others, to be taken optatively (let them rejoice, etc.), but in the sense of the Future, expressing not a prayer, but a hope, is clear from the analogy of the corresponding eighth verse. That those who trust upon the Lord, are not, as most expositors think, such as are different from the Psalmist, rejoicing at the deliverance granted to him, but rather those very persons who participate in the deliverance,—that the gladness and rejoicing here, are considered only in respect of their object and occasion: “they shall rejoice, etc.,” as if he had said: “Thou wilt, through Thy salvation, afford them cause for joy,”—is evident, 1. From the analogy of ver. 7, where, in like manner, the hope of salvation is indirectly declared,—the joy and rejoicing here correspond to the coming into the temple there: 2. From the circumstance, that if the Psalmist spoke of others, who would be glad at his deliverance, this object of their delight would probably have been more minutely described: 3. From the words, “they shall for ever shout for joy,” which, as others could not possibly be

supposed to rejoice perpetually at the deliverance of the Psalmist, necessarily imply, that the persons rejoicing are the delivered themselves, and that the rejoicing is spoken of only as the consequence of the deliverance; Thou wilt give them perpetual cause for rejoicing: 4. From the consideration, that "they shall rejoice," "they shall shout for joy," "they shall be joyful," stand entirely on a par with, "and Thou wilt protect them,"—which the defenders of the exposition we oppose, in vain strive to separate from the preceding and succeeding context, rendering: "since Thou protectest them," or, "whom Thou protectest:" 5. And, finally, our view is confirmed by the entirely general character of the Psalm; so that it cannot appear strange, if, at the close, the plurality concealed under the unity should clearly come to light, and the righteous at large should be substituted in the place of the righteous individual. The meaning, therefore, is simply this: Whereas destruction befalls impious rebels, salvation is experienced by the pious.—Upon חוֹסֵי־כָךְ, comp. on Ps. ii. 12. The former is the full pausal form; Ewald, p. 137. חָסַךְ is Fut. in Hiph. from כָּסַךְ, to cover, with עַל, to cover upon, to protect.—*Those that love Thy name.* The name of God never stands in the Old Testament as a mere designation, but always emphatically, as an expression of His nature. Hence, "to love the name of the Lord," is as much as to "love Him," so far as He has manifested His nature. If God were nameless, He could not be the object of love; for then He could not manifest Himself, as the name is the necessary product of the manifestation, *that* in which the Church gathers up the impression which it has received through the manifestation, so that the name only needs to be named, in order to renew the impression.

Ver. 12. The Psalmist here lays the foundation of the hope, expressed in the preceding verse. The pious shall have occasion to rejoice, on account of the salvation of God; *for* the manner of God, founded in His nature, is to bless the righteous, or him who trusts in God, and loves His name. *For Thou blessest the righteous, O Lord; with favour Thou compasses him about as with a shield.* The Fut. is used in the sense of *custom*. Hope in regard to that which the Lord will do, is only well founded when it rests on what He constantly does. The כַּנֶּה is prop. to be rendered: "as a shield," *i.e.* covers. The comparison is often not fully expressed, when a mere indication will suffice;

for example, Is. i. 25, "I will cleanse thy dross, as soap," that is, as soap cleanses; comp. Ew. p. 614. Just as improper as to supply a כ is it to maintain, that צנה stands in the accus. governed by the verb. (De Wette.) Then the shield would be not that which covers, but that which is covered. חַטְרִי is Fut. in Kal. To take it as Fut. in Hiph. with Rosenmüller, is unwarranted. The Hiph. is never used in the sense of *covering* or *crowning*, but only in a single place, Isa. xxiii. 8, as Denom. from עָטַר, a *crown*, in the sense of "distributing crowns." Luther is not exactly right in rendering: Thou crownest him with favour. The signification of crowning does not belong to the Kal, but only to the Piel.

## PSALM VI.

Surrounded by enemies, the Psalmist cries to God for help, vers. 1-7. He receives from God the assurance that He will hear him, and calls upon his enemies to desist from their projects, since the Lord has vouchsafed to him support, vers. 8-10. The two main divisions here marked, are very obvious. Koester divides the first into three strophes, 1-3, 5 and 6, 7 and 8; so that the measure would be 3. 2. 2. 3. But it is better to divide the Psalm into clear strophes of two verses, with a beginning and concluding verse. Then the strophical arrangement exactly agrees with the divisions in sense. In vers. 2 and 3 the Psalmist grounds his prayer for deliverance on the fact, that through suffering he had become quite exhausted, faint in body and soul. In 4 and 5 he goes so far as to declare, that he had come nigh to death, and was consequently in danger of losing his highest good, that of being able to praise God, which God in His mercy ought not to take from him. In vers. 6 and 7, he justifies his affirmation, that he had reached the precincts of the dead: consuming grief at the malice of his enemies had exhausted the springs of his life. Vers. 8 and 9 form the strophe of his acceptance and confidence. The first and last verses contain the quintessence of the whole; vers. 2-7 being simply a further expansion of ver. 1, and ver. 10 drawing the conclusion from vers. 8 and 9. If we bring vers. 1 and 10 together, we have the Psalm *in nuce*.

Traces of a formal arrangement, apart from the division into

strophes, may be perceived. The Psalm has its course in the number ten; it contains, as it were, a decalogue for those who are sadly oppressed by their enemies. Further, we cannot look upon it as accidental, that, in accordance with the superscription *according to the eight*, the name of God occurs in it precisely eight times. The fact, also, that in the first part the name of God is found just five times, cannot be overlooked, when viewed in connection with the whole number of verses, ten. It would seem that the author wished in this way to mark the first part as the one half of his decalogue. See on the five, as the broken, half-completed number, Bachr Symbolik Th. I. p. 183. The repetition thrice of the name of God, in the second part, makes one just the more inclined to perceive a reference to the thrice repeated name of God in the Mosaic blessing, the fulfilment of which in himself the Psalmist here triumphantly announces, especially as in Ps. iv. 7, and elsewhere frequently in the Psalms, there are distinct verbal allusions to the same.

The superscription ascribes the Psalm to David, and there is certainly nothing to throw a doubt upon its accuracy. What makes David so great—the deep feeling of his sins, and his unworthiness before God, united with firm confidence that God will not withdraw His favour from those who implore it with a broken heart—is all uttered here. Hitzig, indeed, maintains that the Psalmist exhibits a different character from that of David,—a desponding spirit, which permits itself to be easily dismayed,—a weak, languishing heart, certainly not that of a warrior; David did not behave so unmanfully when in danger of death, but always discovered a lively confidence in God, which is wanting here. To begin with the last point, that the Psalmist does not abandon himself to a comfortless despair, but has a lively confidence in God, is evident from his addressing a prayer full of expectation for help from the Lord. But if any one might overlook this in the prayer, he cannot fail to perceive it in the second part, which breathes nothing but triumphant confidence. That in David, however, when heavily oppressed with suffering, the *natural* man sunk not less than with the Psalmist here, is capable of abundant proof from his history. According to 1 Sam. xxx. 6, “David was greatly distressed, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” According to 2 Sam. xii. 16 sq., he fasted and wept for seven long days, after the prophet announced to him the death of his child. In 2 Sam.



xv. 30, he is said to "have gone up Mount Olivet weeping, and with his head covered,"—traits which ill agree with the ideal of a great man formed by the world. The whole argument rests upon the transference of this ideal to a sphere to which it does not belong. That supposed greatness of soul which considers suffering as a plaything, above which one should rise with manly courage, is not to be met with in Scripture: there we find constantly faint, weak and dissolving hearts, whose strength and consolation are in God alone. This circumstance arises from more than one cause. 1. Suffering has quite another aspect to the members of God's Church than to the world. While the latter regard it only as the effect of accident, which one should meet with manly courage, the pious man recognises in every trial the visitation of an angry God, a chastisement for his sins. This is to him the real sting of the suffering, from which it derives its power to pierce into the marrow and bone. "Rightly to feel sin," says Luther, "is the torture of all tortures." He who considers sufferings in that light cannot without impiety attempt to cast it to the winds. He must regard it as his duty to allow it to go to his heart; and if this is not the ease, even that must become again the object of his pungent sorrow. To make light of tribulations is equivalent, in the view of Scripture, to making light of God. 2. "The tenderer the heart, the deeper the pain." Living piety makes the heart soft and tender, refines all its sensibilities, and, consequently, takes away the power of resistance, which the world possesses, from the roughness of its heart. Many sources of pain are opened up in the Christian, which are closed in the ungodly. Love is much more deeply wounded by hatred, than hatred itself; righteousness sees wickedness in a quite different light from what wickedness itself does; a soft heart has goods to lose, of which a hard one knows nothing. 3. The pious man has a friend in heaven, and on that account has no reason to be violently overcome by his sorrow. He permits the floods thereof quietly to pass over him; lets nature take its free, spontaneous course, knowing well, that besides the natural principle, another also exists within him, and that the latter develops power in the proportion in which the former gains its rights—that according to the depths of the pain, is the height of the joy derived from God—that every one is consoled according to the measure of the sufferings which he has borne—that the

meat never comes but from the eater, and honey from the terrible. On the contrary, whosoever lives in the world without God, he perceives that, having lost himself, he has lost all. He girds himself up, gnashes at his pain, does violence to nature, seeks distractions, endeavours to supply to nature on the one side what it lacks on the other; and thus he succeeds in obtaining the mastery over his pain, so long as God pleases. 4. The pious man has no reason to prevent himself and others from seeing into his heart. His strength is in God, and so he can lay open his weakness. The ungodly, on the other hand, consider it as a reproach to look upon themselves in their weakness, and to be looked upon by others in it. Even when inwardly dissolved with pain, he feigns freedom from it, so long as he can.

What relation to sufferings is the right one, may be seen from the consequences to both classes. The pious man, regarding all suffering as a punishment, suffers it to lead him to repentance, and derives from it the fruit of righteousness. He, on the other hand, who looks upon suffering merely as the sport of accident, thereby deprives himself of all blessing from it. And while, in this respect, he is not the better for his suffering, he is decidedly the worse in another. He only gathers himself together, only raises himself above his suffering, in such a way as to strengthen as much as possible the fancy of his own worth, dignity, and excellence; and in proportion as pride grows, love decays; hardness becomes his inseparable companion. So that he in reality feeds upon his own fat, and quenches his thirst with his own heart's blood; and those words apply here, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" But suffering, when endured in faith, serves to free the heart of its natural hardness, to make it softer, and to open it to love. Finally, only the lighter sufferings can find consolation apart from God, even at this dear rate. Whereas no misfortune can crush the righteous, however great it may be—for he strengthens himself in God, whose power is infinite—on the contrary, the man who trusts in himself bears up only so long as "fate," or in truth, He who sends the affliction, permits. Every moment he may be precipitated into the abyss of despair. He who never fainted, who mocked at the faintings of believers, and spake in a contemptuous tone of the "plaintive Psalms," must then feel utterly undone. Human strength, even though everything be done to increase it, is still but a

limited resource: it needs only find its proper antagonist to be wounded in the heel; then it gives way, and, along with the steadiness gained by force, vanishes also that which was feigned. Nothing is better fitted to show the insufficiency of all human power in the struggle against suffering, than the confession of King Frederick II., who spared no cost to elevate this power, and whose great and mighty soul certainly accomplished all that can be accomplished in that field. He says, among other places in the Ep. to D'Alembert, sec. 12, p. 9: "It is unfortunate, that all who suffer are forced flatly to contradict Zeno; for there is none but will confess pain to be a great evil." P. 12: "It is a noble thing to rise above the disagreeable accidents to which we are exposed, and a moderate stoicism is the only means of consolation for the unfortunate. But whenever the stone, the gout, or the bull of Phalaris mix in the scene, the frightful shrieks which escape from the sufferers, leave no doubt that pain is a very real evil." Again, p. 16: "When a misfortune presses us, which merely affects our person, self-love makes it a point of honour to withstand vigorously this misfortune; but the moment we suffer an injury which is for ever irreparable, there is nothing left in Pandora's box which can bring us consolation, besides, perhaps, for a man of my advanced years, the strong conviction that I must soon be with those who have gone before me (*i.e.* in the land of nothingness). The heart is conscious of a wound, the Stoic says indeed to himself, 'thou shouldst feel no pain;' but I do feel it against my will; it consumes, it lacerates me; an internal feeling overcomes my strength, and extorts from me complaints and fruitless groans."

We have not extended our remarks further than the subject demanded; for what Hitzig urges against this Psalm is but a particular shoot of that modern cast of thought, which finds a stumblingblock in the tone of deep lamentation that pervades the Psalms. Hence it appeared proper to employ this opportunity, in order, once for all, to cut up such objections by the root.

It is of importance for the exposition, to determine somewhat closely from the Psalm itself the situation in which the speaker was placed. From ver. 7, and vers. 8-10, it appears that he was sorely pressed with enemies. This serves of itself sufficiently to manifest the objectionableness of that view which represents the distress as consisting in a mere corporeal illness. There are certainly passages, such as ver. 2, which could not,

without the greatest violence, be understood of anything but of exhaustion of all bodily powers. But the whole becomes plain, when we represent to ourselves the position of the speaker thus: His distress proceeded at first from external enemies. But upon this arose another of a far heavier kind. He saw in that outward distress a punishment of his past sins, which now returned upon his soul with the weight of an oppressive load. He fell into a severe conflict, which left even his body weak and impoverished. At length he gives vent to his oppressed soul in this supplication; and then to his deep notes of lamentation, succeeds the most triumphant tone of joy. Now he mocks at outward distress, and in spirit sees his enemies already vanquished. De Wette and Hitzig, without the least ground, give the Psalm a national reference, and suppose, that under the image of a suffering individual, is represented the Israelitish people in exile. Not the slightest trace is to be found of such a reference. When De Wette appeals to the great resemblance this has to public songs of a plaintive nature, as chap. iii. of Lam., he overlooks the fact, that these poems, descriptive of a nation's grief, were imitations of personal poems of a like nature. Ewald remarks, in opposition to De Wette, of this and similar Psalms: "No exposition of such poems can be more erroneous than that which considers the representation of a severe illness as figurative, or which connects therewith the idea of a whole people's lamentation being contained in it, instead of that of a single individual." But we must not, on the other hand, attribute too much importance to the disease,—must not take it as something independent. The second part speaks decidedly against this. Inasmuch as the Psalmist here only expresses his triumphant confidence, that the Lord will deliver him from his enemies, and never mentions bodily sickness, such sickness can only have been the result of hostile attacks, the consequence of the anxiety which they occasioned him; hence, when the cause ceased, the effect ceased. The considerations which oppose the reference to mere bodily trouble, also oppose the exposition of Luther and others, who regard the Psalm as relating to a high spiritual conflict in the hour of death. "It is not to be supposed," says Luther, "that all Christians are afflicted with the vexation and painful trials of which this Psalm speaks; for all are not exercised with the same kind of tribulation, although God tries all with many tribulations and hardships

—He contends here with death and hell, a battle which is not waged with men, nor concerning temporal or spiritual temptations, but in the spirit within, nay, without and above the spirit in that last struggle, when no one either sees, or hears, or feels, save alone that Spirit, who with unutterable groans prays and intercedes for the saints." The words, "because of all mine enemies," in ver. 7, and "depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity," in ver. 8, are quite inexplicable on this view.

As the Psalm does not contain a single feature of a personal kind, it is highly probable that David here expresses the feelings of those who are vexed to death with the long-continued assaults of malicious enemies. For this view, perhaps, vers. 6 and 7 may be adduced, where the profound grief is described in a manner which seems to indicate a supposed, rather than an actual position. David's desire is to impress on the minds of his companions in tribulation that even at the worst they ought not to despair: the desolation itself should be converted into a source of comfort, in that, on the ground thereof, we may implore God for help, who is ever ready to assist His own, when things are at the worst,—so that the lowest depth of sorrow is a sure harbinger of salvation, the approach of death a pledge of life. This general characteristic of the Psalm was perceived by Luther: "I conceive that we have here a common lesson and instruction, which is suited to every Christian who is plunged in such distress."

It is of course plain, that what is here said primarily of the oppression of enemies, may be, substantially, equally applied to every other sort of trouble. The particular is the accident—what is true of the species is true of the kind, and of every other species of the kind. The remarks of the Berleburg Bible on, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity:" "Depart from me, ye false tormenting accusations, ye rage and fury of menacing spirits and powers, that terrify me to death, and have shut up my blessed life as in the abyss of hell; ye are the real evil-doers, whom my external foes merely represent,"—are perfectly correct, when considered as a theological exposition, but not as a grammatical historical one. That the special kind of affliction with which the Psalm is occupied does not so prominently appear under the New Testament dispensation, so that many cannot understand these incessant complaints regarding the malice of enemies, is a mighty proof of the world-transforming power of Christianity.

In regard to the principle which forms the basis of the Psalm, viz. that outward suffering is a chastisement for sin, nothing can be more superficial than to maintain, that this view is peculiar to the lower stage of the Old Testament. The same precisely is found in the New Testament; for example, in the declarations of our Lord Himself; John v. 14; and Luke v. 20, xiii. 1, etc. In the first passage, sickness is threatened as a punishment for sin; in the second, taken away as such; in the third, the Lord threatens, on occasion of a heavy calamity, a similar calamity to all, if they repented not,—implying, therefore, that the evil already inflicted was to be regarded as a punishment for sin. If the suffering be not viewed as a punishment, it cannot be reconciled with the Divine righteousness, it loses all its influence for good, and it is no longer a call to repentance. The only error is to refer the suffering to some special sin, to some coarse offence, instead of to sin in general,—an error characterized as such by our Lord in John ix. 2, 3. Far, therefore, from turning up the nose at the religious standpoint of the old covenant, we should rather follow the admonition of Muis: “As often as we are visited with sickness, or any other suffering, we should, after the example of David, call our sins to remembrance, and flee to God’s compassion; not like the ungodly, who ascribe their evil, as well as their good, to any cause rather than God, and hence are never led, either by the one to repentance, or by the other to gratitude. Sickness or calamity is not to be estimated according to the mind of the flesh, but of the spirit; and we must reflect, that if God afflicts us, He deals with us as sons, that He may chasten and improve us.”

שְׁמִינִי is taken by many expositors for a musical instrument, and because שְׁמִי signifies *eight*, the kind of instrument is generally considered as a guitar with eight strings. It is impossible, however, that “the eight” can denote an instrument of eight cords. Besides, both here and in Ps. xii., the musical instrument is mentioned in addition, as also in 1 Chron. xv. 21. The correct explanation is given by those who take it for an indication of the time. The שְׁ is then put to mark the relation of the particular to the general; that which forms its substratum, upon which it is laid, and according to which it is measured and regulated. But our ignorance of Heb. music renders all more minute explanations impossible.

Ver. 1. *O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten*

*me in Thy hot displeasure.* Calvin: "I acknowledge, Lord, that I am indeed worthy of being destroyed by Thee; but as I am not in a condition to sustain Thy power, deal with me, not according to my desert, but rather pardon the sins, through which I have drawn Thine indignation upon me." Most expositors remark with De Wette: "The sufferer prays not for a removal, but only for an alleviation of the calamity." So also Luther: "This he regards not, nay, he will readily yield to be punished and chastened; but he begs that it may be done in mercy and goodness, not in anger and fury. . . . Therefore the prophet teaches us here, that there are two rods of God, one of mercy and goodness, another of anger and fury. Hence Jeremiah prays, chap. x. 24, 'O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing.'" But that this exposition, flowing from an unseasonable comparison of the above passage in Jeremiah, is unsound, is evident from this, that the Psalmist, in what follows, always begs that chastisement in general may be taken away; but especially from the assurance in the second part, where he still experiences nothing but what he had prayed for (comp. "The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer"), not merely of an alleviation of his suffering, but of an entire removal of it. The contrast is, therefore, not between a chastisement in love and a chastisement in anger, but between a loving deliverance and a chastisement, which always proceeds from a principle of anger. The sufferer prays that, as matters had come to an extremity with him, and his powers of endurance were now completely exhausted, the sun of grace might shine through the cloud of indignation, by which it had been so long obscured. Whereas the ungodly is subject to Divine wrath alone, the righteous, though always at the same time a sinner, is an object of Divine love, even in the midst of wrath; which love must manifest itself as soon as the expression of anger has fulfilled its purpose, and the sufferer is brought to the verge of destruction, which can alight only on the wicked. God does not deal in a soft way with His own: He consumes what remains in them of sin by hard sufferings, but He always orders it so that they are able to bear it; when it has proceeded to a certain point, then He turns, and, instead of concealed grace (for even the exhibition of anger has a part to serve in the work of grace), there is now given an open manifestation of it. But that the sufferer

belongs to the number of the righteous, for whom the exchange from anger into grace is certain, he makes to appear by this, that though he feels nothing but anger, he still sees the light of grace shining through the midst of thick darkness. This he alone can do, who is closely related to God, and has a living faith. In the midst of distress, to pray for grace, to hope for grace, is a sure sign of being in the state of grace, a clear pledge that grace may be looked for. Luther : "This Psalm then teaches us, that when one is pried with such assaults, he must have recourse to no other refuge than to the angry Lord Himself ; but that is a matter of difficulty and labour, and is always to believe against hope, Rom. iv. 18, and to strive against impossibilities.—But it is carefully to be borne in mind, that they who experience such distress should adhere with their whole heart to the doctrine of this Psalm, viz. that they should not let their feelings carry them too far, should not howl and cry, nor seek for human consolation ; but should stand out against the heaviest trials, and suffer the hand of God, and, with the prophet here, apply nowhere but to the Lord, and say, Ah ! Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, and chasten me not in Thy hot displeasure. When men do not conduct themselves in this prudent way, they fall, to their great hurt, out of the hand of God, who in this manner heals and purifies them ; especially if they seek consolation in a worldly way, and have recourse to some poor creature, the issue cannot be otherwise with them. If the clay, while being turned, falls out of the hand of the potter, it becomes more completely shattered than before, insomuch that it is useless, and the potter throws it away as good for nothing."—הוֹכִיחַ to reprove. But the discourse here is of a *sermo realis*. God *reproves* the sinner's guilt through the *sufferings* which He lays upon him. It is incorrect to say, that the verb here signifies precisely "to punish by deeds," but elsewhere, "to punish with words." חָמָה prop. *heat, glow*, then "the glow of anger."

Ver. 2. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am faint ; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are terrified.* The Psalmist, renouncing all disputes with God, and recognising thoroughly the righteousness of his sufferings, appeals alone to the Divine compassion. In this he lays down for his foundation the principle, that God can never suffer His own wholly to perish ; and thus supporting himself, entreats help from the Lord, since matters had already gone to extremities with him. Muis : "He deals with



God as with a father, and sets before Him his pain, in order to move Him to the communication of aid." Such childlike confidence, far from being excluded by the conviction, that sufferings have the nature of punishment, only grows upon this soil, and the one disappears with the other. *Withered, faint*, properly of plants, cannot, on account of the Patach, be the partic. in Pual with the ו dropt, but must be the pret., which, with the relative word intended to belong to it, is a substitute for the adjective — prop. *I am one who is faint*. The pret. is used precisely in this way in Isa. xxviii. 16. That the *healing* is not here to be taken for *delivering, helping* in general, is clear from the declaration, "I am faint, and my bones are terrified." The healing, therefore, must be primarily understood of the removal of his state of bodily distress. But the means of healing is the repulsing of the enemies, with which the bodily exhaustion would cease of itself. The words, "My bones are terrified," are admirably explained by Luther: "It is certain, that with those who suffer such assaults, their bones are so terrified in their body, that they cannot even do what bones are meant to do in the body. Just as, on the other hand, we see that those who have a merry heart, overflowing with joy, have also strong bones, apt to leap, and capable of lifting up and bearing along with them the heavy and sluggish body; so that they feel as if joy were spread through their bones, like as when one pours something moist or liquid over the whole body, which refreshes it, as Solomon says, Prov. iii. 8, 'It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow (pro. moistening) to thy bones.' Where the heart, then, is troubled and sorrowful, the whole body is faint and broken; and where, again, the heart is full of gladness, the body becomes so much the stronger and more agile. Therefore, the prophet here speaks rightly, when he prays the Lord to heal him, and was so weak in body, that he could not stand upon his legs. So mighty and violent is the power of such assaults, not leaving a corner in the whole frame that is not appalled and bruised thereby.— But 'man cannot love God, much less have a heart-felt desire after Him, without being vexed with such great troubles, which constrain and drive him to seek God's help and consolation with a vehement cry of the soul, especially when he has been sunk deep in sin, and his life has been spent in an indolent, corrupt death of flesh."

Ver. 3. *And my soul is greatly terrified; and Thou, O Lord,*

*how long?* The soul is placed in opposition to the bones. The general complaint, "I am faint," the Psalmist carries out first in reference to his body, then to his soul. In the expression, *how long*, there is not properly an ellipsis, but an aposiopesis, occasioned by the violence of the pain, which caused the words to escape in a broken manner. This *Domine quosque* was Calvin's motto. The most intense pain under trouble could never extort from him another word. Luther: "He not merely begs God to hasten to him with help, but, as one impatient of delay, he complains that this is very painful to him, since in all emotions of the heart, such as fear, love, hope, hatred, and the like, a state of suspense and delay is vexatious and difficult to be borne, as Solomon says in Prov. xiii. 12, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' But in troubles of this kind, delay is the most severe and insupportable pain."

Ver. 4. *Return, O Lord, deliver my soul; Oh save me for Thy mercies' sake.* The words, *my soul*, are not here placed instead of the personal pronoun. The Psalmist feels himself so wretched in soul and body, that he believes himself to be near death. This clearly appears from the following verse. But the soul is the principle of life. Luther: "Not for mine own merits, which indeed are nothing, as is enough and more than enough proved by this terror at Thine anger, and my trembling bones, and the sadness of my heart and soul. Therefore, help me for Thy mercies' sake, that Thine honour and the glory of Thy compassion may be for ever connected with my deliverance."

Ver. 5. *For in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave (in sheol) who shall give Thee praise?* David had prayed, that his God would deliver him, and not permit him to sink in despair. He seeks to move Him to grant the prayer by the consideration, that the dead do not praise Him and celebrate His goodness, but only the living. Comp. Ps. cxv. 17, 18, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence; but we shall bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore." Ps. lxxxviii. 10: "Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise Thee?" Comp. also Ps. xxx. 9; Isa. xxxviii. 18. According to the common explanation, the thought that the Lord is not remembered and praised in death is here urged as a ground of deliverance, inasmuch as God Himself, to whom the praise of the righteous is

the most acceptable sacrifice, must therefore be inclined to preserve them in life. The supposition on which the ground thus made out proceeds, viz. that the Lord delights in the praise of His people, is no more peculiar to the Old Testament than to the New. Comp., for example, Heb. xiii. 15. As the living God has made men for His praise, He rejoices when this end of His creation is fulfilled, when the fruit of the lips that praise Him is offered. The God of the Bible is as far removed from the cold indifference and self-satisfaction of the Stoic's God, as the Christian is from a Stoic. But for *us* this ground receives its full meaning, only when we place eternal death in the room of the bodily, agreeably to the clearer light which we have received regarding the state after death, and to the vast change which New Testament times have effected in reference to that future state. See the treatise on the Doctrine of the Psalms, where also will be investigated more fully the import of sheol. *Then* ought we also, having found consolation, to venture to plead the same ground before God, and, appealing to it, beg Him to turn away from us the troubles which threaten to shut our mouths for ever to His praise. There is another way, however, of explaining the ground:—the prayer for deliverance may so far be grounded on the fact of one's not being able to praise God in death, as the praise of God was the Psalmist's most blessed employment, to be deprived of which would be to him the heaviest loss. And this view is strongly confirmed by the preceding words, "for Thy mercies' sake," which naturally lead us to expect some reason connected with the Psalmist's own interest. It would be contrary to the love of God to rob His own of their highest good, to make them inexpressibly miserable, by closing their mouths from praising Him, before the time fixed by the general law of mortality. Understood thus, the words afford a deep, and for us humiliating, insight into the heart of pious men under the old covenant. To consider the praise of God as the highest good, as the most essential thing in life, to love life only as furnishing the opportunity for that, is the highest proof of near fellowship with God.—The constr. of הורה with ל is explained by a modification of the meaning: to render praise to any one.

Ver. 6. The Psalmist shows in this and the following verse, that it was not in vain he asked for deliverance, that he had not without cause described himself as one whose mouth death

was threatening to shut up from praising God. Consuming grief preyed upon his heart, and would soon carry him away. *I am weary with my groaning, every night I make my bed to swim; I make my couch to dissolve with my tears.* The groaning is here represented as the cause of all his exhaustion. The prep. **ב**, however, commonly marks the relation of effect to the cause. *I make my couch to dissolve.* מִסַּח is of one meaning with the more common form מִסַּח, to dissolve. Calvin: "Those who have even moderately experienced what it is to contend with the fear of eternal death, will find no straining in these words."

Ver. 7. *My eye consumes from vexation; it waxes old, because of all my enemies.* עָרַב, "to fall in, to go to decay," is used of the eye in Ps. xxxi. 9, as also of the soul. Some very improperly maintain, that the eye here is taken for the face, in which sense it never occurs. The eye is a mirror and gauge of soundness, not merely as respects the soul, but also the body. By long-continued suffering, the eye sinks, becomes dull and languid, like that of an aged person. Both verbs are hence perfectly suitable to the eye. נָעַם may here be appropriately taken in its common signification of displeasure, vexation. It is not necessary to give it the sense of *grief*, which is never ascribed to it without arbitrariness. Nay, the former sense is here recommended by the corresponding expression, "because of mine enemies," where the **ב** again is to be explained thus, that the effect is considered as rooted in its cause.

Ver. 8. David, as Calvin remarks, assumes now, as it were, a new person. He announces, that God has heard his prayer, and admonishes his enemies to desist from him, as he had now again come under God's protection. Amyrald: "Those violent motions, in which, after the most bitter and dolorous lamentations and testimonies concerning human weakness, faith suddenly regains the ascendant, and, through the offered hope of deliverance, sheds light and serenity over the mind, are very common in the Psalms." Koester falsely: The Psalmist, in thankfulness, renounces the fellowship of sinners: this is contradicted by a comparison of the verse with the preceding context—also ver. 10. *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping.* The Berleb. Bible: "So soon can the righteous Lord change everything, and illuminate with the rays of His love the dark earth of men, which was before covered with thick clouds, while in the depth

of their heart also all was dark." It remarks on the *for*: "The winter is past, the rain is gone, the turtle-dove is again heard." *The voice of my weeping*, my audible weeping. Roberts, *Orient. Illustr. of the Sacred Scrip.* p. 316: "Silent grief is not much known in the East. Hence when the people speak of lamentation, they say, Have I not heard the voice of his mourning?" It is not necessary to give to שָׁמַע here, and in similar places, the sense of "hearken." If God *hears* the cry of His own, He also *accepts* of it: if He will not do this, then He turns away His ear from it.

Ver. 9. *The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord receives my prayer.* The matter of this prayer we learn from ver. 10, where the Psalmist more minutely describes what he obtains in consequence of his being heard.

Ver. 10. *All mine enemies shall be ashamed and terrified; they shall return, be ashamed suddenly.* Their being terrified points back to vers. 2, 3. The terror passes over from the Psalmist to those who prepared it for themselves, according to God's righteous retribution. שָׁבוּ יֹשְׁבוּ may be expounded by, "They shall be again ashamed;" see Ewald, p. 631. But a more expressive meaning is yielded, if we take the word as standing by itself, and render, "they shall return." David sees his enemies, gathered around him for the attack, all at once faint-heartedly give way. In confirmation of this speaks the "Depart from me," ver. 8, and still more, the "Return, O Lord," in ver. 4. The returning of the Lord, and the turning back of the enemies, stand related to each other as cause and effect.

## PSALM VII.

The Psalmist prays the Lord for help against his cruel and blood-thirsty enemies, vers. 1, 2. He protests that he had given no occasion to their hatred, vers. 3-5. In the confidence of this blamelessness, he calls upon the Lord for assistance, and for judgment between him and his enemies, vers. 6-9. God's righteousness affords him hope that this decision and the overthrow of his enemies is near, vers. 10-13; of the fulfilment of which he has an inward assurance, so that he is able to conclude with gratitude for granted deliverance, vers. 14-17.

Vers. 1-5 constitute as it were the porch, and the entrance

into the proper edifice of the Psalm is ver. 6. This is divided into three parts of equal compass, three strophes, each of four verses. First is the strophe of *prayer*. The prayer here has a much fuller swell, and is far more earnest and important in character, than the one uttered in the introduction, for the reason that, according to the basis laid down in vers. 3-5, it is upheld by God's righteousness, which never leaves those to supplicate in vain, who are justified in appealing to it. Then comes the strophe of *hope*, which, as the prayer was grounded upon God's righteousness, in its turn grows out of a lively conviction of the same. Finally, the strophe of *confidence*, resting on the inwardly received assurance of being heard, and celebrating the deliverance as one already obtained. It is distinguished from the second strophe by the *Behold* with which it begins, and also by the preterites in vers. 14 and 17. The internal character of the two first strophes, as those which contain only what is preliminary, is expressed in the proportion of their length to the length of those which form the proper building of the Psalm. They are as it were the steps by which one ascends to it. This becomes still more evident, if we bring the superscription into the body of the Psalm, which we should be justified in doing by its peculiar character—its obviously poetical construction. Reckoning that as ver. 1, the scheme would be, 1. 2. 3. 4. 4. 4. Like the building itself, the porch then falls into three parts—the occasion and subject, a preliminary prayer, the removal of the hindrance to its fulfilment. The proper building (twelve verses) measures double the compass of the porch (six verses).

For understanding more exactly the position in which David was then placed, we must examine the superscription. In this על דברי is commonly taken in the sense of, *on account of, in reference to*. But this exposition is manifestly false; the correct one being, *on account of the words, occasioned by the calumnies*. This is clear for a philological reason alone. The phrase is always על־דבר, and never, על־דברי, when it means simply *on account of*. The passages adduced by Gesenius in support of the signification, *on account of*, are, besides this, Deut. iv. 21; Jer. xiv. 1, vii. 22; but they do not bear examination; they rather imply that the דברים in them all signifies *speeches* or *words*. In Deut. iv. 21, "The Lord was angry with me," על דבריכם, "for your words," is to be compared with Numb. xx. 3-5, where the

talk of the people is recorded, by which the faith of Moses was overcome. Jer. xiv. 1 is to be rendered, "The word of the Lord came to Jeremias, on account of the words of the dearth." The words of the dearth, the prayer which Jeremias sent forth on account of the dearth, and to which the word of the Lord refers, follow in vers. 2-9; the word of the Lord does not come till ver. 10. If we expound, "on account of (or concerning) the dearth," then the superscription—which, 1. announces words of the dearth, and, 2. the answer of the Lord to these words—does not seem appropriate. Hence Hitzig, in his hasty manner, has pronounced it spurious. In Jer. vii. 22, we are, finally, to expound, "I have not commanded them upon words of burnt-offering or sacrifice." Words of sacrifice are words which respect sacrifice, as much as: "I have laid upon them no commands," resting upon, or consisting in words regarding sacrifice. The correctness of this exposition is rendered clear by the contrast in ver. 23, "But *this word* did I command them;" for the דבר must necessarily be taken in the preceding verse in the same sense that it bears here. The LXX. also translate the words before us, ὑπὲρ τῶν λόγων Χουσί. But what especially decides in favour of our rendering is, that David, vers. 3-5, defends himself, with the strongest protestations, against *calumnies*. From this defence we see also wherein the accusation consisted. He had been charged with having sought the life of Saul, and, in general, recompensed good with evil.

It is important now to determine who Cush the Benjamite is, whose calumnious charges against David gave occasion to the inditing of this Psalm. According to the supposition now generally current, there was an individual Benjamite of the name of Cush, who, by his calumnies, stirred up afresh Saul's hatred against David, and with such effect that David found himself exposed to constant danger of death. Now, that such calumniators and go-betweens were busy in the matter of Saul and David, we learn from 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, where David says to Saul, "Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?" and in ch. xxvi. 19, "But if the children of men stirred thee up against me," etc. It cannot but appear remarkable, however, that no Cush is mentioned in the comparatively full historical details of this period, if the part which he played was of such importance as to have led David to compose this Psalm, and immortalize his name in the super-

scription of it,—which must have proceeded from David himself, from its appearing to form a necessary member of the Psalm, from its internal character, and from the undeniable fact that Habakkuk refers to it, in a way which implies that it was even then reckoned an integral part of the Psalm. It must further appear extraordinary that the words of Cush, according to vers. 3-5, do not refer to any peculiar fiction, to any new calumny by which he sought to rekindle the fire of Saul's anger (the words of Cush appear as the efficient cause of the persecutions); but rather allege, quite in a general way, that David was laying wait for Saul,—an allegation which, from the very first, was in the mouth of Saul; 1 Sam. xxii. 7, 13. One does not rightly understand how an individual of the name of Cush could put David into such a commotion, by merely adding his own to the many slanderous tongues which uttered this calumny, with the view of ingratiating themselves into the favour of their master—why he should have selected him in particular from the mass of such persons—why he should not rather have kept to the words of Saul himself. Others, again, consider the name Cush as symbolical, and suppose David to have applied the epithet to his enemy on account of his dark malice, which was too inveterate to admit of a change for the better. So almost all the Jewish expositors, with the exception of Abenezra, who adopted the opinion now generally received; so also Luther, who translates, “on account of the words of the Moor,” and remarks, “He calls him Moor, because of his shameless manners, as one incapable of anything good or righteous. Just as we commonly call a lying and wicked fellow *black*. Hence the language of the poet: He is black, O Roman, be thou ware of him. As we also call him *fair*, who deals with people in an honest and upright manner,—who has a heart that is free of envy. Therefore it is said, David has willingly left out his proper name, and given him a new name in accordance with his perverse heart and ways.” This rendering derives support from two passages in the prophets: Jer. xiii. 23, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” And Amos ix. 7, “Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord;” Chr. Ben. Michaelis: “Who change not the skin, as ye change not your ways.” Besides, this view is exceedingly favoured by the character of the Psalms of David, in which a



great predilection for the enigmatical may be discerned; comp., for example, Ps. ix., xxii., liii., lvii., lx., where precisely similar enigmatical designations of the subject-matter are to be found, and of such a nature as to show that one can only ascribe to a predilection for the enigmatical, David's here not calling his adversary by his proper name, and that the superscriptions, as well as the body of the Psalms, are poetical: a fact which has been too often overlooked. Now, those who follow this mode of explanation are again divided in regard to the person whom David had in view. The Jewish expositors all agree upon Saul; but Luther and others upon Shimei, whose slanders are given in 2 Sam. xvi. 11. The latter supposition is, for various reasons, to be rejected, of which we shall adduce only this one as sufficient, that David could not pray during the rebellion of Absalom, "Save me from all my *persecutors*," as he does in ver. 1. He had then to do, not with persecutors, but with revolters. A special reason may be assigned in support of the reference to Saul, which probably led the Psalmist to the choice of a symbolical designation for his enemy. Saul was the son of Kish, and David plays upon this name of his father. Since it is a mere play on words, it is no objection that Kish is written with a koph; and the less so, as the two letters, so like in sound, are not rarely interchanged. See Gesen. on 2.

From the preceding investigation, we have gathered the result, that this Psalm belongs to the period of Saul's persecution. The more exact time within this period may be in some measure learned from ver. 4. There, allusion is made to the fact of David's not having employed the opportunity presented for killing his persecutor. According to the history, such an opportunity was presented to David twice; 1 Sam. xxiv., xxvi. Here it can only be the earlier occasion that is meant. For, after the second, David immediately passed into the land of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxvii. 4: "And it was told Saul, that David was fled to Gath; and he sought no more again for him." On the present occasion, however, David is still involved in the most pressing danger. The fact, gathered from our Psalm, that David had Saul once already in his power before the close of his persecutions, is of importance in estimating the relation of 1 Sam. xxiv. to xxvi. Hitzig's view, which maintains that only one circumstance of the kind existed as the foundation of the two narratives, and throws away

the one in ch. xxiv. as too marvellous, is thereby proved to be unfounded.

Luther remarks : " Although he composed this Psalm after the assault, that it might be seen how he now, taught by the end and issue of the assault, holds out a consolation to those who are involved in tribulation, and God's anger to those who vex and persecute pious men, furnishing instruction to others by his own and his enemies' danger and hurt ; yet it is still to be believed that, in the midst of this transaction, he had the very thoughts which he afterwards expressed in this Psalm. For he never despaired regarding God ; and he therefore knew well that it would turn out so, that such misfortune would befall his adversaries and opponents." This view will be admitted, when it is seen that, as in all the Psalms which, whilst in the first instance originating in a subjective experience, yet have at the same time a general reference, so this Psalm did not, at some later period, acquire this general reference, but from the first was designed to possess it. Luther, however, goes into the other extreme, by altogether doing away with the significance of the Psalm, for the Psalmist himself. No reason exists for the supposition that David composed the Psalm only after the close of Saul's persecutions, and transferred himself to that period in thought simply to benefit the Church ; and yet that supposition, as the more remote one, would require clear grounds to legitimize it.

De Wette is inclined to deny the Davidic authorship of this Psalm, and its personal character, and to put it amongst the large class of plaintive Psalms. But against this argues, 1. The superscription, the originality of which is supported by the reasons already adduced. 2. The unquestionably very distinct reference to David's connection with Saul, in ver. 4, not to speak of the by no means unimportant general agreement in the position,—in both cases alike, a malicious persecutor hunting after the life of a blameless man, under the pretext that he was brooding ill against him. 3. The correspondence of many expressions here, with those of David as reported in the historical accounts of the period—comp., for example, ver. 1, " Save me from all my persecutors," with 1 Sam. xxiv. 14, " After whom is the king of Israel come out ? After whom dost thou pursue ? Also xxvi. 20, " As when one doth hunt a partridge upon the mountains." Ver. 3 : " O Lord, my God, if I have done this, if there be iniquity in

my hands," with 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, where David protests that there was "neither evil nor transgression in his hand." Ver. 8: "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity;" and ver. 11, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry every day," with 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee," and ver. 15, "The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and judge me out of thine hand." Ver. 16: "His mischief shall return upon his own head," with 1 Sam. xxv. 39, where David, on hearing the report of Nabal's death, said, "The Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head." All these corresponding expressions of David belong exactly to the point of time to which the composition of this Psalm must be referred.

A twofold didactic element particularly discovers itself in the Psalm. It teaches, 1. That to be able to stretch forth pure hands to God, is an indispensable condition of Divine help under the oppression of enemies; and, 2. That where this condition exists, the Divine righteousness affords undoubted certainty of deliverance.

Superscrip. *Erring, of David, which he sung to the Lord, because of the words of the Moor, of Benjamin.* It only remains for us here to explain the meaning of שָׁנָה. So much is certain that we are not warranted, when the root שָׁנָה is of such common occurrence in Hebrew, to derive our explanation from a doubtful comparison with the cognate dialects. At the outset, therefore, are to be rejected the current renderings from the Syriac by *carmen*, and from the Arabic by *mourning song*. The latter reference accords with the subject neither of our Psalm, nor of Hab. iii., where the same word is found in the superscription, but nowhere else. For lamentation and pain are in both places not the predominating ideas. The general signification, *poem*, is not at all admissible in Habakkuk. Neither can we with propriety take the word, with the greater part of those who rightly go back to Hebrew usage, as a musical designation. For it would then be very difficult to explain how it should occur only in the superscription of this one Psalm. שָׁנָה always signifies to *err*, in a physical or moral sense; but never of itself has the meaning, which Clauss improperly supposes to be the radical one, to *be drunk*. Derived from this, then (comp. on the form,

Ewald, p. 246), it would signify *erring, error*. In accordance with the concise style of the superscriptions, one might very well designate a Psalm thus, which had respect to the errors and transgressions of the wicked; the more so, as it is further defined by the following שׁר, under which lies שׁר, “erring which sang,” q. d. “a song upon the erring, which sang.” An explanation of the concise expression is to be found in that of Habakkuk, which alludes to the one before us. He describes his song as one *upon Shiggionoth*,—a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet “on the errings, or transgressions.” The whole of that chapter is occupied with the transgressions of the enemy. Against these the people of God seek help, and express their confidence of receiving it. Thus the gist of the whole Psalm is indicated by these words. It is also worthy of remark, that the verb שׁנא occurs in the address of Saul to David, in 1 Sam. xxvi. 21, “Behold, I have played the fool and erred exceedingly,” ואֵינָהּ חֲרִיבָה מִצָּדוֹר—a passage which, at the same time, confutes those who would maintain that שׁנא is too mild a word for designating such transgressions as those of Saul against David; comp. also Ps. cxix. 21, 118. So that we are here also confirmed in supposing that the dark and difficult words of the superscriptions refer generally to the subject, and that we obtain the key for understanding them whenever we have become acquainted with this. Luther understood the word as referring to the subject, but erred in giving it the sense of “innocence.”

Ver. 1. *O Lord, my God, in Thee do I put my trust; save me from all my persecutors, and deliver me.* Calvin: “This is the true proof of our faith, that we cease not, even in our greatest distress, to trust in God. From this also we conclude, that the door is shut against our prayers, if we cannot open it with the key of confidence. Nor is it a superfluous thing for him to name the Lord *his* God; but he sets this up as a bank against the waves of temptation, that they might not overflow his faith.” Berleb. Bible: “If we honour God, and seek no support besides Him to which we would commit ourselves, He shows us, and gives us to experience, that we also need no other, but that He will be to us quite sufficient.” The words, *from all mine enemies*, show the greatness of the distress and danger, the necessity of God’s agency to deliver.

Ver. 2. *Lest he tear my soul, like a lion, rending in pieces, while there is none to deliver.* In the preceding verse mention

was made of *many* persecutors, while in this David speaks only of *one*. Expositors have, for the most part, united the two, by understanding under the many, those who calumniated David to Saul, and whom the latter made use of for the purpose of persecuting David; but under the one enemy, Saul, who was the originator of the whole persecution, and who was, properly, the one enemy of David, because all the others only acted under his commission. As we find the same thing, however, where such an explanation cannot be adopted, it is much better to explain the singular on the principle of *personification*. The multitude of his enemies David represents as one person, as that of the ungodly and evil-doer. This person, though primarily ideal, was indeed represented here by Saul. He speaks of his *soul*, because it concerned his life. The similitude of the lion, who cruelly rends in pieces a helpless sheep, is intended to make God, the only and ever present deliverer, the more inclined to help. פָּרַק stands here in its common signification, to tear in pieces.

Ver. 3. Since God cannot be called on, without exciting His anger, to vindicate an unrighteous cause, David therefore protests his innocence before he proceeds with his prayer. The apodosis follows in ver. 5. *O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands.* Most expositors interpret the word *this*, "that which my enemies reproach me with, and on account of which I am persecuted by Saul." Ven.: "*hoc quod mihi impingitur, et in vulgus notum est.*" Others understand by it the crime, the mention of which immediately follows. Substantially, both are the same; for the publicly proclaimed accusation against David, is that which is spoken of in the following verse. But the first mode of explanation is the more natural one. The crime is attributed to the hands, because they serve as instruments for its execution, and are consequently polluted. So also purity of hands is not rarely taken for innocence.

Ver. 4. *If I have rendered evil to him that was at peace with me, or spoiled him that without cause was mine enemy.* שָׁלֵם is rendered by most expositors, *him that is at peace with me, that is my friend*. Luther: "Him who lived with me so peacefully." Ps. xli. 10. According to this exposition, David first clears himself of the crime of neglected gratitude and friendship, as Saul's retainers characterized the attempt slanderously attributed to him; then of revenge toward one who had causelessly become

his enemy, which Saul in reality had. Or, perhaps David divides the wrong which he might have done, and which would have rendered him unworthy of Divine help, into two parts: 1. Wrong toward Saul, during the time that David was in good understanding with him,—to which the reproaches of Saul particularly referred: he grounded his persecution on the belief that David laid snares for him. 2. A revengeful behaviour toward him during the time of his unrighteous persecution. It is otherwise understood, however, by the older translators,—in particular, by the LXX., Vulg., Syr., which take the word as equivalent to מְשַׁלֵּם, “one who recompenses me;” comp. Ps. xxxviii. 21, xxxv. 12. The clause is then perfectly parallel to the following one: If I have requited him who has done evil to me, and spoiled him who without cause was mine enemy. Against this explanation may be urged that שָׁלַם never has the signification of *recompensing* in Kāl, but always in Piel,—a consideration which is certainly somewhat obviated by the fact, that the verb also, in the sense of being *at peace, in friendship with*, which appears to be borrowed from שָׁלַם, does not elsewhere occur. Besides, in the case of David, with respect to Saul, it cannot be appropriate to speak of recompense. But there is a decisive reason against the interpretation, in the circumstance, that the sense of retaliating, which it ascribes to נָמַל, does not belong to this verb. If we can only expound it by *render*, then the נָ must of necessity belong to נִמְלַחַי, and the interpretation in question falls to the ground of itself. Hitzig does indeed translate: “If I have done evil to him, who requites me for it.” But it is obviously harsh to suppose that the suff. is to be supplied.<sup>1</sup> הִלֵּךְ

<sup>1</sup> נָמַל signifies in Arab., Pulcher tam corpore, quam moribus, elegans, decorus fuit; in the 2d conj., bonum pulchrumque et bene atque eleganter fecit; in the 3d, pulchre, benigneque et humaniter egit, therefore, to be beautiful, to make and act beautifully, and do beautifully. The many derivatives are easily traced back in the Arab. to the original meaning. In Heb. also, the verb first signified to be good, beautiful; in which sense it occurs Isa. xviii. 5: נָמַל נָמַל omphases maturescentes, ripening clusters; and

from it is נָמַל, camel, derived, as the Arabic جَمَل shows, camelus, sc., pleniore adultus robore. Then to make good, beautiful; so Numb. xvii. 8, “And it yielded (made good) almonds,” brought them to ripeness. Hither also belongs נָמַל as used of the weaning of children, which is considered as a transplanting of them into a more perfect state; and on this account, even in patriarchal times, the weaning day was spent festively. Gen. xxi. 8: “And Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac was weaned,”—a

"to strip," specially of the spoiling of a dead enemy, 2 Sam. ii. 21; Judg. xiv. 19. David alludes here to his conduct toward Saul, as the best refutation of the calumnies circulated against him. As a proof that it was in his power to have killed him and carried off his armour, he cut off the skirt of his garment. Otherwise, David makes asseveration of his innocence in quite a general manner, although he has in view his behaviour toward Saul, intending specially to refute the calumny uttered in regard to him. He thus shows that his conduct towards Saul was not something peculiar, but was rooted in his whole disposition and mode of action. "If I ever have requited evil with evil, as you reproach me with doing, in reference to Saul; and that the more wrongfully, inasmuch as towards him in particular, I showed quite a different spirit," etc. In reference to the spirit here displayed, Calvin says: "If any one not merely does not repay the injury that has been received, but also strives to overcome the evil with good, he gives a solid proof of Divine goodness, and shows himself to be one of God's children; for it is only from the spirit of sonship that such a gentleness proceeds." Luther: "Let this also be marked, that David here manifests an evangelical degree of righteousness. For, to recompense evil with evil, the flesh and old Adam think to be right and proper. But it was forbidden even in the law of Moses, except as inflicted by the magistrate; consequently, not of one's own malice

consideration which readily explains how, on that particular day, the mockery of the envious Ishmael should have broken out so wantonly. Finally, to show one's self good or beautiful, to act so, to give or bestow. This last signification is to be retained, even where the word is used of evil; for in such cases, there is always an unexpressed contrast to some good which should have been given. Particularly deserving of notice on this score is 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, where Saul says to David, "Thou hast rewarded (done) me good, and I have done thee evil," for, I, who should likewise have done thee good, have, instead, extended to thee evil. Comp. also Gen. i. 15, 17; 2 Chron. xx. 11; Isa. iii. 9. Gousset was on the right track, when he remarked; "I confess, that when used in a bad sense, a noun such as נָתַן, etc., is often added, whence I gather that, in its radical meaning, the word was not of ambiguous import, but rather referred to what was good. With נָתַן it is used only of good, not of evil, excepting in 2 Chron. xx. 11, but applied ironically, and so is reduced to a good, since it is only in a figure that the evil is done. Also, in Joel iv. 4, there is the same sort of irony, as appears from the subjoined antithesis." He has not, however, pursued his line of thought to its proper issue, and it has wholly escaped modern lexicographers.

and authority." This evangelical degree of righteousness De Wette will not accord to the Old Testament. It appears to him inconceivable that it should be here marked as a serious crime, to recompense evil with evil. He would therefore take the sense to be: "Did I wrong him, who now deals toward me as an enemy? No, he is an enemy without cause." But what purpose is served by banishing from the Psalm "the evangelical degree of righteousness," since it cannot be banished from the history? Saul himself accords to the Psalmist what De Wette would withhold from him! In 1 Sam. xxiv. 19, he says to him, "For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day." But that rendering of De Wette proceeds upon an ungrammatical explanation of *לֹא* by *doing wrong*. If it can only signify *to strip*, the subject in hand cannot be a wrong which preceded the persecution. To strip, to spoil, can only be used of a vanquished enemy; and when he is vanquished, the persecution ceases as a matter of course.

Ver. 5. Apodosis: If I have done this, then *let the enemy persecute my soul and take it, and tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust*. In vers. 1 and 2 the Psalmist had prayed for the deliverance of his life from all his persecutors. Here he solemnly offers his life to destruction, nay, expressly invokes it, and renounces all claim to Divine deliverance, if the soul, which the enemy sought to take from him, were one laden with guilt. The most inward consciousness of innocence, and the deepest horror of guilt, are here at the same time manifested. The declaration has a high parænetic meaning. It teaches the oppressed more forcibly than any direct exhortation, that they can only share in the help of God so far as they keep themselves free from guilt; it demands of them, first of all, to commune with themselves, to investigate their walk before God, inasmuch as the righteous God can undertake nothing but a righteous cause. The form *יִרְדֵּה* has been very differently explained. The most probable view is the following: In the text stood originally the Fut. in Piel, *יִרְדֵּה*. The Masorites wished to read for this the Fut. in Kal, *יִרְדֵּה*, because the Kal, in the sense of *persecuting*, is much more common than the Piel; which, however, as being the intensive-form (Ewald, p. 195), is the most suitable here, where the most violent, repeated, and continued persecution, are intended. The



difference being merely in the vowels, no Kri could be placed in the margin. They called attention to this by uniting both punctuations. The one standing in the text is therefore no form at all; but we must read either יִרְדֵּף, which is the correct one, or יִרְדֵּף, which latter form is found in many MSS., whose transcribers were bolder than the Masorites. It is customary also with the Arabians, when the punctuation is doubtful, to write the points in two or more ways; comp. Ewald, p. 489. The notion still found in Ewald, p. 602, that ל sprung from אל, is still often of like import with it, and, in particular, is used of direction to a place, turns out, on a closer examination of the examples collected by Winer, *Lex.* p. 510, to be incorrect. The ל always marks, quite differently from אל, the relation of *belonging to*. Accordingly, here רַם לָאָרֶץ is to "tread down so, that it belongs to the earth;" and the honour also is made to dwell so, that it henceforth is a *property* of the dust. The *dwelling* signifies that it is lasting—an overthrow from which there is no recovery. According to De Wette, the expressions, "my soul, my life, and mine honour," are a mere circumlocution for the pers. pron. But this is manifestly false. "My soul," as the parallel, "my life," shows, which is never a substitute for the pron., is used here, as in ver. 1, because it was a question of life to David. That "my honour" does not stand for the pron. is obvious even from the contrast in which it stands to *the dust*. According to many expositors, David offers here, in case he should be found guilty, to suffer the loss of the two earthly possessions which were most highly prized, and were claimed by Saul,—*life* and *glory*. So already Calvin: "The sense is,—*not only let the enemy destroy me, but let him also add all manner of insult to the dead, so that my name may abide in filth and dirt:*" in this case, however, the loss of honour is too strictly referred to the disgrace of his memory after death, instead of to dishonour before, in and after, death. Others, however, take the honour as a designation of the soul, corresponding to "my soul and my life," and as implying that David was ready to sacrifice his noblest part. For this latter exposition there are two conclusive reasons: 1. The putting of "mine honour" for "my soul," in so far as this constitutes the *glory* of man, and is that which elevates him above the whole animal creation, to which, as to his body, he is related—he alone being in respect of his soul a breath of God,

Gen. ii. 7—is, according to the precedent in Gen. xlix. 6, of such frequent use in the Psalms of David (comp. Ps. xvi. 9, lvii. 8, cviii. 2), that it is very natural to take the honour in this sense, when we find it connected with the soul and the life. 2. The reference of our verse to ver. 2 is also in favour of this sense. The Psalmist here manifestly consents that the enemy, in case of his guilt, should attain the end there said to be aimed at by him. There, however, only the soul is spoken of: “lest he tear my soul like a lion.” The enemy seeks after David’s soul, and his soul he will readily give him, if it be laden with guilt; but, since the accusations of the enemy are only lying inventions, God must needs deliver his soul. To make to dwell in the dust, denotes a shameful and humiliating destruction. In accordance with the relation of “mine honour” to “my life,” it is a stronger expression than “treading upon the earth.” The honour of the Psalmist, his glory, must lie *covered with dust upon the ground*.

Ver. 6. Conscious of his innocence, the Psalmist summons the Lord to execute judgment against his enemies. The Berleb. Bible points out well the relation to the preceding context, “But, because my conscience acquits me of such things, and testifies that I am innocent therein, therefore I seek Thy protection, and call upon Thy righteousness, which is wont to defend the guiltless.” *Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger, lift up Thyself at the raging of mine enemies; and awake for me, Thou who hast ordained judgment.* The “lift up” is stronger than “arise,” and is q. d.: “Show Thyself mighty;” comp. Isa. xxxiii. 10, where the “rising” is connected with “exalting one’s self.” עָבַר prop. an *overstepping*, then especially of a violent *rage*, breaking through all bounds of order. The stat. constr. in plural has עָבַרְתָּ in Job xl. 11. But the variation is explicable from the general inclination of the gutturals to the A sound, Ewald, p. 110; which was the more easily to be satisfied here, as the vowel is merely an assumed one, formed from two shevas. Expositors generally translate: “Against the rage of mine enemies.” But this rendering weakens the sense, by confounding the obvious contrast between the anger of God and the anger of the enemies. עָבַרְתָּ stands in close relation to the preceding בָּאֵפֶסֶךָ, and the א must therefore be similarly rendered here. This was already seen by Calvin: “To the rage of his enemies he opposes the anger of God. Whilst the ungodly

burn, and belch out the flames of their rage, he begs God that He also would wax hot." "Awake for me," is for, "turn Thyself wakening toward me." *Thou hast ordained judgment.* As regards the matter, the clause is a relative one: Thou, who hast ordained judgment; and that this is not externally indicated, is to be explained from the circumstance, that poetry loves the abrupt and concise. David begins here to ground his prayer for help on God's being the righteous judge of the world. This thought is further expanded in what follows. We must not translate with De Wette: "Order judgment, command that a day of judgment be appointed," for then the *relat.* could not be absent. Moreover, the sense of the first explanation is more suitable. David says here, the Lord has ordained judgment, inasmuch as to exercise judgment is a necessary outflow of His nature, of His holiness and righteousness, with a reference, perhaps, to the numerous declarations of the law concerning this exercise of judgment—which, however, only are so far considered, as they testify to the fact of God's having appointed judgment. We are not to understand, "Thou hast ordained judgment *in*, but *according to Thy word*;" for in the law, judgment is not ordained, but announced. In what follows, then, he calls upon God actually to hold this judgment: "Help me, for Thou hast ordained judgment; Thou hast ordained judgment, therefore judge the people first, and then, in particular, me."

Ver. 7. *And let the congregation of the peoples compass Thee about; and over it return Thou on high.* The main idea of the verse is, Show Thyself, O Lord, as the judge of the world. Every special act of God's judgment is a consequence of His being judge of the *whole world*. If this were not the case, the expectation of such a thing would be groundless, a mere act of arbitrary procedure. Hence, the Psalmists and Prophets not unfrequently point to an universal judgment, before announcing a special judgment, or a prayer for one—comp. Mic. i. 2 ss., Isa. ii. 9 ss. The proper wish of the Psalmist is contained in ver. 8, "Judge me." But because a special judgment is only a result of the general and comprehensive judgment, the Psalmist first of all prays that the latter might begin: "Thou hast arranged judgment; come then to the judgment of the world; come also to the judgment between me and my enemies." The clothing of this idea is taken from the manner of pronouncing judgment, which still prevails in the East, where the king, sur-

rounded by the crowd of contending parties, ascends the throne, and then gives forth the judgment. The Lord comes down from His lofty seat in the heavens;—(this is what is to be understood by *הַמָּרוֹם*, “the height,” as appears from the quite similar representation in Ps. lxxiii.; see especially ver. 18, “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men”)—around Him are gathered all nations of the earth; after the judgment has been held, He returns back to heaven. This representation is in perfect accordance with the common figurative description of every *manifestation* of God, as a coming down from heaven to earth. The true God is at once above and in the world; whilst the self-made god is either wholly shut out from it, after the manner of the naturalists, or wholly depressed to the world, and amalgamated with it, after the manner of the pantheists. Neither *לְאֻמִּים* nor *עַמִּים* ever designates the family of Israel, of whom various expositors, incapable of apprehending the true sense, here think. (In Deut. xxxiii. 3, 19, the word *עַמִּים* signifies, not nations, but peoples or persons.) Nor are the nations to be considered merely in the light of witnesses of the judgment, but rather as those on whom the judgment is to be exercised. This is undeniably clear from the words in next verse, “The Lord shall judge the people;” comp. also Mic. i. 3. *עָלֶיהָ*, *over* or *above it*, raising Thyself above it, refers to the assemblage of the nations. *שׁוֹב־לְמָרוֹם*, to return back, that one may belong to the height; as to the sense, but not grammatically, equivalent to “return to the height.” Venema: *Universo coetu inspectante cœlum, unde descendisti, repete.* In disproof of De Wette’s forced interpretation: “Over it turn to the height, *i.e.* to Thy elevated seat upon Mount Zion,” “This His seat, Jehovah had in a manner left, as He was not exercising righteousness among the people, and permitting the good to be oppressed,” it is enough to remark, that *הַמָּרוֹם* is never used of Mount Zion, but always of God’s lofty dwelling-place in the heavens. Besides, at the time of this Psalm’s composition, Mount Zion was not yet the seat of the Lord; and the words, “over it,” are not suitable, etc. Luther has also quite failed in giving the right meaning: “That the people again assemble before Thee, and for their sakes rise up again.”

Ver. 8. *The Lord judges the people; judge me also. O Lord, according to my righteousness, and integrity in me.* Many ex-

plain by "over me," from David's representing his integrity as a cover and shield, protecting him against hostile assaults, and insuring him of Divine assistance. We may, however, simply explain, "in me," "which is peculiar to me." The qualities of the man are, as it were, over, or cover him in whom they inhere. That the Psalmist here prays God to judge him according to his righteousness and innocence, agrees quite well with that in Ps. cxliii., "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." The discourse here, as may be seen by comparing vers. 3-5, is properly of righteousness in reference to a determinate matter, which certainly can only be conceived as an outflow of righteousness generally; yet still only presupposes such a righteousness as does not exclude the exercise of Divine mercy in pardoning, but only fits us for becoming partakers thereof.

Ver. 9. *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, and establish the just; and the trier of the heart and reins art Thou, O righteous God.* David's conflict with Saul was not a conflict between individuals, but between parties; Saul's cause was espoused by the wicked as theirs, and David's by the righteous. Comp. the often misunderstood passage, 1 Sam. xxii. 2. Therefore, the Psalmist prays, that in Saul the wicked might be judged, in him the righteous delivered. Many render: "May He, the Lord, bring to an end." But as there is an address to the Lord both in the preceding and following verse, we should scarcely expect Him to be here spoken of in the third person. נִסֵּךְ occurs also elsewhere in the Psalms in an intrans. sense; xii. 1, lxxvii. 8. The words: "The trier art Thou," etc., point to the Divine righteousness, which does not permit God to be indifferent toward the righteous and the wicked, but constantly makes use of His omniscience to penetrate into the inmost regions of the heart, in order to discern the one and the other, and to visit them with blessing or punishment accordingly. "The proving of the heart and the reins" is mentioned, as is evident from the expression, "O righteous God," not as pledging the mere possibility, but the *reality* of the Divine judgment, not as an outflow of the Divine omniscience, but of the Divine righteousness. Comp. Jer. xvii. 10, "I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings;" xx. 12, "And, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the

heart, I shall see my revenge on them." The *and* also is better explained on this view than on the other, which would rather lead us to expect a "for," insomuch that some of its supporters, for example Ewald, are disposed to throw it out of the text entirely. If the trying of the heart and reins is a spontaneous activity of God, then there is involved in the words before us, which, primarily, simply ascribe this activity to God, when viewed in connection with the preceding entreaties, an indirect solicitation to exercise such activity—"Thou art a trier," etc., so try then—and the second clause of the verse comes into parallelism with the first. If God does try the heart and the reins, He cannot but bring to an end the wickedness of the wicked, and establish the righteous. Many translate: And the righteous God tries the heart and the reins; but it is better to regard this as a direct address to God, in accordance with the preceding one.

Ver. 10. In the room of the prayer, appears now the hope grounded upon the righteousness of God, which manifests itself in defence of the righteous, and for the destruction of the wicked. *My shield is with God, who delivers the upright in heart.* The *by* cannot mean precisely *with* here. Wherever this appears to be the sense, the connection with the radical meaning *upon* must still be able to be pointed out. Here the use of the preposition may be explained thus, that the shield stands figuratively for *defence*; either it devolves on God to protect me, to hold His shield over me (comp. Judges xix. 20, "All thy wants are upon me," it lies upon me to relieve them; Ps. lvi. 12, "Thy vows are upon me, O God"), or my defence *rests* upon God, has Him for its foundation. This latter supposition is favoured by Ps. lxii. 7, "Upon God is my salvation and my glory." In that David expects deliverance only on the ground of God's saving the upright, he supplies a new evidence of his having a good conscience.

Ver. 11. *God judges the righteous, and the Almighty is angry every day.* This is David's double ground of hope. For he is a righteous man, and his enemies are the ungodly. Many take שׁוֹפֵט as a subst., and צַדִּיק as the adjective belonging to it: God is a righteous judge. But the parallelism with זָעַם requires that שׁוֹפֵט also should be taken as a participle standing for the verb finite. This is confirmed by a comparison with ver. 8. To the "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness," *there,*

corresponds *here*, the "God judges the righteous;" there the prayer, here the positive principle, which guarantees the fulfilment of the prayer. The *every day, continually*, points to the fact, that the Divine judgment on ungodliness is one always realizing itself in the course of history, so that they who practise it can never be secure, but are always in danger of a sudden overthrow.

Ver. 12. *If he turn not, He will whet His sword, bend His bow, and make it ready.* The subject of the verb *turn*, the ungodly, is to be borrowed from the second half of the preceding verse, where it occurs by implication. It is erroneous to suppose with many that a particular enemy, Saul, is here described as such. That the Psalmist delineates here only in a general way the punishment of the ungodly, is clear even from the preceding context. This and the next verse are merely a further expansion of the words, "God is angry every day," which, on account of the "every day," must not be restricted to the enemies of David. The punishment of the enemies of David follows from this, with the same necessity as, from the general principle, "God judges the righteous," does the deliverance of David. The "turning back" is wider than the "turning back to the Lord." It denotes merely in general the ceasing from former doings and strivings, while the latter, at the same time, indicates the aim toward which the changed course is directed. Koester justly remarks, that it perfectly accords with the placable spirit of the Psalm, comp. ver. 4, that David should first wish the conversion of the enemy. *He will whet His sword.* The Lord is represented under the image of a warrior who prepares himself for the attack; comp. Deut. xxxii. 41, "I whet My glittering sword, and My hand lays hold on judgment." This passage, which, the mention of arrows immediately after the sword, as here, proves more certainly to have been in the eye of the Psalmist, is of itself sufficient to confute those who suppose that the ungodly are the subject of the whole verse. *And make it ready*—He places the arrows upon it. Falsely, De Wette: "And directs it." This signification does not accord with the parallel passage, Ps. xi. 2, nor does it occur in the Pilel of the verb כּכּ. In all the passages adduced by Gesenius in favour of the sense "to direct," that of preparing, making ready, charging, should rather be admitted. The "directing" is first introduced in ver. 13. It is a remarkable instance of that play of Divine

Providence which so often occurs in history, that in the death of Saul, the bow and the sword both actually had their share. Saul was hit by the hostile archers, and sore pressed, so that he despaired of his life. "Then said he to his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me : but his armour-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it." 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, 4. The apparently coarse manner of expression in our text, representing God as a warrior, equipped with sword and bow, has, besides, for its foundation, the coarseness of sinners, and the weakness of faith on the part of believers, which does not find the simple thought, that God judges, a sufficient support in face of visible danger, but demands that the thought take to itself flesh and blood, and that the judge should stand over against the sinner, man against man, sword against sword. But this kind of representation shows, at the same time, a very lively faith, which alone was able, in order to satisfy this need of the weakness of faith, to clothe the judge and avenger with flesh and blood. The idea of God's righteousness must have possessed great vigour to render such a representation possible. There are some excellent remarks upon the ground of it in Luther, who, however, too much overlooks the fact, that the Psalmist presents before his eyes this form of an angry and avenging God, primarily with the view of strengthening, by its consideration, his own hope ; and pays too little regard to the distinction between the Psalmist, who only indirectly teaches, that is, presents what he himself has inwardly experienced, and the Prophet : "The Prophet employs a coarse human similitude, in order that he might inspire terror into the ungodly. For he speaks against stupid and hardened people, who would not apprehend the reality of a Divine judgment, of which he had just spoken, unless it should be shown them by the use of serious human images.—Now the Prophet is not satisfied with mentioning the sword, but he adds thereto the bow ; even this does not satisfy him, but he describes how it is already stretched, and aim is taken, and the arrows are applied to it, as here follows. So hard, stiffnecked, and unabashed are the ungodly, that however many threatenings may be urged against them, they will still remain unmoved. But in these words he forcibly describes how God's anger presses hard upon the ungodly, though they



will never understand this until they actually experience it. It is also to be remarked here, that we have had so frightful a threatening and indignation against the ungodly in no Psalm before this; neither has the Spirit of God attacked them with so many words. Then, in the following verses, he also recounts their plans and purposes; shows how these will not only be in vain, but will return again upon their own head. So that it clearly and manifestly appears to all those who suffer wrong and reproach, as a matter of consolation, that God hates such revilers and slanderers above all other characters."

Ver. 13. *And He has prepared for him the instruments of death, He makes His arrows burning.* The ל with the verb הִנֵּן denotes the object toward which something is directed; which is aimed here, therefore, at the ungodly. The object stands here with peculiar emphasis in the foreground. The Psalmist draws attention to the danger of being the target at which God levels His attack. בָּרָק to burn. In sieges it is customary to wrap round the arrows burning matter, and to shoot them after being kindled.

Ver. 14. *Behold, he travails with mischief, but is big with misery, and brings forth falsehood.* In place of the hope which springs out of the consideration of God's righteousness—which leads Him to help the righteous, but to prepare for the wicked a fearful destruction—confidence now enters. The Psalmist sees with his eyes how the malicious plots of the wicked, for the ruin of the righteous, are brought to nought, and turn out to their own destruction. The "behold," and the prophetic pret., are a wonderful proof of the strength of faith, which can overlook what violently presses upon the sense, and see what is still invisible. Luther: "He first says, 'behold,' as if he himself wondered, and called upon all to come, as it were to a rare spectacle. For it appears far otherwise to our senses." Luther translates: Behold, he has evil in his heart, with misfortune he is pregnant, but he will bring forth a failure; and he is followed by De Wette, Hitzig, etc. But we must rather refer the words, "he is big with misery," to the issue as full of wretchedness for the wicked. This is supported, 1. By the accents, which connect the words, not with what precedes, but with what follows, comp. ver. 15; 2. and, besides, the being in labour, ought in the other case to follow upon the being pregnant.

Ver. 15. The same thought, under another image. *He has*

*digged a pit, and hollowed it out; but he falls into the ditch which he makes.* Luther: "All this is written for the consolation of those who are oppressed, to the end that they may be sure and certain, that the evil, which is directed against them, shall fall upon their revilers and persecutors. At the same time, it is also written for a terror to the ungodly, persecutors, and slanderers, whose excessive rashness and security needs to be alarmed, as the weakness of the other to be strengthened." It is customary to dig pits, and cover them with foliage, in order to catch lions and other wild beasts in them. From such custom the image is here taken:—*And hollowed it out.* This addition marks the depth of the pit dug by him, the anxiety of the wicked to have it made as deep as possible. Luther: "See how admirably he expresses the hot burning fury of the ungodly; not simply declaring: he has dug a pit, but adding to this: and hollowed it out. So active and diligent are they to have the pit dug and the hole prepared. They try everything, they explore everything; and not satisfied that they have dug a pit, but clear it out and make it deep, as deep as they possibly can, that they may destroy and subvert the innocent. In this way the Jews acted: although they were eager to have Christ put to death, and their whole efforts were directed thereto, still they were not satisfied that He should die a painful death, but took care that His death should be of the most shameful kind, just as if they had dug a very deep pit for Him, and cleared it out. So are all godless persecutors and revilers disposed, not to be satisfied with merely destroying their neighbour, but strive as much as in them lies to bring them to the most shameful end." Before לַעֲשֹׂה the pron. relat. is to be supplied; or, more correctly, there is here an usage of very frequent occurrence, especially in poetry, of placing the relative clause after the substantive without any particular word. Comp. Ewald, p. 646. The pron. suff. also is wanting, because the sense is clear from the substantive immediately preceding: poetry, too, is fond of expressive brevity. Therefore: he falls into the pit he makes. We must not expound: into the pit which he *has made*. The wicked man is still occupied with the pit, still working at it, when he falls into it. The punishment overtakes him in the midst of his guilty career. Kaiser supposes, without ground, that an external deliverance already past is here celebrated. But that by no means necessarily follows from the Fut. with

vau conv. **לַעֲשׂוֹת**. For this form only marks that an action follows out of the preceding. If this is all, it may stand also for the present and the future, although certainly it is most commonly used of the past. Therefore not he fell; but, he falls. Ewald, p. 541.

Ver. 16. *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his own pate*, like a stone or an arrow, which, having been thrown aloft, returns upon the head of him who threw it. The **ב** in **בְּרֹאשׁוֹ**, is the **ב** which is used with verbs of motion, when the object moved remains in its place. *Upon his head*, is not grammatically correct. The head is considered as the seat of the mischief. The mischief not merely falls *upon it*, but presses into it. **עָלָה** always denotes the evil one suffers, not that which one inflicts. The evil is here characterized by the suffix, which refers to the ungodly, as belonging to him, as wrought by him. This verse, like the two preceding ones, points to "the elastic nature of right, according to which every infliction calls forth a counter infliction:" as is indeed a necessary consequence of the existence of a living God. God, indeed, cannot be conceived of without the idea of recompense. Luther: "For this is the incomprehensible nature of the Divine judgment, that God catches the wicked with their own plots and counsels, and leads them into the destruction which they had themselves devised."

Ver. 17. In what precedes, the Psalmist had attained to a living acquaintance with the Divine righteousness, and described its manifestations. Here he concludes with giving praise to God on account of this His righteousness, and generally on account of His glorious nature, or with the declaration, that he will praise Him on account thereof. *I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High*. According to His righteousness, in proportion thereto, so that the righteousness and the praise shall correspond. The verse forms a suitable conclusion to the strophe of *vision*. For the manifestations of Divine righteousness are taken for granted in it as having been already given.

## PSALM VIII.

The grand topic of this Psalm must, according to various expositors, be twofold,—the greatness of God, as the God of the world and nature, and His goodness toward man. But a more careful examination of it shows, that the latter topic alone is strictly the theme, to which the other is merely subordinate; that the greatness of the Lord in the creation of the world is only celebrated for the purpose of presenting in a more striking light His condescending goodness towards weak man.—God's glory—this is the train of thought—is made known on earth by the splendour of the heavenly edifice, in so impressive, feeling, and palpable a manner, that even children apprehend it, and by the wondering delight which they experience, and the praise which they stammer forth to Him, put to shame the folly of His hardened blasphemers; vers. 1, 2.—When one considers this glory and greatness of God revealing themselves in the heavens, how must it fill with adoring wonder, with sincere gratitude, that such a God should have so taken notice of weak man, who appears unworthy of the least regard from Him, crowned him with honour, made him His vicegerent upon earth, and delivered into his hands the lordship thereof! vers. 3-8. Great indeed is God, as well in the dignity which, in the fulness of His love and condescension, He has conferred on men, as in the glory of the heavens!—This, then, is the theme, *The greatness of God in the greatness of man.*

The Psalm needs no historical exposition, and bears none. It has been often said, that David was raised to the adoration of God by the sight of the starry sky. And in this way it has been commonly explained, why, in the third verse, amid the glorious works of God in the heavens, the sun is omitted, and the moon and the stars only are mentioned. That this idea is not well-grounded, we shall see when we come to the exposition of the verse. That David composed this Psalm, not as a shepherd, as some have supposed, for the sake of their sentimentality, but as king, is probable from the familiar reference in the Psalm to the kingly glory; comp. vers. 1 and 5. In his shepherd-days, David had not yet begun to indite Psalms; and in him also was verified the proverb, "The wine-press only presses out the wine;" and this, "Necessity teaches men to pray." It was in the per-

secutions that he endured from Saul, that the springs of Divine song began to flow in him.

Passages from this Psalm are applied to Christ in the New Testament; and this has led many expositors to refer the whole Psalm to Him alone. Not only, however, do many internal grounds oppose this view, but it is not sufficiently confirmed by the authority of the New Testament. This will appear on an examination of the particular passages. In Matt. xxi. 16, Christ rebukes the Pharisees, who could not contain themselves because children were crying to him Hosanna, by bringing to their remembrance the 2d verse of this Psalm: "Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?" From this quotation, it does not at all follow that the Lord explained the Psalm to refer to Himself. It is enough that the idea uttered in the Psalm,—viz. the high-minded, who proudly shut their heart to the impression of what is Divine, withstanding, and impiously blaspheming it, are put to shame by the cheerful acknowledgment thereof, uttered by the unsophisticated mind of childhood,—is here also exemplified. The stroke which the Lord here dealt to the Pharisees, was a completely silencing one; they must have felt it in their innermost conscience. The second quotation from this Psalm, in Heb. ii. 6-9, appears to favour more the Messianic interpretation. There vers. 4, 5, are applied to Christ's glory, and His lordship over all creation. But neither are we necessitated by this passage to refer the Psalm, in its primary and proper sense, to Christ. Although David, in the first instance, speaks of the human race generally, the writer of the Epistle might still justly refer what is said to Christ, in its highest and fullest sense. For whereas the glory of human nature, here delineated, has been so dimmed through the fall, that only some few slight flashes of it are seen, and therefore what is here said refers rather to the idea than to the reality, it appeared anew in Christ in full splendour. The writer of the Epistle describes the dominion obtained for humanity in Christ over creation, whereby it was exalted above the angels, in the words of the 4th and 5th verse of this Psalm. The thoroughly incidental reference of the beginning of ver. 5, as rendered in the LXX., to the humiliation of Christ, is not properly an exposition, but a popular adaptation. This is unquestionably the case also with the third quotation, in 1 Cor. xv. 27. Paul there refers the words of ver. 6, "Thou hast put

all things under His feet," to Christ, because the power of humanity over the whole creation, lost and changed in Adam to a base servitude, was regained in Christ, and that, indeed, in a still higher and more perfect manner than it was possessed by Adam. The following remarks may contribute to a deeper insight into the ideal Messianic meaning of this Psalm. The Psalm stands in the closest connection with the first chapter of Genesis. What is written there of the dignity with which God invested man over the works of His hands, whom He placed as His representative on earth, and endowed with the lordship of creation, is here made the subject of thanks and praise. *That passage in Genesis is here turned into a prayer for us.* But how far man still really possesses that glory, what remains of it, how much of it has been lost, of this the Psalmist takes no note. His object was simply to praise the goodness of God, which still remained the same, as God, who does not repent Him of His gifts, had not arbitrarily withdrawn what He gave; but man, by his folly, has robbed himself of them. But, in consequence of his looking only to the goodness of God, which continues the same, the entire representation completely suits only the *beginning* and the *end*, and only very imperfectly suits the middle period, in which we, along with the Psalmist, now are. When this middle is considered, man is represented quite otherwise in the Old Testament than we find him in this Psalm, — as a sleep, a shadow, a falling leaf, a worm, as dust and ashes. And that for which God is here thanked, the prophets hoped and longed to see in the *future*: see especially Isa. xi. 6-9, where the same reference is made as here to Gen. i., and where is expressed an expectation that the Messianic period will restore the original, but now disordered, relation of the earth to man. Accordingly, the matter of this Psalm can find its full verification only in the future; and for the present it applies to none but Christ, in whom human nature again possesses the dignity and power over creation, which it lost in Adam. By and by, when the moral consequences of the fall have been swept away, this also shall come to be the common inheritance of the human family.

על־הנְהִיחַ upon the harp of Gath, or in the Gathic style. As the termination ך, except in the cases of adjectives which are derived from proper names, is rare, and as גֹּת in the sense of Gathic, of Gath, a city of the Philistines, occurs frequently

(comp. Jos. xiii. 3; 2 Sam. vi. 10, 11, xv. 18), we must reject, as arbitrary, all other derivations, such as from  $\text{נֵי}$ , a "wine-press," and still more those from the purely imaginary  $\text{נֵי}$  cantus fidium. Now, the Gittith may be either an instrument invented in Gath, or a tune or air originated there, just as the Greeks speak of a Lydian or Phrygian air, and according to the analogy of the expression, "upon the Sheminith." It is worthy of remark, that all the three Psalms distinguished by this name (besides this, lxxxi. lxxxiv.) are of a joyful, thanksgiving character; from which it may be inferred, that the Gittith was an instrument of cheerful sound, or a lively air.

Ver. 1. *Jehovah, our Lord, how glorious is Thy name in all the earth! who hast crowned the heavens with Thy majesty.* The "our Lord," shows at once that the Psalmist speaks here, and throughout the Psalm, not in his own name, but in that of the whole human race. That the word  $\text{עַד}$  is ever used as a mere periphrasis for the person, without any further reference, is just as erroneous as the opinion, that it is synonymous with *renown*. The name, in the language of the ancient world generally, and of the Hebrews in particular, is the image and expression of the being, the echo of its manifestation. God, as He is in Himself, is nameless. But a manifestation and a name are inseparable from each other. The name proceeds quite naturally out of it; and the more glorious the manifestation, so much more glorious also is the name, that is, it is the more full and significant. Now, the following words declare by what means the name of God has become glorious on the whole earth,—point to the manifestation, whose product is the glorious name. They are to be translated literally: "Thou, in respect to whom, giving is Thy glory, above the heavens." This, according to most interpreters, is equivalent to: Thou, who hast not confined Thyself to overspread the earth with Thy glory, but who hast also crowned the heavens with it, hast set it upon these as a crown. But if we compare ver. 3, where the heavens alone are spoken of, it will be seen that the glory of the name of God upon earth is here only in so far celebrated, as God is glorified upon it through the magnificence of the heavens. This is also implied in the  $\text{אִשֶּׁר}$ , which indicates in what respect, and by what means, God's name is glorious upon the earth, or how He has acquired His glory upon earth.  $\text{תִּנֵּה}$  is the inf. constr. in Kal of  $\text{נָתַן}$ . Those of the verbs  $\text{זָרַק}$ , which form the Fut. upon Zêre or Patach, commonly throw

away in inf. constr. the נ pointed with Schwa; for the small word the feminal termination נָה is commonly chosen; from נָהַן, נָהַנָה, contracted נָה. In place of this, we find here the fem. term. נָה, just as along with the common inf. constr. of יָרַד, יָרַדָה, the form יָרַה also occurs; see Ewald, p. 460. Now the inf. governs here, as usual, the case of the verb fin.: the giving Thy glory; Ew. p. 622. We must not translate, with Ewald and Winer: the giving of Thy glory; for the form of the inf. constr. with the appended ה fem. has precisely the nature of a noun in stat. absol. There is not a single instance to be found, where such a form should be directly connected with a following noun. It should then, of necessity, have been נָהַת, and not נָהַנָה.—The prep. עַל, instead of our rather expecting ב, is explicable from the fact, that הוֹד, glory, is considered as a crown, which the Lord sets upon the heavens; comp. ver. 5.—The common exposition considers the inf. of נָהַן to be used here, instead of the preterite. But this cannot be admitted, for two reasons. First, the inf. constr. never stands in place of the pret., but only the inf. absol., which must have been נָהַנָה, because נ furnished with a long vowel is not to be dropt. And then, the inf. absol. also can stand for the pret. only when used simply of the action, expressed by the inf., but not when used of the acting person. This, however, is so far from being the case here, that the acting person is just what comes prominently into view. The attempt of Hitzig, and others, to derive the word from another verb than נָהַן, is refuted alone by the parallel passages, 1 Chron. xxix. 25, Numb. xxvii. 20, Dan. xi. 21, in which הוֹד נָהַן is found exactly as here, with עַל. We willingly omit other still more untenable explanations, such as that of Höffmann, who would take the word as an imperative.—הוֹד is rendered by many expositors, *renown*; but this signification never belongs to it: it always means *glory*. God has clad the heavens with His glory, in that He has set in them the sun, moon, and stars, as monuments of His almighty power and greatness.

Ver. 2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast prepared for Thyself a power.* עוֹלָלִים are children in general; יוֹנְקִים, children till the third year, up to which the Hebrew women used to suckle their children. De Wette, without cause, stumbles at the circumstance, that praise to God is here ascribed to sucklings. Even a little child is conscious of pleasure, in looking upon the lovely scenes of nature,—in particular, upon



the starry heavens, which are here specifically mentioned; and this admiration of the works of God is a sort of unconscious praising of them. According to De Wette, and others, the sense must be: "The child, his existence, his life, his advancement, etc., proclaim God as Creator." Or: "Even the child, in his happy joyous existence, in the fulness of his delight in life, is a witness of God's renown." But the incorrectness of this view is evinced partly by its leaving the expression, "out of the mouth," quite unnoticed,—for no one surely will agree with Hoffmann in thinking, that "the mouth" here is superfluous,—and partly because the allusion to children, in proof of the creative power of God, is here quite unsuitable, as in the following verse, which resumes the subject of vers. 1 and 2, it is God's greatness in the framing of the worlds that is spoken of. The beautiful structure and connection of the Psalm is entirely destroyed, if the children are made to praise God through their existence, and not through their admiration of the glory of God, as displayed in the heavens,—a reason which also disproves the view of Umbreit, who, artfully enough, seeks to get rid of the difficulty connected with "the mouth," by referring it "to the living breath of the new-born child, to the first cry of the babe, and the first movement of the infant lips to pronounce words." Besides, it would be quite unsuitable to bring forward children here as proofs of the creative power of God, when the object is to exhibit the nothingness of man, for the purpose of magnifying the more the grace of God. If children do indeed proclaim the glory of God not less than the starry heavens, it is surely nothing wonderful or unexpected, that God should so richly favour man. *בָּנִים* commonly means, to *lay the foundation of*, and then also to *prepare* in general. *וְיִשְׁבְּחוּ* most modern commentators take in the sense of *praise, renown*; but we must retain, with Calvin and others, the sense of *might, strength*; this seems the more suitable: God needs against His impotent and foolish adversaries no other combatants than children, who are able alone to maintain His cause. And what is quite decisive, a more careful consideration of the passages, in which the word, according to grammarians and lexicographers, should signify *praise*, shows that such a meaning is quite imaginary. *וְיִשְׁבְּחוּ* always signifies *might or strength*. By taking it in the sense of *praise* here, the meaning is disfigured. The marked contrast between the proud enemies of God, and the little children whom He sets up against

them as His force of war, then completely disappears. But God obtains the victory over His rebellious subjects by means of children, in so far as it is through their conscious or unconscious praise of His glory, manifested in the splendour of creation, especially of the starry firmament, that He puts to shame the hardy deniers of His being or His perfections. Even Koester, who otherwise egregiously errs in the right construction of the Psalm, returns here to the correct explanation: "In *וְ* there is contained a pointed irony; the lisping of infants forms as it were a tower of defence (?) against the violent assaults of the deniers of God, which is perfectly sufficient."

*In order to still the enemy and the revengeful*,—all those who, when they are visited by Thee for their sins, burn against Thee with foolish rage and impotent revenge. The words unfold the meaning of the preceding expression, "because of Thine adversaries." The enemy and the revengeful are united here together, just as in Ps. xlv. 16, and have in their company the reproacher and blasphemer. That in regard to God we may speak of revenge, is shown especially by the Book of Job, where, for example, Elihu, in ch. xxxvi. 13, speaks of the lawless, "who heap up wrath, and cry not when He bindeth them;" that is, when God inflicts sufferings upon them, they beg not for pardon and grace, but kick against Him. He refers specially to Job, who, because punishment of sin was combined with want of acknowledgment of sin, turned his spirit against God, and cried out against Him to the blood avenger, who, to his sorrow, existed not on earth nor in heaven: "O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place." In modern literature, nothing could be of more service to keep us from every attempt to force a foreign meaning upon מְחַנֵּק, than the journal of Carl von Hohenhausen, in the work: C. v. Hohen. Untergang eines Jünglings von achtzehn Jahren, Braunsch. 1836. What but the most burning revenge discovers itself there in such expressions as the following: "Lord of the heavens and the earth, what have I done to Thee, that Thou crushest me!" "No words of reproach are too big for me, they all vanish before the weight of my sufferings;" "Almighty! that when He is resolved on crushing me, crushes me to pieces so very slowly! were a man to do this, one would say, that it must proceed from the most miserable weakness, or the meanest malice." We see everywhere, that he would rather have murdered God than himself.

Ver. 3. *When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy hands*—inasmuch as men can make nothing without fingers, and in expressive contrast to the poor works which they can make therewith—the moon and the stars, which Thou hast founded. If we would not account for the absence of the sun by supposing the Psalm was sung at night, we may conceive, with S. Schmidt among the older expositors (*quando suscipio cœlum, prout illud interdiu apparet cum sole suo, noctu autem lunam*), and Ewald among the more recent, that the Psalmist, in the first member, has his eye chiefly upon the sun, and then, in the second, specially describes the splendid appearance of the night-heavens; and this seems the more natural, particularly on account of the reference to Gen. i., where, among the objects of creation, the sun holds so prominent a place. When the heavens are spoken of as proofs of the greatness of God, every one thinks first of the sun.

Ver. 4. *What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?* The designation *עָוֶם*, which, according to its etymology, is *weak, frail*, is here used intentionally. Calvin: "The prophet means, that God's wonderful goodness is the more brightly displayed, in that He, the great Creator, whose omnipotence shines forth in the heavens, should crown so miserable and unworthy a creature with the highest honour, and enrich him with numberless treasures." Contrasted with God, whose almightiness and greatness as Creator is manifested by the heavens with their shining stars, man appears nothing more than a worm in the dust, undeserving of the least regard. What a wonderful display of love is it, then, that he should still have done so much for him, as is set forth in the following verses?—*נָסַח* to visit. Every manifestation of God for blessing or for punishment—which of the two must always be determined by the connection—appears as a visit by Him. So, for example, Ruth i. 6, "The Lord visited His people to give them bread." In Gen. xviii. 13, the Lord promises, then personally present, that He would return about that time the following year to Abraham, and then would Sarah have a son. In ch. xxi. 1, the fulfilment of the promise is thus recorded, "And the Lord visited Sarah, as He had said;" therewith are conjoined, as having the same force, the words, "and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken." The Lord appeared not *personally*, but invisibly in the fulfilment of His promise. From this and similar passages

it is manifest, that the commonly received signification of *בקר* in such a connection: "to look on something or some one," is inadmissible. The expression testifies to a great force of the religious consciousness, which apprehends God in every operation of His hand.—The commencement of David's prayer in 2 Sam. vii. 18 presents a striking resemblance to our verse: "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast led me hitherto?" It is the same humility which here wonders at the greatness of God's condescension to man in general, and there at the greatness of His condescension to the son of Jesse. The words, "what is man, what am I," expressed one of the deepest feelings of David's soul. In vers. 5-8 he further enlarges on the way in which God has thought upon man, and visited him.

Ver. 5. *Thou settest him a little beneath Divine rank, Thou crownest him with honour and glory.* Various expositors follow the Chaldee and the LXX. in rendering *אלהים* by *angels*. But this exposition has manifestly sprung from doctrinal considerations. In support of this meaning, one can only appeal to certain passages in which it has been falsely so rendered either for doctrinal reasons, or others beside the mark; and in connection with those passages, appeal is made again to the one before us. But there is *here* a special ground for rejecting this exposition, which was first pointed out by Dereser. The grace of God is here celebrated, which led Him to give to man the sovereignty over the earth. But how could he be compared in this respect with angels, who possess no such sovereignty? Others expound: Thou hast made him only a little less than God. But there is a double objection to be made also to this exposition: 1. *חסר* in Pi., with *מן*, is taken in the sense of *making less than, to make inferior to*, which is against the *usus loquendi*. The verb signifies, in Piel, *to make, or cause, to want*; and the noun connected with it by *מן* marks the object, in regard to which there is the want. So in the only place besides, where it does occur. Eccl. iv. 8, *מחסר את-נפשי מטובה*, "Deprive my soul of good;" comp. the adj. *חסר* with *מן* of the thing in Eccl. vi. 2. Accordingly, the expression here, *החסרתו מ'*, can only be rendered: Thou hast made him to want little of God. 2. It is not admissible to understand by *אלהים* here, precisely and exclusively the only true God. The passage would, in that case, be at variance with the view unfolded in Scripture, of the

infinite distance between God and man, and so loftily expressed in this Psalm itself. The correct interpretation is the following: The Elohim expresses the abstract idea of Godhead. But where it is not made concrete by the article, it is not unfrequently used merely to designate something super-earthly. (See my Treatise on the names of God in the Pent. in 2d vol. of Beitr. zur Einl. ins A. T.) Important in this point of view is the passage, Zech. xii. 8, "The house of David shall be as Elohim, as the angel of the Lord," where the transition from "Elohim" to "the angel of the Lord," is put as an advance from the less to the greater. The idea of the Elohim sinks lowest in 1 Sam. xxviii. 13, where the witch of Endor says to Saul, "I see Elohim ascending out of the earth." Here there remains only the vague representation of a super-earthly, super-human power, which the woman sees entering in the one apparition, into the world of sense. Now, applying this to the place before us, it shows that the words, "Thou makest him want little of God," Thou makest him well-nigh possess God, is correctly expounded by Calvin: *Parum abesse cum jussisti a divino et cœlesti statu*,—Thou bestowest on him an almost super-earthly dignity.

There remains the inquiry, whether the comparison refers to *all* the privileges conferred by God on man, or only to something special. The latter is undoubtedly the right supposition. The discourse is of man's dignity only, in so far as the lordship over the earth has been given him by God. This is clear from the parallelism alone. God is praised in the second member, because He has conferred royal dignity on man. But still more does it appear so from the following verses. These are only a further expansion of the present one. And in them, the subject handled throughout, is solely the lordship of man over the earth, as the deputy of God. In his representation, the Psalmist has manifestly before his eye the passage in Genesis, in which man is installed by God as lord of the earth. In what follows, there are, to some extent, verbal coincidences: comp. Gen. i. 26: "Let us make man in our image, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, etc.;" ver. 28, and especially ix. 2, "And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air . . . and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are

they delivered;" which last passage has this in common with our verse, that its enumeration of the objects ruled, begins with the higher, and goes on to the lower; whereas in Gen. i. the reverse order is observed. Our Psalm is properly the expression of the subjective feelings occasioned by this sovereign act on the part of God. But though the Psalm directly relates only to the supremacy of man over the earth, it does indeed indirectly lead farther. This *particular* dignity of man is but the result of his *general* endowment, of the general pre-eminence which he holds above all creatures of earth. In Genesis this is very obvious. It is *because* man bears God's image, that there the lordship of creation is given him. But, whilst allowing that the Psalm inculcates *indirectly* the dignity of man in general, we do not justify those who would derive from the Psalm a proof that the moral dignity of man still continues after the fall, or rather a proof against the fall. We have already shown, that the Psalm simply and solely treats of God's appointment and gift, and does not notice what man has squandered and destroyed thereof. If this holds true of the proper object, to wit, the lordship over the earth, it must also hold true of that which is considered only so far as it is presupposed by that object.

*And with honour and glory Thou crownest him*,—the common designations of kingly state and majesty; comp. Ps. xxi. 5, xlv. 3; Jer. xxii. 18; 1 Chron. xxix. 25. God has set up man on earth as His deputy-king. It is self-evident, however, that not every individual man is represented here as God's deputy and vicegerent, but humanity. The Fut. with *vau* conv. at the beginning, shows, that the "making him to want little" is a consequence of the remembrance and visitation. That we cannot grammatically translate: "Thou *hast* made him to want, but, Thou *makest* him to want, or, *and so* Thou *makest* him" (comp. Ps. vii. 15), appears from the parallel תַּעֲרֹךְ, Thou crownest him. To the Psalmist, the action of God is not one limited to a period absolutely *past*, but one continued through all time, and independent of time. God daily crowns man anew. עָרַךְ, to crown, like all verbs of "covering," with a double accusative.

Ver. 6. *Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands, Thou puttest all under his feet.* In Genesis, the corresponding phrase is רָרָה with ב; prop. "to plant the foot on something," "to tread," then "to rule."

Ver. 7. *All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field.* צֶמֶן = צֶמֶן, a flock made up of sheep and goats. The choice of the rare form is to be referred here to the poetical dialect. The form צֶמֶן, midway between the two, occurs in Num. xxxii. 24. שֶׂרֵי, poetic form for שָׂרֵי, field; Ewald, p. 298.

Ver. 8. But Thou hast not merely put land animals beneath his feet, or subjected them to his rule; Thou hast added also the tenants of the air, and of the water,—*the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea.* The paths of the sea, as the Homer. ὑγρὰ κέλευθα. עֲבָרִי is not to be straightway referred to רִגִי, for then we should have expected the plural, but that which passeth through, whatsoever goes through; Eng. Trans.: *And whatsoever passeth*, beside fishes, the other inhabitants also of the sea; comp. Gen. i. 21. That what is here ascribed to man, is peculiar to him to a certain extent, even since the fall, as is implied in the frequent use of the Future denoting the Present, is shown, not only by Gen. ix. 2, but also by daily experience. No creature is so strong, so savage, so alert, but that man, though relatively one of the weakest creatures, in process of time becomes its master; comp. Jas. iii. 7. Nevertheless, there is a vast difference in this respect between his condition *before* and *since* the fall. Before that event, the obedience of all creatures toward the appointed vicegerent of God was a spontaneous one; after it, his subjects revolted against *him*, as he against *his* Lord. He must maintain against them, as against the resisting earth, a hard conflict,—must on all hands employ art and cunning; and though, on the *whole*, he remains conqueror in this warfare, yet, in particulars, he has to suffer many defeats.

Ver. 9. *Jehovah, our Lord, how glorious is Thy name in all the earth!* These words are not a simple repetition of those in ver. 1. There they contained a general expression of praise to God, on account of the glory accruing to Him on earth, by means of His manifestation in the heavens. Here they refer to the great proof of His glory, which God has given in His condescension and goodness toward man.

## PSALM IX.

God's righteousness, in assisting His people, and humbling their ungodly enemies, is praised, vers. 1-6. From what God has *done*, a conclusion is drawn as to what He *is*, righteous, and an helper to the oppressed, vers. 7-13. From the consciousness of what the Lord had formerly done, and what He is, the Psalmist, or rather the people in whose name he speaks, raise the prayer that He would graciously assist them, as heretofore, against all their other and still unsubdued enemies, who threaten them with destruction, vers. 13, 14. They receive the assurance of an acceptable hearing, vers. 15, 17; and conclude with the hope, that God will verify His word, vers. 18, 19, and with the prayer that He would do so, vers. 19, 20. The opinion of Koester, that the author has observed a six-membered strophe, is not well founded. To secure that, we should need to divide what belongs to one part, and throw together what belongs to different ones.

The superscription attributes the Psalm to David, and no weight is due to the reasons which have been alleged to the contrary. Even by critics like Hitzig the authorship of David is admitted, both of this and the next Psalm. In support of this, he mentions the rough and abrupt style, the archaisms, and many traits in common with those Psalms which are certainly David's. The precise time, however, in the life of David to which the Psalm is to be referred, cannot be determined; for nothing more definite can be learned from the Psalm itself than, 1. That it must have been composed after Zion had become the sanctuary of the nation, by the removal thither of the ark of the covenant,—the Lord being spoken of in ver. 11 as "dwelling in Zion;" and, 2. That it was composed at a time when some of the external enemies had been conquered, and while others were still threatening danger. But in such a position David was placed almost through the whole of his life. Indeed, this is the case with God's Church in general upon earth. In the *ecclesia militans*, the words, "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart," are constantly succeeded by "Have mercy upon me, O Lord." The Psalm, besides, may be fully explained without any more exact historical reference. The matter is so general, that one is obliged to suppose that David, from the very first, penned the Psalm for the use of the people, when



pressed with danger from foreign adversaries. There is nothing to set against this supposition, if we refer the first part, vers. 1-12, not to any particular transaction, but in general to all the deliverances which God had granted to His people. The sacred penman makes grateful remembrance of this, that, by such a recognition of the past, he might render God more inclined to listen to the prayer which follows. The view now taken contributes much to set the Psalm in its true light. Especially does it serve to make the general bearing of the entire first part clear. The relation of this part to the second has been very much misunderstood by De Wette. He conceives that it only contains the hope, that the Lord would subdue the enemies, confidently expressed. But we only need to consider the representation more closely, in order to see that it expresses, not hope for help to be afforded, but thanksgiving for benefits already conferred. De Wette himself is obliged to admit that "the Psalm certainly stands in this respect alone." Here, and in a multitude of other Psalms, thanks and praise are offered up before prayer for a double reason. The *Giver* will be more disposed to bestow new gifts when He sees that those already conferred are kept in grateful recollection. A *spirit of thankfulness* is one of the marks by which the family of God is distinguished from the world. He who cannot from the heart give *thanks* shall *beg* in vain. The *receiver* raises himself more easily to the hope of future kindnesses, when he recalls the remembrance of former benefits derived from the Giver. The foundation of despair is always ingratitude. The false supposition of De Wette is occasioned by another just as false, according to which the first part is made to express thanks (by anticipation) only for a single deliverance, notwithstanding the "all Thy wonders," in ver. 1, and the still more decidedly contradictory words in ver. 5, "Thou rebukest the heathen."

The relation which David had in view when he composed this Psalm for public use, was that of the Church of God to its external enemies. We must not take objection to their being simply designated the wicked, those who forget God, while the Israelites appear as the righteous, the meek. The same appearance constantly recurs again,—to wit, that a society which is animated by a truly Divine principle, and, consequently, has a kernel of members in whom this principle is embodied, regardless of the husk, which everywhere exists, is contrasted with

another society which is animated by an ungodly principle, and in which, as a society, there can consequently be no kernel (the evil rather being the kernel), and is opposed thereto, as the kingdom of good, to the kingdom of evil. Let us just look at the songs of the age of the Reformation. They everywhere contrast the community of God and the community of Antichrist. Who would conclude from this, that the reformers reckoned every professing member of the Evangelic Church truly pious, and every member of the Romish Church utterly bad? Still, according to their view, it was accidental, because not involved in the idea and principle, if in the former any ungodly person was found, and in the latter any pious. Then, it is also to be taken into account, that, in relation to the heathen, the justice of the cause was always on the side of Israel, who, humanly considered, were unjustly oppressed. In this point of view Habakkuk justly asks of God, i. 13, "Wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" The two together, the internal righteousness of the kernel, and the external righteousness of the cause, gave a solid ground of confidence to the prayer for deliverance out of the hand of the heathen. It may also be considered how entirely analogous the language was with ourselves during the war for freedom.

In opposing De Wette, who would put this into the large class of plaintive Psalms, Clauss has suffered himself to fall into an entirely false view of it. He maintains that the Psalm contains no element of prayer, but is wholly occupied with thanksgiving and praise. He is thus obliged to take up the unnatural position, in which he is certainly preceded by many of the older expositors, that ver. 13 only adduces directly the cry of the miserable, which was already heard; which is contradicted, however, by the conclusion of the Psalm, where there is also a prayer, showing that the evil was still not altogether removed. The structure of our Psalm is quite analogous to that of Ps. xviii., xl., lxviii., and to many others, in which the deliverance already obtained is first fully described, and then, upon the ground thereof, are expressed hope and prayer. It is certainly true that the feeling of gratitude for the aid already received here predominates, and on that account the prayer here is shorter, and is at once replaced by the confidence of being heard. Hence

we are not to think of such times as the exile, when the pain was much more severely felt, and the conflict more violent.

That the Psalmist speaks not in his own person, and of what he himself had either obtained or wished to obtain, but in the name of the Church and of the deliverance granted to it, or wished for by it, is clear from the designation of the object of the Divine care, as "the afflicted," ver. 12, "the meek," in ver. 18, "those who know the name of the Lord and seek Him," in ver. 10. Consequently, what Hitzig alleges in support of the Davidic authorship of the Psalm, that the author must, from vers. 3, 4, 13, have been a king, vanishes of itself. For this allegation rests upon a confusion of the author with the person speaking.

The position, that the Psalm does not refer to the personal relations of the Psalmist, but from the first was composed in the name of the whole body, and designed for its use, is supported, not only by the absence of all definite historical references, to which we have already adverted, but also by the whole tone of the Psalm, which evidently betrays the situation of the author to have been merely a supposititious one. We also discover here nothing of that inwardness and liveliness of feeling displayed in those Psalms which refer to personal relations, or even to the community at large, when particular circumstances were in question, or a special necessity oppressed it, or a special deliverance had been experienced.

In the LXX., which the Vulgate follows, this Psalm is united to the following one. Many expositors approve of this, appealing to the similarity of subject, and the want of a superscription to Psalm x. We shall return more at length to the matter in our introduction to that Psalm.

The words עֲלֵמֹת לֵבֶן in the superscription are not easy. Winer, De Wette, and others, read the two first as one word, and point עֲלֵמֹת; which is used at the beginning of Ps. xlv. for marking the tune. לֵבֶן they render: for Ben, or the Benites. A Ben is mentioned in 1 Chron. xv. 18 as a master-singer. It is to be alleged against this, however, that the common reading and punctuation have on their side the preponderance of external authorities; and still more, that we are then driven to the unjustifiable necessity of supplying עַל before עֲלֵמֹת. Clauss gets rid of this difficulty only by introducing a greater one. He would read עֲלֵמֹת. But this word, which never actually occurs,

could only signify *virginity*; and out of this to get a "virgin-song," or "virgin-piece" = music-piece of the character *עלמה* *by*, is not very easy. Finally, the *ב* should then have been without the article,—an objection which is not of itself indeed quite conclusive, but which still gives important confirmation to the others, as the article is very rarely placed before proper nouns: see Ewald, p. 568. If, with others, we consider the words as taken from an old song, after the air of which our Psalm was to be sung, still they needed not have formed exactly the beginning of this song, but only to have occurred somewhere in it. Songs were not always named from their commencing words. Thus David's song of lamentation upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, in 2 Sam. i. 18, is named *the bow*, *קשת*, because mention is made in it of the bow. It would then be very natural to suppose that this old song was a plaintive one on the death of a son, *dying to the son*, either with some such verb as *has happened*; or it might be taken as a mere circumlocution for the stat. constr., rendered necessary from the circumstance that the first noun was intended to be an indefinite one, the second a definite one, not "*the dying*," but "*dying*:" see Ewald, p. 583. *מת* is found as inf. nominasc. also in Ps. xlviii. 14, comp. Gen. xxv. 32. But this whole view labours under the difficulty, that for such a pointed reference to a song, after the air of which a Psalm was to be sung, there is no analogy whatever in the superscriptions; in every other place, where this hypothesis has been advanced, it has turned out, on closer investigation, to be groundless. The true mode of explanation was hit upon by Grotius, who supposed that *לבן* was put by a transposition of letters for *נבל*, and that the superscription marks the subject of the Psalm. But he erred in taking *נבל* as a proper name, *upon the dying of Nabal*—a subject to which the Psalm could not possibly refer—instead of: *upon the dying of the fool*. This error being rectified, the superscription accords exactly with the contents: the destruction of the fool (comp. Ps. xiv. 1) is actually the subject of the Psalm. Precisely corresponding words are used in ver. 5, "Thou hast destroyed the wicked:" comp. also in ver. 3, "they shall perish at Thy presence;" in ver. 6, "their memorial is perished;" in ver. 12, "when He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them;" and in ver. 17, "the wicked shall be turned into hell." Analogous examples of an enigmatical designation by a change of letters, are *Sesach* for

Babel, and the Leb Kamai for Kasdim in Jeremiah, both according to the *Alphabet um Atbash*.—See on this and similar enigmatical designations, Christology, Part ii. p. 92 ss. Such an enigmatical description of the subject is peculiarly appropriate in the superscriptions of the Psalms, and finds in them, as our exposition will show, a great number of analogies. This explanation derives special support from 2 Sam. iii. 33, where David laments, “Died Abner as the fool dieth,” כָּמֹת נָבָל; comp. also 1 Sam. xxv. 38, “And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal that he died.” Though the word is here to be taken as an adjective, yet it would seem that David had his eye upon that circumstance, which he viewed in the light of a prediction; comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 26, where Abigail said, “Let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.”

In the first half of the first strophe, vers. 1–6, the Psalmist first declares his purpose of praising God, in vers. 1, 2; then in vers. 3, 4, he mentions the overthrow which God had inflicted on the enemies as the ground and occasion of this purpose; and in vers. 5, 6, he enlarges on the same subject.

Ver. 1. *I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, I will show forth all Thy marvellous works.* The words, “with my whole heart,” serve at once to show the greatness of the deliverances wrought for the Psalmist, and to distinguish him from the hypocrites—the coarse ones, who praise the Lord for His goodness merely with the lips, and the more refined ones, who praise Him only with half their heart, while they secretly ascribe the deliverance more to themselves than to Him. *All Thy wonders*, the marvellous tokens of Thy grace. The Psalmist shows by this term, that he recognised them in all their greatness. Where this is done, there the Lord is also praised with the whole heart. *Half-heartedness*, and the depreciation of Divine grace, go hand in hand. The כ is the כ instrum. The heart is the instrument of praise, the mouth only its organ.

Ver. 2. *I will be glad and rejoice in Thee; I will adorn Thy name, O Thou Most High.* Many expositors render כָּךְ by, *upon Thee*, upon Thy wonderful doings. But the כ after a verb of joy always denotes the person or object wherein the affection reposes. It is not a mere joy *before* God, but a joy *in* God. To adorn the name of God is equivalent to singing of His glorious deeds (Venema: Deum factis illustrem), for the name

is the product of the deeds. The *Most High* is used descriptively, because God had manifested Himself as uncontrolled ruler over all earthly things.

Ver. 3. *When mine enemies are turned back*—the ב points to the occasion of the praise, the circumstances which had called it forth, its cause—*they stumble and perish at Thy presence*: not human power and might have compassed their overthrow, but Thy indignation, which they could not withstand. This is poetically expressed, as if the enemies had been thrown to the ground by the glance of God's fiery countenance. כן is the מן causæ. פנים has the sense of *angry face*, only from the connection; it never signifies this, as many expositors maintain, by itself. The use of the Fut. is to be explained from the lively nature of the representation. The Psalmist sees the downfall of his enemies taking place before his eyes. With this De Wette could not sympathize; and so he thinks that in this verse he finds a support to his false view, that vers. 1-6 express hope in regard to future deliverance. In the further enlargement that is given in vers. 4-6, the Psalmist speaks in a calmer style, and there the Preterite is constantly used.

Ver. 4. *For Thou hast made my judgment and right.* The *for* marks the relation of vers. 4-6 to ver. 3. What has been said in general, is confirmed by particulars. ממשט and דן both denote, according to many expositors, causam forensē. *Thou hast made*, q. d. Thou dost undertake, or decide. The idea of a favourable decision is necessarily involved therein, since God, as the righteous one, if He undertakes a cause at all, cannot but do justice to the righteous. But this exposition is contradicted by the fact, that the expressions עשה ממשט and עשה דן are never used, except of a decision in favour of a righteous cause; while, according to it, they might be used just as well of a decision against the ungodly. Comp. 1 Kings viii. 45, 49; Deut. x. 18; Ps. cxl. 12. These parallel passages show that the two words must be taken rather in the sense of judgment and right (דן in this sense, Prov. xx. 8, Isa. x. 2), that which belongs to me, which is due to my righteous cause. This exposition also fits better than the first into the parallelism. *Thou satest on the throne as righteous judge.* ישב should here, according to many, be taken in the sense of *setting Himself*, on account of the prep. ל following; for, that ל is not put for ב, is to be taken for granted. But there is nothing to prevent us from

abiding by the common and only certain meaning of the verb. For there is as little to warrant us in taking ל in the sense of לא, as these interpreters presuppose, as in that of ב. Therefore יִשֵּׁב לְכִסֵּא, "to sit as one belonging to the throne," is equivalent to "sitting upon the throne."

Ver. 5. *Thou hast rebuked the heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked.* נָעַר, to rebuke, denotes, when used of God, the infliction of the punishment, without receiving another sense than the word usually has. The punishment is considered as a sermo realis. The נִיִּם shows that the thanksgivings do not refer to victory over a single heathenish nation. *Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever:* Thou hast so completely extirpated them, that their memory has perished with them.

Ver. 6. *The enemy, finished are the destructions for ever; and Thou hast destroyed cities, their memorial is perished, even they.* The pron. sep. הֵמָּה is used with emphasis, after the suff. had already been employed. Their memorial perished, even theirs; or more exactly: "their memory perished, even they (have perished)." Attention is called to the great contrast between the proud expectations of the enemies, their apparently invincible strength, and their now entire annihilation: their memory is gone,—the memory of those who, in their supercilious pride, and in their actual possession of all human means of help, fancied themselves lords of the whole earth. Thus emphatically also at the beginning stands the nom. absol. *the enemy*—he who thought himself so secure, so invincible, who appeared destined to lasting prosperity. הֵמָּה in the sense of being *completed, finished*, is found also in Jos. v. 8; 1 Kings vi. 22, vii. 22; Ps. lxiv. 6. While הֵמָּה marks the entireness of the desolation which reigns in the land of the enemies, לְנֶצַח expresses the perpetuity of it. By the *ruins* we are to understand, as is evident from the parallel, *cities*, and even from the word itself, destroyed fortresses and dwellings. In the verb, "Thou hast destroyed," the address is directed to God, as in ver. 5, throughout. As in the first and last clause the desolation is merely described by itself, it is necessary that attention be called to the author of it in the middle, the desolation being here viewed only so far as it is one wrought by God. The second clause stands in the same relation here to the first and third, as in ver. 3 the third does to the first and second. Another exposition renders: "*the enemies, their devastations have an end.*"

But it is to be objected, that חרבה never signifies *devastation* in an active sense, but only "ruins." Apart from usage, which furnishes no instance of the word being employed in the former signification, either in the masculine or feminine gender, the inadmissibility of that signification is evident also from the form. The Segol-forms with ט serve only to express intransitive or passive ideas: see Ewald, p. 228. As the verb signifies only to be desolated, never to desolate, so also the noun must mean desolation in the passive sense. The parallelism too: "Thou hast destroyed cities," tends to show that the subject of discourse here is the ruin of hostile habitations; as also the ascription, that "their memory is perished," indicates a total destruction of them. The three verbs, אבר—נחשת—חמו, stand in exact parallelism. Now, if the affairs of the enemies are described by the two last as going to ruin, the same explanation must be held also to be the only correct one in regard to the first. Ewald, following Venema, would take האויב as the subject: the enemies are completed as desolations for ever, *i.e.* the enemies became altogether perpetual desolations. But desolations do not suit persons; and how little the parallelism favours this exposition may be gathered from this alone, that Ewald sees himself under the necessity of taking ערים in the sense of צרים, adversaries. Quite arbitrary, also, is the exposition of Maurer: O enemy, there is an end to the ruins and the cities which thou hast destroyed. For the address in the first part is throughout directed to the Lord; and it could not be said that the cities destroyed by the enemies have an end. Finally, the exposition of De Wette: The enemies are gone, desolations (are) for ever, does violence to the accents, which separate חמו from האויב, and connect it with חרבות: the verb in the plural, standing in the middle between a noun in the singular and a noun in the plural, is more naturally joined with the latter than the former; according to the analogy of נחשת and אבר, the חמו also is to be referred, not to the enemies themselves, but to that which belongs to them; lastly, that the words, חרבות לנצח, form a period by themselves, with the omission of the verb, is against the analogy of the other members of the verse, and of vers. 4 and 5, where verbs are constantly placed in the Preterite. The contents of vers. 5 and 6 suit most exactly to the Amalekites (without being confined to them), who, after the victories gained over them by Saul and David, altogether disappear from the



theatre of history. That the Psalmist had them chiefly in view, and derived from their fate the strong colours in which he depicts the overthrow of the enemies of God's people, is probable from the reference which the expressions, "Thou hast put out their name for ever," and "their memorial is perished," seem to bear to Ex. xvii. 14, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek," and Deut. xxv. 19, "Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek." Comp. also Num. xxiv. 20, "Amalek is the first of the heathen, but his end is destruction," עַרִי אֶמְלֵךְ. The representation, however, was also verified in the overthrow of the Canaanites, and in the victories of David over the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and other nations.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord is enthroned for ever; He has prepared His throne for judgment*, or for holding judgment. The Psalmist strengthens his faith through the conviction, confirmed by those deliverances, that God is the eternal ruler and judge of the world; that, however the rage of the ungodly may swell, they can never prevail to push God from His exalted throne, from which, with almighty power and perfect righteousness, He governs the world, and vindicates the cause of the oppressed. He thus derives the general from the particular, from individual realizations he forms the idea, from history he deduces the doctrine, and praises God because His very nature is a pledge of the salvation of His people in all their needs. The way is thus prepared for the prayer he has to present. The Futures are to be translated in the Present, and mark the continuous action.

Ver. 8. *And He judges the world in righteousness; He ministers judgment to the people in uprightness.*

Ver. 9. *And the Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed.* יְיָ might be taken as an Optative. The Psalmist would then express a wish that God would be to him what He had been described in the preceding context. Through this wish he would make known his pleasure in what is divine. However, as in poetry the abbreviated form stands in place of the common one, we may also translate in accordance with the preceding and following context: "And there is." מִשְׁכָּן is a high place, where one is secure from the attacks of one's enemies. The remark of Venema is not to be overlooked: "Utique David, quod observo, primus est qui Deum locum editum, hac voce, appellavit." The ground of David's predilection for this

designation of God, he finds in the circumstance of David's having often experienced safety in such places, when fleeing from Saul. רָץ from רָכַץ, "to crush," signifies, "one who is oppressed." *A refuge for times in trouble.* Times in trouble are times when one is in trouble; comp. Ps. x. 1. In this verse, also, faith judges from that which God has done, what He is, and will do. How He had shown Himself during the past, in a series of actions, as a refuge for the oppressed, was declared in vers. 3-6; therefore such is His character generally, and such also must He prove Himself in regard to the present oppression.

Ver. 10. *And they that know Thy name do put their trust in Thee.* To know the name of God, is to know Him according to His historical manifestation, as described in vers. 3-6.—For the name of God is the product of this manifestation. When one hears Him named, then one calls to remembrance all that He has done. The name is the focus in which all the rays of His actions meet. *For*—this is shown by Thy name, this is pledged by Thine historical character, which can only result from Thy nature—*Thou hast not forsaken them that seek Thee, O Lord.*

Ver. 11. This and the following verse form the conclusion, the epiphony and resumé of the whole first part, or of the two first strophes, in which it has been described how the Lord has acted, then how He is: therefore sing. *Sing praises to the Lord, who is throned upon Zion*—prop. the enthroner of Zion, to whom Zion belongs. This designation is here chosen because God had acted as King of Israel, as guardian of the nation, and in that capacity had been described. *Declare among the people His doings*: tell among the heathen how gloriously He has helped, and still helps, His people. Rightly Calvin: "Although this were substantially to preach to deaf ears, yet David would show, by this form of expression, that the limits of Judea were too narrow to comprise within themselves the everlasting riches of the praise of God."

Ver. 12. *For the avenger of blood remembereth him, He forgetteth not the cry of the afflicted.* *For*—this is the deduction from the deeds with which the Psalmist had just been occupying himself—the Lord, who leaves not innocent blood to be shed with impunity upon the earth, punishes the enemies for the cruelty which they practised upon His people. In regard to the Preterites of the verb, which are to be rendered by the Present,

the remark of Ewald, *Small Gr.* § 263, specially applies: "General truths which are clear from experience, and have already shown and proved themselves to be such, are described in the Perfect." The suffix in אָתָם refers to the plural דָּמִים. God appears to have *forgotten* the blood of the slain so long as He leaves the murderer unpunished; He calls him to *remembrance* when He punishes him. The sense is weakened if we refer it to the following עָנִי, and it is also opposed to the parallelism. God remembers blood: He forgets not the cry of the afflicted. In both members mention is made of that which calls forth the vengeance of God against the evil-doers. *Blood* is not here to be taken, with the generality of expositors, as synecdochically comprehending all sorts of misdeeds; but the Psalmist naturally mentions the highest pitch of hostile malice, as peculiarly fitted to draw forth the Divine vengeance. A special reason for this manner of expression is to be found in the unquestionable reference to Gen. ix. 5, where God designates Himself the avenger of blood, "I will require your blood:" "He, who in His word announces Himself to be the avenger of blood, does, as experience testifies, remember him." (Venema: "Quam personam Deus sibi jam aptavit tempore Abelis, cujus sanguis vindictam clamavit et se constanter in orbis gubernatione esse gesturum declaravit. Gen. ix.") For עָנִי the Masoretic marginal reading is עָנִים, whose vowels, as usual, stand in the text. The marginal reading is here also to be rejected. It has only arisen from the feeling that a moral quality, humility, is necessary to the hearing of prayer. But it is overlooked, that although עָנִי constantly retains its proper signification (see upon the never-failing distinction between עָנִי, *afflicted*, *miserable*, and עָנָה, *humble*, Christol. P. ii. p. 126 ss.), it is clear enough from the connection that only persons who innocently suffer are meant. The mention of a cry and of blood also points to the idea of suffering, and not of humility. The reading in the text is further confirmed by the following עָנִי, in ver. 13, which is most closely related to עָנִים: "God forgets not the cry of the afflicted,—Be merciful to me, O Lord, *behold* my affliction."

Ver. 13. The prayer now rises on the foundation laid in the preceding context. Luther remarks: "In the same way do all feel and speak who have already overcome some tribulation and misfortune, and are once more oppressed, tormented, and plagued. They cry and beg that they may be delivered." This is un-

questionably the right view of this and the next verse. *Be gracious to me, O Lord, behold my affliction of my haters, Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.*  $\text{וַתִּשָּׁאֵנִי}$  is formed as if the verb were a regular one. According to the analogy of the verbs  $\text{שָׁאֵן}$ , it ought to have been  $\text{וַתִּשָּׂאֵנִי}$ . Such forms are merely poetical; Ewald, p. 476. Poetry ever strives to give outward expression to its internal separation from common life. *Of my haters, i.e. proceeding from them, done to me.*  $\text{בְּ}$  designates the originator. Not so good is the exposition of those who suppose here a constr. prægnans: Behold my affliction and free me from my haters. There are certainly to be found similar constructions. So, for example, is it said in 2 Sam. xviii. 19, "The Lord hath judged him out of the hand of his enemies." But still the passage here is not perfectly analogous. The *seeing* is less practical than the *judging*, and even than the *hearing* in Ps. xxii. 21; the helping is not involved here, as it is there, in the expression itself (it is to be observed that in Ps. xxii. not  $\text{שָׁמַעַ$ , but  $\text{עָנָה}$  is used), but is only a *consequence* of the seeing. *Thou, my lifter up*, Thou, whose constant part it is to lift me up. Death, or the realm of death, sheol, is represented under the image of a deep, firmly barred prison-house, from which no one can deliver himself. The greatest distress and misery are here, therefore, denoted by the sinking down into sheol. That God is a helper in distress, begets confidence towards Him in particular seasons of distress. The words comprehend in brief, what in the first part had been exhibited in detail, and, consequently, direct attention to the relation subsisting between this strophe and the two preceding ones—the connection between the prayer and the thanksgiving and praise.

Ver. 14. As a reason for the granting of his prayer for further deliverance, the Psalmist declares that he should thereby have occasion for still more praising God. In this verse we discover one of the two ends intended to be answered by a previous offering of thanks and praise. It is substantially based on the supposition that the thanks and praise of His people are acceptable to God. *That I may show forth all Thy praise, all Thy wonderful doings, in the gates of the daughter of Zion.* That we must not, with many expositors, the last of whom was Clauss, render  $\text{לְמַעַן}$  by *on this account*, we have seen on a former occasion. *In the gates*—expositors commonly remark—were the assemblies and judgments held; hence, "in the gates" is equivalent to "in

the public assembly." But this view is untenable. God's praise is not to be celebrated in the gates, amid the noise of worldly business, but in the temple. The expression is to be regarded as simply meaning *within*. It is confessedly often used in that sense in the Pentateuch; see the Lexicons. The former interpretation is opposed also by "the gates of death," in the preceding verse, which also signify the whole region of the dead. The daughter of Zion is Jerusalem. The Gen. is to be understood precisely as in the words, נהר פרת, "the river of the Euphrates," for, Euphrates. So בת בבל, בת ירושלם, is not "daughter of Jerusalem," "daughter of Babylon," but rather, "daughter Jerusalem," "daughter Babylon," etc. Words which are very frequently coupled together, take gradually the form of the stat. constr., although, according to their meaning, they merely stand in apposition; Ewald, p. 579. Cities were poetically personified as maidens or daughters, and that so frequently that the designation sometimes found its way also into prose. The form תְּהַלְלֶנּוּ cannot be plural; the plural must have been תְּהַלְלֶנּוּ; neither can it be singular, for then the Jod must have been wanting. It appears that the vowels have originally belonged to a Kri, which had afterwards been dropt from the margin. The Masorites wished to read the singular instead of the rarer plural, which they considered to be recommended by Ps. lxxi. 4, cvi. 2.

Ver. 15. The fourth strophe contains the internal assurance of being heard.—*The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the net which they hid, was their own foot taken.* That the Præterites refer to an *ideal* past; denote that which, not the corporeal eye, but faith, saw as present; and that we must hence not suppose, with most expositors, that the Psalmist returns to celebrate a deliverance actually past,—appears from ver. 17 ss., where he continues to express his hope of that in the future, which is here represented as already afforded.

Ver. 16. "The Lord made Himself known, He held judgment:" The latter words describe the manner of making known, that through which He was recognised, wherein He manifested Himself. It is quite unnecessary to bring the two members into a closer relation to each other, to make the second grammatically dependent on the first. The abrupt mode of expression is in perfect accordance with the joyful emotions of the Psalmist. *In the work of his own hands,*—in the snares pre-

pared by himself, and laid for others,—*the wicked is snared*; comp. Ps. vii. 15, 16. נָקַט is the participle in Kal of the verb נָקַט; in Piel, “to ensnare,” in Kal, “to be ensnared.” As this verb is also found elsewhere, there is no reason for taking the word here as an irregular form of the Præter. in Niph. from נָקַט; in which case, instead of the Zere, Patach should have been used.—הִנֵּי is found in three other places besides this. In two of them, Ps. xix. 14, Lam. iii. 61, the sense, *musings, reflection*, is certain, and generally recognised. This established meaning is also quite suitable in the third passage, Ps. xcii. 3—to muse upon the harp, is “to play meditatively, feelingly thereupon,” corresponding to the silent praise in Ps. lxxv. 1,—and to substitute, with Gesenius, De Wette, and others, the unfounded sense of *loud playing, or music*, is quite arbitrary. Applying this signification also here, הִנֵּי contains a call to reflection, most appropriate to the elevation of the moment at which he renewed the assurance of being heard. The *Selah*, pause, is very suitably added here. The music must cease, to afford space for calm meditation.

Ver. 17. The fifth strophe. *The wicked shall be turned into hell, all the nations forgetting God.* The transition from the Præter. to the Fut., which is the rather to be noticed, as Higgaion and Selah intervene between the two, may be explained in this way, that the lively emotions which took possession of the Psalmist, when he became assured of acceptance, have now subsided, so that he continues his discourse in a more calm and ordinary manner; or, perhaps, in vers. 15 and 16 the Psalmist, as out of himself, sees things with God’s eye as *present*, while here he falls back to the common point of view, and *hope* consequently takes the place of *sight*.—שׁוּב never signifies *to turn one’s self any whither*, but always *to turn away, to turn back*; and this signification is quite suitable here also: “They turn away from the Psalmist, and towards sheol.” Already was it remarked by J. D. Michaelis: Ceterum reditur quidem interdum a termino, ad quem ventum erat, set ad alium, quam in quo quis antea fuerat, c. c. 2 Par. xviii. 25, Job i. 21. The ה in לִשְׁאוֹל, can only be held to be superfluous by those who fail to see the distinction between שׁ and שׁוּ. There is a reference to ver. 13. The same God who raises the righteous from the gates of sheol, drives the wicked down thither, as into “their own place.” In reference to “the forgetting of God,” Venema remarks excellently: “Not

in that sense in which the Gentiles are said to be without God and His worship, which is common to them all, but rather in an emphatical one, as treading all law and righteousness beneath their feet, and manifesting that they have thrown off all regard to God, the judge of the world, and the avenger of crime—that they have obliterated and erased all those thoughts and apprehensions of God, which are inscribed upon the consciences of men."

Ver. 18. *For the poor shall not always be forgotten, the hope of the meek doth not perish for ever.* In the second hemistich, the אל is to be supplied from the first. The Kri עניים for ענים arose simply from the false notion of the Masorites, that the parallel אבין requires a word which does not denote a moral quality, but has respect to the outward condition. According to the connection, the needy is the poor and neglected righteous man, and the עניים are the suffering meek ones.

Ver. 19. The last strophe. There is a renewal of the prayer, with the difference, however, from the former, that it now springs from the assurance of being heard (the Psalmist takes God at His word); whereas, in the former case, it rested only on the ground of a general confidence in God's grace.—*Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in Thy sight.* The words, "Let not man prevail" (be strong), call attention to the internal contradiction which exists in the present state of things, to the contrast between the reality and the idea, which imperiously demands reconciling. That man, whose very name is weakness (comp. the vindication of the derivation of אנוש from אנט, to be weak, by Tholuck, Beitr. z. Spracherk. S. 61), makes his power prevail, is so intolerable a quid pro quo, that God must necessarily lift Himself up, in order to put it down. The use of the על is to be explained thus: The parties *stand* before the sitting judge, and so are raised above Him.

Ver. 20. *Put fear into them, O Lord; i. e. associate it with them as a companion, place it beside them, or appoint it for them.* שוּת with ל exactly as in Ps. cxli. 13: "Set a watch to my mouth." *To drive into, or lay on*, cannot be the meaning of the verb with ל. Some take כרס in the sense of *razor*, in which sense it occurs Judg. xiii. 5, and elsewhere, and translate: "Lay on them the razor." By this would then be denoted the greatest dishonour, for it is customary in the East to let the beard grow, and to have no beard is counted a reproach. But

this cannot, as we have said, be the meaning of the verb : and the expression has here, where all else is so simple, a forced and unnatural appearance. It is, therefore, better to take כָּוַרָה as only a different manner of writing the word on the margin, כָּוַרָה, *fear*, from יָרָא. ה often usurps the place of א, because the sound at the end is the same, and the number of words which end in ה, is much greater than those which have א. The Masorites, then, have only, as they have often done, placed the current for the rarer form.—*Let the heathen know that they are men*, weak, impotent creatures. The singular אִנְיֹשׁ carries more emphasis than the plural—dying, feeble man, not God. The use of the singular shows, that in all numerical and other differences, the nature still remains the same.

## PSALM X.

The Psalmist complains, that the Lord delivers up His people to the oppressions of proud, cruel, deceitful enemies, who forget God, vers. 1–11. He calls upon Him to withhold no longer His help from the innocent, and avenge Himself and them on His despisers and their oppressors, and expresses his confident hope that this will be done, vers. 12–15. He receives the assurance of being heard ; and, with the eye of faith, sees the enemies annihilated, the meek redeemed, the offence removed, which had drawn from him the “wherefore,” vers. 16–18.

Though the Psalm has no superscription, yet its place among those which belong to David renders it very probable that he was the author. At all events, the exceedingly compressed and difficult style, and the impress of originality, allowed even by De Wette, proves it to belong to an early age. The almost literal agreement in many passages between it and the preceding Psalm, which the superscription ascribes to David, would lead us to infer that this also must be his: comp. especially the peculiar phrase לַעֲתֹת בַּעֲרָה, in ver. 1, which nowhere else occurs, with ix. 9 ; “Arise, O Lord,” in ver. 12, with ix. 20 ; “That the man of the earth may no more oppress,” at the close, with “let not man prevail,” in ix. 19 ; the words, “the heathen are perished,” and “judg; the fatherless and the oppressed,” in vers. 16 and 18, with “let the heathen be judged,” in ix. 19, etc. These similarities, especially the first, prove not merely the identity of the



author, but also contemporaneity of composition. Others show, that a still nearer connection existed between the two Psalms; and that therefore the older translators, such as the LXX. and Vulgate, who joined both together, did not do so without reason. It is, first of all, remarkable, that this Psalm has, unlike all those which immediately precede and follow, no superscription. It is still more remarkable, that Ps. ix. begins with *א* and Ps. x. closes with *ן*,—nay, that through the two Psalms a certain alphabetical arrangement discovers itself, though it is not preserved throughout. In the rule, every alternate verse begins with the letter of the alphabet next in order. This fact is not overthrown by a number of exceptions. For these are to be explained on the principle, that the external arrangement was subordinated to the sense, and hence sacrificed to it, where the one could not be adapted to the other. The same view also is supported by the manifest internal reference of the words, “Thou hidest Thyself in times of trouble,” in x. 1, to those in ix. 9, “The Lord is a refuge in times of trouble,”—a reference, to which the similarity of the otherwise quite singular expression is but a fingerpost, and by which Ps. x. proclaims itself to be a continuation of Ps. ix. But, on the other hand, it does not suit well to unite both Psalms precisely into one. An external ground against this exists in the division in the MSS., which certainly is not accidental; and an internal one, that the two Psalms are separate, and complete in themselves. There only remains, therefore, the supposition, that the author designed the two Psalms to form one whole, divisible into two parts—a sort of thing which also occurs elsewhere; for example, in the relation of Ps. i. and ii., Ps. xlii. xliii. to each other. Along with the unquestionably great resemblance between the two Psalms in reference to the object, situation, train of thought, and particular features, there still exists a threefold difference, not to be overlooked: 1. The help, which the Lord had already granted to His people, forms in Ps. ix. the foundation on which the prayer is based; whereas in Ps. x. the same purpose is served by a lengthened description of the mournful state of things, loudly calling for Divine interference, of the superciliousness of the ungodly, nourished by their impunity, and of the sufferings of the righteous. This parallelism of the two sections, Ps. ix. 1–13, and x. 1–11, is of importance for coming to a right judgment on the first. It shows that the thanks rendered in it have not an independent

significance, but that the remembrance of that, which the Lord had formerly done, was only designed to insure the fulfilment of the word, "Ask in faith, nothing doubting." 2. In Ps. ix. the reference to the heathen is decidedly prominent. On the contrary, in Ps. x. the heathen are only once thought of, in ver. 16; and the author, besides, is throughout concerned simply with "the wicked." 3. In Ps. ix. the Psalmist introduces the people of the Lord saying, "I will praise the Lord," etc., which has caused some groundlessly to suppose that it refers to the personal relations of the Psalmist; here, on the contrary, he speaks always of the meek, the afflicted, etc., in the third person.—That David composed this Psalm, not in reference to any particular position of his life, but to the end that the people might avail themselves of it in all seasons of distress, was remarked even by Kimchi; and if this supposition had been kept steadily in view here, as also in the preceding Psalm, confirmed as it is by the entire matter, a host of fruitless conjectures might have been spared,—such, for example, as Hitzig has brought forward, who, however, has decidedly acknowledged the authorship of David. No trace is anywhere to be found of an individual reference; and vers. 8–10, which might be most readily explained historically, conclusively show that the individual element, where it seems to occur, is merely poetical individualization. The individual representation is also excluded here, as in Ps. ix., by the use of the alphabetical arrangement. This is never found in the personal Psalms.

Ver. 1. *Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why standest Thou as an indifferent spectator of my contest with the enemy, and dost not hasten to my rescue? The why is, in circumstances like the present, an evidence of lively faith. Only he who possesses it, and, with it, a firm conviction of God's omnipotence and righteousness, will consider it as a monstrous thing, and one that cannot continue, that God should not assist His suffering people. Thou coverest in times of trouble.* תַּלְיָה rightly by Calvin: "connives;" to which must be supplied, *eyes*. The expression stands in full, Lev. xx. 4, 1 Sam. xii. 3, and in many other places. See upon the omission of the *members* in current phrases, Ewald, p. 190. When God does not assist His people, He appears to have turned away His face from them, to have covered His eyes; comp. ver. 14. See on Ps. ix. 9, for the expression, "times of distress

or trouble." The supposition that "times *in* distress" stands simply for "times *of* distress," is opposed by the very concise character of the whole Psalm. We have already shown, that the words are externally, as well as internally, related to Ps. ix. 9. There the Psalmist had obtained from the earlier manifestations of God the sure result, that He is a refuge in times when one is in distress. He here takes up the inference from this result, and asks God, wherefore His actions are in contradiction thereto. The לענות בצרה is to be viewed as furnished with marks of quotation, and תעלים should have stress laid on it, as forming the contrast to מיטב.

Ver. 2. *Through the pride of the wicked the poor is inflamed; they are taken in the plots which they have devised.* רלק, in Heb. as well as in the cognate dialects, signifies, "to burn." Here the burning, or setting on fire, figuratively denotes "anger:" comp. כעס indignation, in ver. 14, which so often appears under the image of fire—comp., for example, Ps. xxxvii. 1, "Be not inflamed against the evil-doers;" Ps. xxxix. 3, "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned;" Isa. xxx. 27, "burning His anger;" Ezek. xxi. 36 (31), בערים, burning, for angry, raging. Against Gesenius and De Wette, who think that *burn* must here mean to *be in anguish*, we place the fact, that anguish is never so designated in Hebrew; and against Stier, who takes רלק to signify the heat of tribulation, and of Hitzig, who translates, is burned, we may urge as decisive, the remark of J. H. Michaelis: "*רלק ardorem activum, qualis est in igne, non passivum, qualis in materia denotat.*" The exposition of Sachs and others: "Through the pride of the wicked he persecutes the miserable," does not suit the parallelism so well; only one passage, Lam. iv. 19, in support of רלק connected in this signification with the accusative, can be adduced. Elsewhere it has this signification only with אחרי, which also is strictly necessary; and indeed it could only be left out, when the language had already grown corrupt. Most expositors explain the second clause: "they, the wretched, are caught or taken through the plans which those, the wicked, have devised;" and this exposition is to be preferred, from the parallelism and connection, to the other: "may they, the wicked, be caught or taken in the wiles which they have devised;" although the latter may be supported by parallel passages, such as Ps. vii. 13 ss., ix. 16.

Ver. 3. *For the wicked extols the desire of his soul, and he who makes gain blesses, despises the Lord.* The *for* marks not so much the relation of this verse to the preceding one, as the relation of the whole representation in vers. 3-11 to vers. 1 and 2. The brief intimations which the Psalmist had given in these two verses, regarding the posture of things, he establishes by a further elucidation in vers. 3-11. **נ** has precisely the same force in Ps. ix. 4; and this agreement also points to a closer connection between the two Psalms. The first clause is commonly rendered: "For the wicked boasts of his desire." But this rendering is inadmissible, as **לל** never signifies *to boast*, to *be proud*, least of all in Ps. lvi. 4, where its object is coupled with it, nor in Ps. xlv. 8. We must rather translate: "The wicked extols the desire of his heart." The **ל** stands then quite appropriately as a designation of the object, to which the extolling refers—its substratum. When the wicked ventures to laud in public the shameful lusts of his heart, as things which need not shun the light, this is the highest degree of depravity; and betokens, at the same time, how secure he has become in consequence of his impunity, how sad the condition of the poor, how much occasion there is for such to fear, how necessary therefore it is for God to interfere, and what reason there was for the *why* in the first verse. So also Ewald: "He gives praise, not, as is due, to Jehovah, but to his own lust;" comp. Hab. i. 11-16. The second clause can only be rendered: *who-soever makes gain, blesses, despises God.* **בצ** is correctly explained by Venema: *quæstum faciens per fas et nefas*. The bad sense lies not in the word itself, but in the connection. The object of the lamentation is, that whosoever makes gain, without further consideration, blesses God for it, without ever asking whether the gain is a righteous one or not. *Blesses God.* This indicates the highest degree of boldness. For a man who possesses any moral feeling will say, "Blessed be God," only when he has obtained a righteous gain;—comp. Zech. xi. 5, which passage clearly shows, that God is to be considered as the object of blessing. With this is fitly connected, "he despises the Lord." Such a blessing of God is, indeed, the highest kind of contempt toward Him. For, as Calvin justly remarks: "Whosoever believes that God will be his judge, will shudder to bless his soul (rather, God), while he has an evil conscience." That from the expression, "he blesses the Lord,"

we are not to conclude the Psalmist to have referred to the wicked in Israel, is manifest from the passage already quoted, Zech. xi. 5, the oversight of which has been a main cause in the misunderstanding the present words. Zechariah speaks of the flock of slaughter, "whose buyers slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich." Under the buyers and sellers are there to be understood the foreign oppressors; see Christol. in loc. The blessing or praising of the Lord here, on account of gain, we are not to regard quite so seriously,—it is done half in joke; moreover, even the heathen were inclined to grant a certain portion to Jehovah of the advantages which they obtained over His people,—comp., for example, Jer. l. 7. De Wette, following many of the older expositors, and himself again followed by Maurer and others, expounds quite differently: "The plunderer blasphemes, despises God." If we would follow this exposition, we must, in that case, not take בָּרַךְ in the sense of *blaspheming*, which it never has, but in that of *renouncing, bidding farewell*, which originated in the custom of *blessing* at separation. That the sense of *blaspheming* does not, and cannot exist, Schultens has proved on Job, p. 12. Comp. further, my Beitr. Th. II. S. 131, where I have shown, that that meaning is not found in the passage, 1 Kings xxi. 10, on which the principal stress is laid. Neither should we force on בָּצַע the signification of *plunderers*, which is not justified by a robber's being designated בֹּצֵעַ in Hab. ii. 9—for what might not then be proved?—but it must be taken in the only certain signification: "the gain-getting," which is also perfectly suitable in Hab. ii. 9, where it is clear that we must render בָּצַע רָע, "he who gaineth a wrong gain." Not only is the meaning, *robber*, unsuitable, but that also of *covetous*, which others have accepted. Therefore: "He who only makes gain, renounces the Lord, despises Him." The verbs בָּרַךְ and נָאֵן would then mark a progression. But against this explanation, even as thus modified, we may urge, that the obvious and striking contrast between *blessing* and *despising*, the designation of the highest degree of impiety by the juxtaposition of these extreme opposites, is destroyed by it; to which also must be added, that בָּרַךְ can scarcely be taken in any other sense than that of *blessing*, were it only for the parallelism with הָלַל, to extol; the extolling of the desire of his soul, and the blessing of God on account of his unrighteous

gain, are closely connected. The exposition: "He blesses himself," adopted by Stier and others, after Venema, is quite arbitrary. In the passage referred to by them, Deut. xxix. 18, the verb in Hithpael is unquestionably used in a transitive sense. We repeat, that all these wrong expositions are set aside by the passage in Zechariah.

Ver. 4. *The wicked in his pride, he does not inquire: God is not, are all his purposes.* The *height of the nose* is a picturesque description of *pride*. Many render the first clause: "The wicked in, or according to, his pride, does not concern himself." They either supply *God* to יִדְרֹשׁ: he does not seek after, or care for, God; or they understand the verb quite generally: in his heart the wicked disregards everything; right and wrong are alike to him; he knows no other law than his own lust. "The principle of right action through the whole of life," remarks Calvin, "is inquiry, in that we do not allow ourselves to be blindly carried about wherever our own spirit, and the impulses of our corrupt flesh, would draw us. But the disposition to inquire springs from humility, in that we, as becomes us, set God before us as our judge and guide." But others take יִדְרֹשׁ כל as the words of an evil-doer: "the wicked in his pride (says) He (God) searches or perceives not." And this exposition, which presents no difficulty when we bear in mind the extremely concise style of the Psalm, is shown to be the correct one, by comparing ver. 13: "Wherefore doth the wicked despise God; and say in his heart, Thou wilt not require it?" לֹא יִדְרֹשׁ, — a parallel passage which is the more decisive, as ver. 13 manifestly resumes the subject of vers. 3 and 4. In these verses the fact is set before us, that he despises God, that he says, "Thou punishest not;" in ver. 13 reference is made to the abnormity of such thoughts, and to the necessity of their being uprooted: "Wherefore does he despise, wherefore does he speak?" We may also comp. יִדְרֹשׁ דָּמִים, in Ps. ix. 12, where the verb, in like manner, signifies "to inquire into," "to punish." The denial of providence is here justly marked as the product of pride. The wicked desires to be a god himself; therefore he suppresses consciousness regarding God in heaven. *God is not, are all his purposes*: they are a continued practical denial of God. For had he a real conviction of the being of a living God, he would stand in awe of the judgment-seat. Whether he have a cold and dead notion of God, or even of His provi-

dence, is a matter of indifference. Venema: "Their counsels and projects were such, that in their very nature they involved the denial of God; and if an inference might be drawn therefrom concerning the faith of those who entertain them, we should conclude them to be deniers of God: in which sense those who confess God in words, are said to deny Him by their works, Tit. i. 16." מומה we take here, according to the usage of the Psalms, for ungodly purposes, and the rather so, as it had occurred in that sense in ver. 2. The sense is weakened if we render, with other expositors: "There is no God, are all his thoughts." This exposition is also unsuitable, in that it would attribute a *theoretical* denial of God to the wicked, in opposition to the first clause, ver. 3, vers. 11 and 13. Some, in order to avoid this objection, would take the "not God," against the usage, as meaning: "God is nothing; He has no power." אץ always denies existence, not quiddity—see Christol. P. ii. p. 474 ss. Hupfeld, Hitzig, and De Wette, in his 4th ed., take רשע absolutely, and both periods as expressing his thoughts: "The wicked, according to his pride, he punishes not, God is not, are all his thoughts." But this construction, which destroys the parallelism, rests upon the view of נִמְצְאוֹתֵי, which has already been proved to be false. If this be understood of the *purposes*, it cannot be referred to בל ידַרשׁ. For the denial of providence is, according to vers. 11 and 13, the *theoretical* principle of the wicked.

Ver. 5. *His ways, his undertakings, are always prosperous.* The Chaldee gives this sense, and the best expositors follow it. The verb חל occurs in a similar meaning in Job. xx. 21; and the derivative, חיל, *strength*, also confirms it. Against the parallelism, some expositors take it in the unproved sense of *being crooked*, and translate: His ways are always crooked. The relation of the two following members to this first was already pointed out quite correctly by Venema: "The other two members take out of the way the obstacles to prosperity, the one of which is the judgments of God, the other, the attacks of enemies." *A height are Thy judgments, Thy punishments, away from him; i.e.* Thy righteous chastisements are so far removed from him, that they never reach him. This can only be understood in two ways—either as a continued description of the prosperity of the wicked, and their freedom from punishment, from which sprung their supercilious security de-

scribed in ver. 6; or as a description of this supercilious security itself, as a consequence of their being "prospered in their ways." The latter exposition is adopted by Calvin: "Because continual prosperity flows in upon them, they think that God is obliged to them. And so it comes to pass, that they put His judgments far from them." But as there is not the slightest hint of a reference to the wicked's *thoughts*, and since the preceding words, "his ways are prosperous," refer not to a fancy, but to the reality, this view could only be considered as admissible, in case these grounds could be counterbalanced by an undeniable reference of the last clause to the supercilious security of the wicked. This, however, is by no means the case. The last clause, also, has respect, not to the thoughts, but to the actual lot of the wicked. From what has been said, the presumption is in favour of this view, and the most natural exposition is: *All His adversaries, He breathes upon them; i.e. He blows them away with little trouble; He has only to breathe, and they vanish: comp. Isa. xl. 24, "He blows upon them, and they wither;" and the "cujus tu legiones difflavisti spiritu quasi ventus folia" of Plautus, in the Mil. Glor. i. 1, 17.* To explain the words as referring to some sort of blowing, through which a proud disposition manifested itself, has this against it, that such a blowing is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament. In Mal. i. 13, to which we are referred, the הִפִּיחַ, "to make to breathe out," is, by comp. with Job xxxi. 39, as much as, "to blow out the light of life," to rob the soul, to annihilate. So that all the three clauses refer to the external lot of the wicked; and the following verse for the first time sets forth the influence, which his prosperity and his impunity have upon his disposition.

Ver. 6. A feeling of security springs from his prosperity. *He says in his heart, I shall not be moved; from generation to generation, I am he who is not in adversity; i.e. is not unfortunate.* The meaning is: Misfortune shall never overtake me. The expression, "from generation to generation," is to be explained by the circumstance, that the wicked here is an ideal personage. בָּרַע, *in evil*, for, in misfortune, as in Ex. v. 19. The אִשָּׁר is used with peculiar emphasis, and not as a kind of expletive, as we might at first sight suppose. He is *that* man who defies all misfortune, whom God cannot harm, even if He would. Precisely so is it also used, for example, in Isa. viii.



20, "If they speak not according to these, they are those for whom there is no dawn." Calvin here beautifully contrasts the confidence of the pious, which is the offspring of faith, and the false security of the wicked. "The latter says, I shall not be moved, or shall not shake for ever, because he thinks his strength sufficient to bear up against all assaults. The believer says, If I should happen to be moved, or even to fall, and to sink into the depths, still I shall not utterly perish; for God will put His hand beneath me."

Ver. 7. The representation given of the violation of duties toward neighbours, which the ungodly, confirmed in his unconscientiousness by his prosperity, allows to grow into actual guilt, is commenced in this verse with the *words*, and proceeds in vers. 8-10 to *deeds*. *His mouth is full of cursing, and of deceit and oppression.* אלה preserves here its common signification. But the circumstance, that it occurs here in a description, which refers only to the relation toward neighbours, and its being coupled with *deceit* and *oppression*, shows that such cursings are here spoken of, as the ungodly utters upon himself, so that he may be successful in his deceit, and may win confidence to the perjuries through which he seeks to circumvent his neighbour in goods and chattels. In the foreground are perjury and deceit, false assurances of peace and love: in the background are violence and oppression. By the former his victims are made defenceless; and then he comes forth with the latter. In Ps. lix. 12, אלה is coupled with כחש, "lie," as it is here with מרמה. In opposition to the connection, Stier regards the cursings, execrations, and calumnies, as directed against God, as well as men. מלא not an adjective, but a verb.—*And of deceit and oppression.* מרמה the LXX. render by πικρία, bitterness, probably confounding the word with מרות from מר.—*Under his tongue is sorrow and mischief.* עמל, never actively, distress, which one brings upon another; but here, as always, misfortune, distress, which others suffer. אס signifies here, and constantly, mischief. The sorrow, the product of the injustice, is in, and with this under the tongue: comp. the investigations upon both words in my Treatise on Balaam, p 112 sq. In the expression, "under his tongue," the metaphor, according to several interpreters, is taken from the poison of serpents, which is concealed under the teeth, and from thence is pressed out, as is mentioned in Ps. cxl. 3,

"Adder's poison is under their lips." But the parallelism, with the *mouth*, favours the less remote exposition of others, who consider the tongue to be mentioned here as *the organ of speech*. That the Psalmist says *under* the tongue, and not, as elsewhere, *upon it*, arises from his thinking of a whole storehouse of misery and injustice as being under their tongue, from which, at fitting times, particular portions are taken and laid upon the tongue. This corresponds precisely to the words in the first clause: His mouth is *full*. His mouth is like a magazine of sorrow and mischief. It is also against the reference to the poison of serpents, that, in Ps. lxi. 17, the expression, "under the tongue," is in like manner used of words, and that in a good sense: "I cried unto Him with my mouth, and the song of praise was under my tongue."

Ver. 8. Having set forth, that if God be willing to help, now is the proper time, as the profligacy of the wicked had mounted to the highest pitch, the Psalmist turns from words to deeds. He describes them as robbers and murderers, who lay wait for the defenceless traveller for the purpose of destroying him. Several commentators are disposed to understand this representation *figuratively*: the wicked are *likened* to robbers. But there is just as little ground for this supposition as for the other, that a reference exists here to special historical events. The representation is not a figurative, but an individualizing one; and the particular mode in which the heathen committed their wickedness, here mentioned, is in reality no more under consideration than any others: the individualization is only designed to give vividness to the description. The particular trait, besides, manifestly suits better to evil-doers among the Israelites, than to foreign adversaries, who were wont to break in upon the land with open violence, and not to waylay individuals in lurking places: comp. the analogous description, Job xxiv. 14. Hab. iii. 14, to which De Wette appeals in support of the reference to the heathen, is placed by him in a distorted light. The Chaldeans are there expressly compared to such as waylay the poor in secret places, who are here the subject of discourse; it cannot, therefore, have been *their* custom. *He lies in the lurking places of the villages*; i.e. in concealed places, in the thicket, in the neighbourhood of townships, they lie in wait for the peaceable inhabitants, with the view of suddenly falling upon them, and killing or plundering them. The verb

יָצַב is specially used of the lion, which lies in his den upon the watch, comp. ver. 9; then also of men. *In the secret places he murders the innocent.* נִסְתָּר is used pre-eminently of covered places, which are adapted for snares. So, of the dens of lions, where they lie in secret, Ps. xvii. 12; Lam. iii. 10.—*His eyes keep watch upon the miserable.* צָפַן prop. denotes to *conceal*, and nothing else. The sense of *watching*, as it occurs here and in Prov. i. 11, 18, comes only from the general omission of the object, as is often the case in Hiph., that is, of the concealed place of the snares or gins. But this omission must have been so current, that the verb gradually got to mean simply “watching.” For here, on account of the verb’s being connected with the eyes, it would not at all do to supply the object. חָלַכָה is very differently explained. The Masorites think it is a compound of the defectively written word חָלַי host, and the suff. ך with ה appended. Believing that the first syllable must have been originally written plene, they have given to it the vowel Zere, whereas otherwise, in a compound syllable, a *short* vowel must always stand. Hence the vowels, as due to the Masoretic explanation, do not come under consideration. This exposition of the word, which a number of interpreters follow, is undoubtedly false, and yields no fitting sense. Equally false is another explanation, that of Schroeder ad Ps. dec. p. 180–88, which is adopted by most recent expositors. According to it, the word is derived from the Arabic حَلَكَ, to be black, which, in the metaphorical sense, must mean to be *unfortunate*. It is in itself a questionable proceeding to transfer a root at once to the Hebrew, which does not otherwise occur in it, and that too in a sense not even found in the Arabic; some faint trace of it is discernible there only in the derivatives. The chief objection, however, against it is, that the ה cannot, as is done by some, be taken as a formative, or with others as parag., since the plural חֲלָכָיִם in ver. 10, where the ה is exchanged for א, shows it to be a *radical*. We must rather take חָלַכָה as a quadriliteral compositum, formed from the two Hebrew roots חָלַה, to be weak, sick, and בָּאָה, mærore affectus, afflictus fuit. Comp. Ps. cix. 16, Ez. xiii. 22. The sing. is then to be pointed חָלַכָה, the plural חֲלָכָאִים. There are not wanting examples of similar compounds; comp. Ewald, p. 519, Christol. P. ii. p. 98. The double form with ה and with א admits then of an easy explanation, because both letters properly belonged to the root, and the

mode of abbreviation was a matter of choice. We can thus also understand how the Masorites should have come to consider the word as a double one. In ver. 10 they understand one of its component parts quite correctly. They take חלבים as meaning an agmen afflictorum, and consequently derive נאים from the verb נאה. With this exposition agrees also admirably the rendering of the LXX., the Syriac., Chal., by *poor*; that of Aquila and Symm. by *weak*. But what is the main thing, this exposition is in perfect accordance with that which the Psalm itself suggests in reference to the signification of חלבה. We must, firstly, now consider the other designations in the Psalm of those here denominated. In reference to these, it is remarked by Gousset: "Semel (vers. 14, 18) vocantur nomine יהום, semel nomine נקי, alias quoque nomine עני.—At merito עני præferimus, quia multoties in eodem sermone occurrit, tanquam proprium orationis subjectum et cujus ideam ac notionem auctor sibi frequentius objiceret." Then, an important help towards a right explanation is supplied by ver. 10, where חלבים stands in opposition to עוצמים, "the strong." Now, in חלבים, according to the view we have taken, both ideas, that of a mournful, poor condition (נאה), and that of weakness (חלה), are combined, while the latter, according to the derivation from חלף, is entirely absent. The writer unquestionably formed this word himself, which is never used elsewhere, and intended it to be a kind of enigma.

Ver. 9. *He lies in wait in the secret places as a lion in his den, he lies in wait to catch the poor, he does catch the poor, drawing him with his net.* The suff. in במכרו refers to the *poor*; comp. in Hos. xi. 4, בחבלי אדם אמיתכם, funibus humanis eos attraxi. Others refer it to the ungodly, and translate: "while he draws, or draws to his net;" comp. משך with ג, in the sense of drawing, in 1 Kings xxii. 34. The Psalmist, who, in the first member, had compared the robber to a lion, lets this image drop here, and represents the ungodly under the figure of a hunter, who casts his noose around the neck of the unsuspecting game; comp. Ps. xxxv. 7, lvii. 6. The thought which lies at the bottom of the figurative representation is this, that the ungodly always unite cunning with open violence, and that, consequently, the poor servants of God must be wretched every way, unless the Lord deliver them.

Ver. 10. *Crushed, he sinks down, the poor man.* The first

word has a double reading. The form in the text, which must be pronounced *וּרְכָה*, is an adj. verb, formed from *רָכַה* = *רָכַן*; the marginal reading, which must be pronounced *יִרְכָה*, and the vowels of which, as usual, stand in the text, is Fut. in Kal of *רָכַה*. The text is here, as always, when there is no urgent reason to the contrary, to be preferred to the margin. The unhappy man is represented under the image of a wild animal, which, entangled in the net, falls to the ground. The *crushing*, *overpowering*, is to be taken figuratively, and refers to the utter impotence produced by the netting, to use his powers and save himself; comp. Ps. lvii. 6. With *יָשָׁה* here should be compared "my soul is bowed down," in Ps. lvii. 6. *And the poor falls through his strong ones.* *עֲצוּמִים* signifies, wherever it occurs in the Old Testament, *the strong*; hence all those expositions which give the word another meaning must be rejected at once, from such as palm on it a foreign sense out of the Arabic, to those which take it abstractly in the sense of *strength*. The suff. *ו* refers to the *רָשָׁע* as an ideal person. *His strong ones* stand in opposition to *חֲלָכָאִים*, and indicate how the latter, in their impotence and helplessness, must be an easy prey for such formidable enemies. "Through *his* strong ones," is substantially the same as, "through *them*, the strong." The individuals are represented as belonging to the personified idea. Calvin explains it somewhat differently. According to him, the image of a lion is here continued, his claws and teeth are personified as strong warriors. This supposition, though deserving to be rejected, as the Psalmist has long since dropt the image of a lion, is, however, more admissible than the one adopted by some recent expositors, who would have the word to signify *strong members*. This view weakens also the manifest contrast between *עֲצוּמִים* and *חֲלָכָאִים*, which requires the former, according to its constant import, to be a designation of persons. The connection of a verb in the singular with a noun in the plural is always allowable, when the verb precedes, inasmuch as then the speaker has not in view determinate persons, their number or sex; comp. Ewald, p. 639. Here the use of the singular was the more natural, as in the first member he had spoken of an individual who was wretched.

Ver. 11. The Psalmist here comes back again to the source of the audacity of the wicked, their fancy, fostered by continued impunity, that God's providence rules not over human things.

He brings this so prominently out, because it must be to God the most pressing motive to interference, and is consequently the best preparation for the immediately following prayer. *He*, the wicked, *says in his heart: God hath forgotten*, namely, my shameful deeds, as well as the sufferings of the unfortunate; it is to Him a matter of indifference what is done on earth, He troubles not Himself about it—*He hideth His face*, that He may not be disturbed in His repose by the sight of the confusion on earth.

Ver. 12. *Arise, O Lord: O God, lift up Thine hand; forget not the wretched.* Here the second part begins—the prayer, which, of itself, springs out of, and was indeed strictly contained in, the complaint uttered before God. As the visible presented no traces of God's righteousness and providence, but *seems* rather to clash therewith, it is to the Psalmist, in accordance with the weakness of human nature, as if God rested, and did not concern Himself about earthly things, and left His people in forgetfulness. But while the ungodly purposely cherishes and feeds this error, the offspring of his own reprobate state of mind, the believer fights against it, as a thought that has arisen only from his troubled condition, and prays the Lord to help him in his conflict, and, at the same time, to destroy the delusion of the wicked, by making Himself known in His righteousness and retribution. *The lifting up of the hand*, is spoken of one, who, after he has been taking rest, and has put his hand into his bosom, arises and addresses himself to his work. The words "forget not," refer to those of the wicked in ver. 11, "God hath forgotten." On the different readings, ענין and ענין, see on Ps. ix. 12. Here, too, the latter, which is the marginal reading, arose out of the supposition that a *moral* quality was required.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore does the wicked contemn God? Wherefore dost Thou permit him to despise Thee with impunity? Wherefore does he speak, wherefore dare he say, Thou punishest not?* prop. Thou dost not inquire. This, with God, coincides with *punishing*. For when God inquires into the doings of men, being a righteous God, it necessarily follows that He also recompenses. The transition from the third person to the second gives more emphasis to the language. He speaks as it were to God's very face. Still we might also take the words לא תרש as oratio obliqua, = "that Thou punishest not;" and this view is even to be preferred. Calvin: "Though it is superfluous to bring forth reasons before God, for the purpose

of persuading Him, He yet permits us to deal familiarly with Him in our prayers, to address Him as a son addresses his earthly father. For the object of the prayer must always be kept in view, namely, that God may be the witness of all our feelings, not as if they would otherwise escape Him, but because, while we pour out our hearts before Him, our cares are lightened, and our confidence of being heard, increases." Thus David here rises to hope, through representing to himself how absurd a thing it would be for God to suffer the impious to despise Him with impunity. The verse, besides, is closely connected with the first part, vers. 3 and 4. *There the fact was set forth; here attention is called to its absurdity, and consequently to the necessity of a reaction of the idea against the actual state of things.*

Ver. 14. *Thou hast seen.* The Psalmist here rises to the confidence, to the faith, that the Lord will put to shame the fancy of the ungodly, mentioned in ver. 11, that He is unconcerned about earthly things in general, and especially about their wickedness; and that He sees both their abominable deeds, and the sufferings of the righteous, and will act accordingly. We might regard this as the commencement of the third part of the Psalm. However, as the Psalmist turns back again to the prayer in ver. 15, it is better to begin the third part with ver. 16, from where confidence alone has the ascendant. When more closely examined, the confidence here also is different from that in ver. 16 sq. Here it is grounded upon a conclusion; there it is an immediate conviction. Confidence of the first kind, which may be designated a presupposing one, is more related to prayer, nay, a kind of prayer: I hope still that Thou dost see. The Psalmist *here* expresses his confidence in the form of a conclusion a genere ad speciem. God is, in general, the all-knowing, the righteous One, the true helper of His people; consequently, He both will, and must prove Himself to be such here also. This conclusion a genere ad speciem is, of all tasks, the most difficult, and one that can be performed only by the powerful assistance of God. That all human things are placed under God's providence, is not so difficult to be received as a matter of conviction; but to judge every particular oppression in accordance therewith, to apply this doctrine thereto, at the very time when the flesh feels precisely the reverse, when God appears to be merely an inactive

spectator of our misery, is possible to none but the regenerate, and yet there is no living faith in Divine providence without it. The same holds good also in reference to the doctrine of the atonement. To accept it as true, that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, is not so difficult. But to be convinced, and firmly persuaded, that He died specially for *our* sins, whilst sin and Satan are loudly crying the opposite, lies beyond the reach of human power. The object of the word רִאיוֹהָ, which refers to בֵּל רָאָה לְנֶצַח in ver. 11, is *the particular case*,—that in respect to which the ungodly had declared, God inquires not. The חִבִּיט, on the other hand, refers to the *general*. Allowing this, בִּי, as part. ration., is evidently quite suitable, and there is no need of palming on it, with many expositors, strange meanings, such as *yea, yea indeed*. With this also agrees the use, first of the Preterite, and then of the Future. Thou hast seen, *for* Thou art accustomed to behold. If the latter were not, the assumption of the former would be utterly groundless. For God does nothing which has not its foundation in His nature; and what has its foundation there, must regularly take place. But the latter being the case, then it is *unreasonable* not to assume the first. For this is virtually to hold that God denies Himself, that He is not God. *For Thou seest suffering and anger in the city, to put them in Thine hand.* The verb בָּעַס always signifies to be *angry*; the noun, without exception, *rage, anger*; and the meanings *grief, lamentation*, which expositors give it here and in some other places, are palmed on it merely from the connection. Here it is anger at the unjust assaults of the wicked,—the righteous indignation, the subjective feeling which is called forth by the suffering, עָמַל: comp. 1 Sam. i. 6, where an example also occurs of the manner in which God takes this anger into His hand, when He appears for a moment to forget: also the expression in ver. 2, “the wretched one burns;” and the passage in Job vi. 2, which is important for the signification of בָּעַס, when connected with words expressive of misfortune. In the words, “to give, or put them in Thine hand,” the image, according to many, is derived from those who make for themselves marks of remembrance in their hand. The justness of this explanation is thought to be clear from Isa. xlix. 16, “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands, thy walls are continually before Me.” But the use of the verb נָתַן does not favour the view adopted.



Rather is the thought, that the Lord lays the sufferings of His people in His hand, a sign that He will, in His own time, avenge them upon their enemies, that no part of their afflictions escapes Him, or is a matter of indifference to Him; comp. lvi. 8, "Thou tellest my wanderings; put my tears in Thy bottle, nay, they stand in Thy book." Against the explanation, "to recompense with Thy hand," apart from the impossibility of at once assigning such a meaning to *giving*, there is also the circumstance, that *נתן ביד* uniformly occurs, in the sense of, "to put into the hand." *The poor commits to Thee.* *עֹבֵד*, "may commit to Thee," as the parallel last clause shows. The subject in hand is not primarily that which the helpless in duty *ought* to do, but what he, in good confidence, *can* do. *עֹבֵד* is not to be taken here in a reflective sense: neither is any definite object, his weakness or the like, to be supplied; but it is as if he had said: "The unfortunate man commits to Thee, to Thee he surrenders." *Of the orphan, Thou art the helper.* *יָתוֹם*, "an orphan," is used in this Psalm, which refers to the relation of the Church of God to the heathen, as a figurative designation of helplessness and desertion. There is also a reference to passages of the law which ascribe to God a tender care for orphans in the strict and proper sense: *e. g.* Deut. x. 18; Ex. xxii. 22 (21). So also Ps. lxxviii. 5 (6); Hos. xiv. 4.

Ver. 15. *Break the arm of the wicked*, annihilate his power, which he is applying to the destruction of the innocent,—*and the evil, seek out his wickedness, find them not.* *רַע*, according to the accents, belongs to the second clause, and stands as nomin. absol.: *And the evil.* Expositors generally explain: Thou mayest seek his wickedness, not find it; *i. e.* may Thy judgments so utterly annihilate him, that even Thine all-seeing eye shall be able to detect no more wickedness remaining to be punished. The trackless disappearance of a thing, and its complete destruction, are often denoted by the seeking and not finding of it: comp. Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36. But it is remarked, on the other hand, quite correctly by Claus, after the older expositors, such as Venema, that there is thereby overlooked the unmistakable reference to *רָרַע*, in ver. 13. The verb must here be taken in the same sense as there,—therefore: search out his wickedness, drag it before Thy judgment-seat, to which he thinks himself not liable; and that with such a result, that it shall be utterly brought to an end, that Thou Thyself shalt find it no more.

Venema: "Until Thou shalt not find; i.e. until there shall be none surviving, or nothing shall remain to be punished, and so Thou mayest require to the very uttermost." To the *לא תדרש* of the ungodly, stands opposed the *תדרש*. The *בל תמצא* contains a piece of covert raillery. True, indeed, as thou sayest, it shall not be found; but from quite another cause than thou supposest, to wit, because thou, with thy ungodliness, shalt be wholly extirpated. The prayer, that God would break the arm of the ungodly, and search out his wickedness, proceeds from the living faith that He can and must do so; that the ungodly rages only through His permission; that he would be made to disappear without leaving a trace behind, the moment God pleased, and that He would certainly be pleased to do it in His own time. We have proceeded on the supposition that *תדרש* and *תמצא* are to be taken optatively in paral. with the Imper. *יזכר*. But, as the demand has hope for its foundation, we can also fairly expound: Thou *will* search out, Thou *will* not find; and this might be represented as the more suitable, since the transition to the undoubting confidence, expressed in ver. 16, would then appear a more natural one: "Break, for that we pray; Thou wilt search out, for that we hope; they are perished, that we behold."

Ver. 16. The third strophe—the *confidence*, as it springs from the inwardly received assurance of being heard. The Psalmist gives utterance here to an exuberant joy of faith. The Lord has granted him such an internal assurance of being heard, that he already sees the ungodly conquered, and the holy land of God purged of their abominations. *The Lord is King for ever and ever*. At an earlier period, when his faith was still subject to assaults, it had appeared to the Psalmist as if the Lord were thrust down from His high throne, but now the matter presents itself to him quite otherwise. Faith shows him how impotent all attempts of the rebels are to rob Him of His supremacy. He is, and abides KING, and will prove Himself such now and for ever. The Lord is named *King* here, not as ruler of the world, but as sovereign over His people and His holy land; comp. Dent. xxxiii. 5, Num. xxiii. 21. *The heathen are perished out of His land*. Luther understands by *גוים* such as ought to have belonged to God's people and the chosen Israel, but have now degenerated and become heathens, and so are no longer God's people, but His enemies. So also Calvin,

with an appeal to Ezek. xvi. 3, "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite;" for: As to thy way and manners, thou derivest thy being from these people; comp. other passages in which the ungodly among the Israelites are described as heathens, in *Christol.* P. ii. p. 398. But we have no reason here to depart from the usual signification of the word; and this, indeed, is rather confirmed by a comp. with ver. 9, where heathens, in the proper sense, are unquestionably meant. נִיִּם also signifies, not heathen as individuals, but heathen nations. Yet it does not follow from this that the whole Psalm limits itself to them. The Psalmist might here very well name a particular species of ungodly enemies—just as the poor are in vers. 14, 18, denoted by the individualizing term of the *orphan*, and the wicked in vers. 8–10 are described under the particular character of *robbers*—because the same law which brought *their* subjection, would certainly carry in its bosom the subjection of the others. Against the exclusive reference of the whole Psalm to heathenish enemies, we have to urge the want of any special allusion to them in all the rest of the Psalm, and the existence of many traits which suit better a home conflict between the pious and the ungodly; comp. on vers. 7–10. But all appearances are satisfactorily explained when the Psalm is viewed as a song for the general use of the pious, when suffering oppression at the hands of the wicked,—it being of no moment whether the latter were merely uncircumcised in heart, or also uncircumcised in flesh; comp. Jer. ix. 25. The words, "out of His land," point to the cause of the extirpation of "the heathen." The Pre. אֲבָדוֹ is to be explained thus, that the Psalmist, by the internal vision of faith, sees his enemies as already annihilated.

Ver. 17. *Thou hast heard, O Lord, the desire of the meek; Thou makest their heart firm:* through the inward conviction which Thou givest them of the hearing of their prayer, Thou impartest to them the power of resisting all assaults, in the firm hope of obtaining the deliverance promised them. A firm heart is opposed to a heart that is moved, shaking, trembling, and indicates courage, strength, repose; comp. Ps. cxii. 7, "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord," Ps. li. 12, lvii. 7. *Thou causest Thine ear to hear.*

Ver. 18. *In order that Thou mayest judge the orphan and the*

*oppressed.* These words are closely connected with the close of the preceding verse.—*The man of the earth will not continue to defy.* We must take the second clause as an expression of confidence, not of desire. For in the latter case, the abbreviated Fut. would have been used. *אנני* has, as was already remarked, the subordinate ideas of feebleness and weakness, which are still more plainly denoted by the addition, “of the earth;” q. d.: He who is sprung from the earth, who belongs to it; the man of the earth, as opposed to the God of heaven. The expression occurs in Ps. cxlviii. 7, “Praise the Lord, *מן הארץ*, ye of the earth,” ye inhabitants thereof; before, in ver. 1, it was, “Praise the Lord, from the heavens.” Comp. also, examples of the similar use of *מן* in Venema, in loc. The verb *ערץ* has in the Arabic and Hebrew (Isa. xlvii. 12) the signification of, *withstanding, braving*. As the object of the resistance or defiance, God is to be understood. Between *לערץ* and *הארץ* there exists an intentional paronomasia, pointing to the glaring contradiction between *nature* and *will*. The exposition of Hitzig and others: “That they may not further drive the people out of the land,” is already confuted by the parallel passage, Ps. ix. 19, 20, “Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail,” where the same contrast is found between the *assumed* strength and *native* weakness; and also by the circumstance, that it destroys the significance of the paronomasia, which was taken notice of by Luther: “Here is a fine play upon the words, in that man who is still of the earth, should magnify and exalt himself; which contains within itself a strong contrast, since it is wholly and utterly improper, that man, because he is a man, and besides born of the earth, and returning again to it, should thus exalt himself and act proudly.” Also, we do not perceive how the suffering could be designated *אנני*, which refers solely to human weakness in general. Finally, it is far-fetched to render *יסיף* *בל*, “one will not continue.”

## PSALM XI.

The speaker is hard pressed by godless enemies; and he is advised, abandoning all—all, indeed, being already lost—to look only to the safety of his *life*, vers. 1–3. But he answers, that he puts his confidence in God, who, throned on high in His holy heaven, rules with His providence over the affairs of men,

and will assuredly accomplish the overthrow of evil, though it seems almighty, and secure victory to the righteous, vers. 4-7. "Confidence in the Lord and His protection, even against the *huge* force of the wicked," remarks Claus, is the simple subject of this Psalm. After expressing briefly this confidence ("in Jehovah I put my trust"), he sets forth the facts, which seem to show, that the condition of the people of God is a perfectly hopeless one; that the suppression of the good principle and its supporters, and the triumph of wickedness, is a decided one; so that the righteous and upright, who can no longer be of service in public affairs, does best to attend only to his own personal deliverance. In opposition to these facts, the speaker proceeds to unfold the words, "I put my trust in the Lord;" representing how the Lord would bring deliverance in what, humanly considered, were completely hopeless circumstances, so that it was not necessary to flee, but to continue in good courage. The general principle laid down in ver. 4, that the providence of the holy and omnipotent God bears rule among men ("His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men"), is carried out further in ver. 5 by the assertion, that He lovingly knows the righteous, and hatingly knows the wicked ("The Lord trieth the righteous, and the wicked His soul hateth"): these two principles the Psalmist carries out still further in vers. 6 and 7, taking up again the last first, "Upon the wicked He will rain snares," etc., and then returning again to the first, "Righteous is the Lord, He loveth righteousness, His countenance beholds the upright."

The hypothesis of Koester, who divides the Psalm into two strophes of three verses, with a concluding verse, is quite subverted by this distribution of the matter. The second strophe is mutilated, if we separate ver. 7 from it.

At first sight, the Psalm appears to bear an individual character; the words, "I put my trust," and, "How say ye to my soul," seem to introduce us into the midst of personal relations. But, considered more narrowly, this commencement leads to a precisely opposite result: the address directed to a number, "flee," and the expression, "to *your* mountain," can only be satisfactorily explained by supposing, that the speaker introduced, saying, "I put my trust," is an ideal person, the personification of a whole class—more especially, as the supposition, which otherwise is somewhat far-fetched, that, along with

the Psalmist, his companions are addressed, has against it the following singular, נָצַח, in which the Psalmist again returns to the personification. In vers. 2-7, also, there is no trace whatever of a reference to an individual: we have only to do with "the wicked," "the right-hearted," "the righteous," "the upright,"—the two classes which constantly meet us in those Psalms that are of a general character. How little colour the Psalm affords for a personal construction, is evident from the circumstance, that those who take that view perpetually dispute whether it refers to the times of Saul or of Absalom. The individualizing designation, given in ver. 2, to the misdeeds which the wicked practise against the righteous, appears also to be opposed to both, inasmuch as it points to crafty devices of a *private* nature, whereas, in both the periods referred to, the wicked *openly* lifted themselves up against the righteous—a trait which is equally fatal also to the supposition of De Wette, that the Psalm refers to the relation of the Israelites to their heathen oppressors; comp. on Ps. x. 8-10.

The following, accordingly, presents itself to our mind as the correct view: David had lived to see two great conflicts of the evil principle against the good; and, having stood in both as the representative of the latter, had on each occasion "strengthened himself in the Lord," and had received deliverance as the reward of his faith. On the ground of this personal experience, he here shows "the righteous," how in similar circumstances, when the Church is in a troubled and distracted condition, they ought to behave themselves; viz. that they should not abandon themselves to despair, but should trust in the Lord.

The placing of this Psalm in the same series with the preceding ones, appears to have arisen, not merely from the general similarity of its contents, but also specially from the resemblance of ver. 2 to Ps. x. 8.

Ver. 1. *In the Lord put I my trust, how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?* נָס, quomodo ergo—an expression of wonder, of reproach. The words, "to my soul," are explained by Calvin: "He indicates that his heart was pierced by the taunting question." But ver. 2 shows rather that the soul is mentioned because the life of the righteous is endangered, and flight appears to be the only means of deliverance (comp. Gen. xix. 17). If he who is introduced saying, "In the Lord put I my trust," is an ideal person, the righteous man, those also

who address him must be ideal persons. The Psalmist has in his eye such as, though attached to the good cause (the words unquestionably betoken that), still stand on a lower ground of faith, and who, because their gaze continues fixed on the visible, think that all is irrecoverably gone. In reality, these persons are merely personifications of the doubting thoughts, which arose of themselves in the mind of the speaker,—the “flee,” is the voice of the flesh, which is met by the voice of the Spirit in the declaration, “I put my trust in the Lord.” No one, not even the most advanced, needs to seek those who say “Flee,” outside of himself. The plural נורו is accounted for by what has been already remarked. הרכם, *your mountain*, is, according to the common interpretation, the mountain which will afford you protection, in which ye have your places of refuge. This, however, is somewhat forced; and we might feel tempted, even were it only because of the word *your*, to take *mountain* in a figurative sense, “your mountain” = your hiding-place. Ven.: mons hic locum exilii extra societatem, ad quam noster pertinabat, designat. This exposition is the more natural, as the following צפור appears to explain why the hiding-place is figuratively described as a mountain. Birds escape the dangers to which they are exposed in the open plain, by betaking themselves to wooded mountains. But even if we should keep to the literal meaning, still the expression would afford no countenance to the individual view of the Psalm. For the mountain, in that case, would only be chosen as an individualizing trait, having respect to the natural appearance of Palestine, where the mountains occupy the first rank among the hiding-places: comp. the saying of our Lord, which contains an allusion to this passage, in Matt. xxiv. 16, “Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” We are not, as many expositors think, to supply כן simil. before צפור, but to regard it as a decurtata compar.: as a bird (a bird in the figurative sense). Lam. iii. 52, “Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause,” is a parallel passage. הרכם is in the accus., as is usual with verbs of motion; Ewald, p. 585. The Masorites wished, on account of the sing. לנפשי preceding, to read, נורו תם, but נורי. This reading would not have been preferred to that of the text, had it been borne in mind, that, like all the Kris, it is no more than a mere conjecture. What is advanced by Hitzig in its support,—that the Ketib offends against the sing. צפור, and is quite unsuitable to the preceding

context, where an individual is addressed, serves to explain how it arose. Neither the originators nor the defenders of this reading have succeeded in referring the interchange between the singular and the plural in this verse back to its true ground. They sought, therefore, to set aside what they did not understand, but proceeded with little consistency, when they left standing the to them not less inexplicable הָרַבּ. If we look more closely, we shall find, that נוֹרִי, "flee thou, soul," cannot at all stand. To the soul belongs feeling, not action. The like may be said of the various reading, which the old translators are thought by many to have followed, and which, after their supposed example, several expositors have preferred: הָרַבּ כְּצֹפֵר, "to the mountain as a bird." The easier this reading, the more doubtful is it. Our difficult text could never have arisen from one whose meaning lies so plainly on the surface. The old translators probably left out only the suffix, which must always remain a matter of difficulty, so long as one does not recognise in הָרַבּ the deeurata comparatio, which the following צֹפֵר so naturally suggests. Too straitened a sense is given to the verse, by those who seek nothing more in it than a simple call to flee. This the righteous might have complied with, as David indeed actually did flee during the persecutions of Saul and Absalom, without necessarily renouncing confidence in the Lord. The flight may rather, under particular circumstances, be the *product* of confidence. But *here* the righteous contrasts confidence in the Lord with such a call. In what sense this was meant, appears from vers. 2 and 3, where it is grounded upon the circumstance, that the constitution of the Church was shaken to its lowest depths, and all prospect of a healthful state of things was foreclosed against the righteous. This *flee*, therefore, was a word of utter despair, which the righteous meets here by the declaration, "In the Lord put I my trust;" and still more strongly in ver. 4 sq., after expressly exhibiting in vers. 2 and 3 what those, who looked on things with an eye of flesh, produced in justification of their proposal. As in ver. 6 there is undoubtedly a verbal reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorria, as recorded in Genesis, it is possible that the words, "Flee to the mountain," contain an allusion to those of the angel to Lot, "Escape to the mountain," in Gen. xix. 17.

Ver. 2. The friends of the righteous indicate the ground on which they think flight necessary for him. That כִּי must not



be expounded, with Claus, by, *indeed! it is true, certainly!* is self-evident; and, consequently, there can be no doubt that this verse, and the next, contain the continuation of the discourse of the friends.—*For, lo! the wicked bend the bow, place their arrow upon the string.*—כֶּן in Pilcl, aptare, *to shoot in the dark*,—from a concealed lurking-place, comp. בִּמְסָתִים in Ps. x. 8, 9,—*at the upright.* There is just as little ground here as there, for understanding the expression figuratively; the less so, if we keep in view the general character of the Psalm, to which the matter of this verse also certainly points. For the utterance of wickedness, here set forth in an individualized form, which was peculiarly adapted to poetry, as being fond of picturesque scenes, was, unquestionably, of very rare occurrence in real life, far rarer than others. יָשָׁר לֵב, properly, *straight of heart*, not in respect to the cunning and malice of the wicked, but to their own state, as conformed to the rule; comp. Vitranga on Deut. xxxii. p. 41: “It is implied in the idea of rectitude, that there is some canon, rule, or common measure, according to which judgment may be given in regard to all spiritual operations. What is conformed to this standard is morally straight, as that is also called in architecture, which is exact according to the line or plummet.” The word “upright” is purposely without the article. That the wicked should relentlessly persecute the upright, shows what is the state of things. יָרָה, to throw, to shoot an arrow; elsewhere with the accus., here with ל of the person, to whom the action pertains, so far as it is the aim thereof. The distinction is such as between our shooting any one, which involves the *hitting*, and “shooting at one.”

Ver. 3. *For the foundations are destroyed.* We have no right to take כִּי in the sense of *if*, which it very rarely possesses: “If the foundations are destroyed, what doeth the righteous?” The common signification, *for*, is quite suitable. The particular matter mentioned in the preceding verse is here referred to the general, as to its ground, or root. This general is a state of moral dissolution, which deprives the righteous of any footing for successful activity. שָׁמַח from שָׂחַ, “to lay,” is rightly rendered by the Chaldee, Syriac, Aquila, and Symmachus—*foundations*. What is to be understood by the foundations is obvious enough from the preceding verse, as also from the words, “What can the righteous do?” The basis of society is the supremacy of justice and righteousness. The foundations are

destroyed "in societies remarkably corrupt, in which the laws of right and equity are wantonly trodden under foot" (Venema). — *The righteous, what does he do?* With the dissolving of the foundations, in the sense meant, the impossibility of the righteous accomplishing anything goes hand in hand. Things must have gone far with a community, when such an impossibility exists. What is said by Ewald in his *Small Gr.* § 262, suits the *Præter.* exactly: "The *Perfect* is used of actions which the speaker considers as complete, as already finished, but so reaching into the present, that modern languages employ the simple *Present*." That the righteous effects nothing, is sufficiently proved by past experience, is a *fait accompli*. The exposition of De Wette and others: "The righteous, what should he do, what else should he do than emigrate, flee away?" has against it the *Præter.*; the common use of *לַעֲשֹׂה*, not *facere*, but *efficere*, comp. Job xi. 8, xxxv. 6; and the parallelism, since, according to it, we get two unconnected sentences, and we are obliged to resort to such unhappy explanations as: "If the foundations are destroyed, etc."

Ver. 4. The reply of faith, which sees heaven open, to reason, whose gaze is fixed on earth. Geier: "He returns now to his first resolution to confide, ver. 1, and fortifies himself in it." Although certainly the earth offered him no help and hope, though all was remediless, so far as human aid was concerned, yet a regard to the Lord and His providence made despair appear to be folly. We can either expound: "The Lord (is) in His holy temple, the Lord, in heaven is His throne;" or: "The Lord, in His holy temple, the Lord, whose throne is in heaven, His eyes see," for: "The eyes of the Lord, who is in His holy temple, whose throne is in heaven, see." In support of the latter exposition there is, 1. This, that in the succeeding context the principle, "His eyes see," "His eyelids try," is only further extended; and 2. The parallel passage in Ps. cii. 18, 19, "For He looks down from His holy height, the Lord looks from heaven upon earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose the children of death." These reasons are sufficient to show, that if we prefer the first exposition, which certainly looks the simplest of the two, still the words, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord, in heaven is His throne," cannot be considered as independently co-ordinate with these others, "His eyes see," etc., but only as the basis on which the assertion in the latter is

made ; so that this alone, "His eyes see," is the proper shield which preserves the righteous from despair. *The Lord is in His holy temple, i.e.,* as appears from the second clause, in heaven. Calvin : "It is a great exercise of faith, when we are on all sides environed by darkness in the world, to seek light from heaven to guide us into the hope of safety. For though all confess that the world is governed by God, yet, when the sad disorder of affairs has enveloped us in darkness, there are few in whose inmost minds this persuasion keeps a firm hold." *The Lord's throne is in heaven.* The Lord's throne being in heaven, as a mark of loftiness and majesty, shows His power to see, and the holiness of His abode, arising from His personal purity, His will ; for as a holy God He cannot permit unholy beings to obtain the ascendancy in His kingdom on earth. On these two foundations is based the declaration, *His eyes see, His eyelids try the children of men*—His eye is continually directed toward earthly things ; He watches every operation of men, continually weighs their spirits, in order to reward every man according to his works. עֵינָיו, "His eye-lashes," for His eyes, in parallelism with עֵינֵי, because the language offered no expression quite synonymous. בָּהֶן, "to prove," of the penetrating glance of the Lord as judge.

Ver. 5. *The Lord tries the righteous.* Because God is the just One, His searching and proving involve also His protecting. It must necessarily be a blessing to the righteous for God's judging eye to be directed to them. Precisely as in Ps. i. 6, the first member is to be supplied out of the second, and the second out of the first. *And the wicked, and him that loveth violence, His soul hates.* Luther : "This, too, is spoken emphatically, in that the prophet does not say simply, He hates, but, *His soul hates* ; thereby declaring that God hates the wicked in a high degree, and with His whole heart : He cannot, as we may say, either see or hear them. It is not to be understood as if God had a soul as we have ; just as He has no eyes. The language here is metaphorical," etc.

Ver. 6. *Upon the wicked He will rain snares, fire and brimstone.* פֶּחַם stands here poetically for the common פֶּחַם. פֶּחַם must here, according to various expositors, be taken as a figurative designation of *lightning*, which is alleged to be called also by the Arabians, in prose and poetry, by the name of *chains*. But it is a sufficient objection to this meaning, that פֶּחַם does not signify *cord* in general, but specially *gin, snare, trap*. We are

the less warranted to give up the ordinary signification, as the cords, nets, and snares, in which God entangles the wicked, are a common image of the destruction which He prepares for them; comp. Ps. ix. 15, "In the net which they hid, is their own foot taken;" Job xviii. 9, "The gin (פֶּחַ) shall take him by the heel;" xxii. 10, "Therefore snares are round about thee;" Isa. xxiv. 17, 18; Prov. xxii. 5. The common signification also of פֶּחַ is confirmed here, by the relation in which it stands to "bird" in ver. 1, being specially used of the snares of bird-catchers; comp. Amos iii. 15, Gesenius, Thes. s. v. While the wicked believe that they have the righteous in their snares, and are able with little difficulty to destroy them, suddenly a whole load of snares is sent down upon them from heaven, and, all flight being cut off for them, they are smitten by the destroying judgment of God. It is well remarked by Calvin: "He appropriately mentions snares, before he comes to fire and brimstone. For we know that the wicked fear nothing so long as they are spared by God, but go boldly on, as having a free course. Then, if anything of an adverse nature threatens them, they bethink themselves of ways of escape. At last, they mock God, as if they could not be caught, until He binds them with His cords" (more correctly: catches them in His gins). This explanation contains, at the same time, a refutation of the supposed emendation of Olshausen, who reads פְּחָם, "coals"—an emendation inadmissible, indeed, even on the ground that the word, when used without any further addition, denotes black coals not yet kindled, in contrast to גִּתְלִים, "burning coals;" as appears incontestably from Prov. xxvi. 21. The same consideration also disposes of the assertion of Gesenius, that פֶּחַ is here singular, and of like import with פֶּחַם; as also of Boettcher's "etymological explanation" of פֶּחַם, as meaning "something striking with fearful violence." We may well dispense with "etymological explanations" of words that are of such frequent occurrence. Hitzig takes the word, indeed, in its common signification, but thinks that the snares must consist of fire and brimstone;—"a sort of burning sulphur-threads is meant." It is sufficient to object thereto, that פֶּחַ signifies not "cord," but "gin," and to refer also to the parallel passages. One is at a loss to comprehend what should have given rise to all these unfortunate attempts at exposition, since the correct meaning is so obvious. The expression, "that He will rain," can present no real difficulty, as

it simply points to the fulness of God's retributive judgments, noticed already by Luther, when he says that by it "the prophet indicates the great variety and multitude of the evils threatened." In the words, "God will rain fire and brimstone," there is a verbal reference to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrha, Gen. xix. 24. That event must be regarded as a standing monument of the punitive righteousness of God, the more impressive, as the scene of it lay before the eyes of the covenant-people. The Psalmist hopes that the event in question would be repeated, as every Divine act, indeed, is a prediction, in the form of fact, regarding the future, and, under like circumstances, must again take place. A similar verbal allusion is found in Ez. xxxviii. 22, comp. Job xviii. 15.

The "fire and brimstone," in the opinion of many expositors on Genesis, in particular Le Clerc and Michaelis, must be understood as a circumlocution for "lightning." A number of expositors are inclined also to adopt this explanation here; but it has not sprung from an unprejudiced investigation. In conformity with the natural constitution of the region of Sodom and Gomorrha, we must assume a literal raining of brimstone, which supplied material for the fire that at the same time descended. This is perfectly clear from Job xviii. 15, where brimstone occurs without fire, so that we cannot suppose lightning to be referred to. If we take the words here in their natural sense, we see at once that we must lay too much stress on the letter of the descriptions given in the Psalms of the destruction of the wicked. Inasmuch as the rain of fire and brimstone is something very isolated, it is plain that the Psalmist represents that in the future which is essentially of the same nature, under the form of what had happened in the past, and that we are to concern ourselves only with the essence, and not with the form.

The last clause is explained by recent interpreters: *And a burning wind is the portion of their cup*; more correctly, *their cup-portion*, for the suffix refers to the compound idea. The wind Silaphot is said to be the pestiferous wind, called by the Arabians Samum, which blows in July and August, and instantly kills everything which does not prostrate itself on the ground. But the language does not support this exposition. Of the two other places where the word occurs, that in Ps. cxix. 53 does not admit of this exposition. And then the

image of the burning wind, which does not blow in Palestine, is generally, and, in particular, as denoting the punishment of the ungodly, very seldom used. The only well-grounded exposition is: *strong wrath*. The  $\zeta$  is a letter inserted, not belonging to the root: comp. the collection of similar examples in Gousset's *Lexicon*, and Ewald, p. 520. The root  $\eta\eta$  has, in Hebrew, the signification of *being angry*; no other, not even that of *being hot*, is to be found in the dialects: the vehemence of the anger is denoted by the plural, perhaps also by the strengthening of the form. The *wrath-wind* is the Divine anger, which resembles a wind, breaks forth even as a tempest. The representation of the Divine anger under the image of wind and storm, is a very current one. Here it is the more suitable, as mention had just been made of fire and brimstone. The breath of God's indignation blows upon the burning coals, Isa. xxx. 33. In the two other passages also this exposition is quite suitable: Ps. cxix. 53, "Anger, indignation hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked, who forsake Thy law." In the paral. ver 139,  $\eta\eta$ , *zeal*, is substituted for  $\eta\eta$ . In Lam. v. 9, the prophet takes the keenness of hunger as a poetical description of His fury. Their *cup-portion*, that which is proper for them to drink—a figurative description of their lot or portion. Upon the form  $\eta\eta$ , with Kametz, comp. Ewald, *Small Gr.* § 386. Such representations of the fearful destruction of the wicked, as already intimated, are not to be taken literally; but we ought always to bear in mind the remark of Luther on this passage: "This verse contains the description of a storm against the wicked, who do not, however, always perish in an actual tempest, and by a corporeal destruction; but it does happen, nevertheless, in whatever way, that they perish, not in peace and enjoyment." This is the *substance* of the thing; the *form* is partly borrowed from the earlier judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and partly adapted to the imaginative character of poetry, so that it must not be taken into account. The threatening is also fulfilled in him who, though outwardly reposing in the lap of fortune, breathes his last amid pangs of remorse.

Ver. 7. *For righteous is the Lord, He loves righteousness, His countenance beholds the upright.* The Psalmist concludes from the nature of God, that He could not do otherwise than suspend over the ungodly the judgment spoken of in the preceding verse. He, the righteous One, loves righteousness, because it

accords with His own nature; His eye, therefore, rests with satisfaction upon the upright, as the possessor of righteousness; and He must support and avenge him by the overthrow of the wicked. The verse is to be viewed primarily as laying the ground for what is affirmed in ver. 6. But a comparison of ver. 5 shows that it must be also co-ordinated with that. We have already remarked, that in it the Psalmist further unfolds the first half of ver. 5, just as in ver. 6 he further unfolds the second half. The words, *His countenance beholds*, is a mark of satisfaction. God hides or veils His face from those with whom He is displeased. The plural suffix is to be explained from the fulness and richness of the Divine nature. *י* never stands for the *singular*—as is evident from the circumstance, that where it appears to do so, it always refers to collectives, or ideal persons, who, in point of fact, comprise a multitude, while it is never used in regard to actual individuals. See on the plural designations of God, which are unconnected with *Elohim*, and spring from the same root with it (the plural of the suf. in Gen. i. 26, “In *our* image, after *our* likeness”), my *Beiträge*, P. ii. pp. 256–260, 309. Here the plural suf. is probably chosen for the sake of having at the close a full, well-sounding form. Others expound, “the righteous behold His countenance,” equivalent to, “they rejoice in His favour;” as the expression is unquestionably used in Ps. xvii. 15,—only we should then have expected the plural. The plural *יהו*, standing between a singular and a plural, cannot, without the greatest violence, be referred to any other than the latter. Then by this exposition the obvious parallelism between the first and second member is left unnoticed: as *יהו פנימו* corresponds to *ארחב*, so must *ישר* stand in a like relation to *צדקות*. Further, everything is represented in vers. 4–7 as proceeding from God even as to form, and hence to His acting the conclusion must especially refer. But besides, there is not the slightest ground for rejecting the first exposition. It is supported by ver. 4, where, likewise, God’s eyes, that is, God’s countenance, are the *seeing*, and the children of men are the *seen*. Let it only be remarked how exactly this, “His eyes behold the children of men,” corresponds to that, “His countenance beholds the upright.” A comparison of the two parallel passages also speaks against the exposition of Koester: “the righteous shall see it with their countenance,” which is inferior even to the second. So also does it exclude the

exposition of Boettcher: "on that which is right, His countenance looks." (יָרָא as neuter, in which Luther also takes it, though not in Ps. xxxvii. 37, yet in Ps. cxi. 8, Job xxxiii. 27.) The seen must here, as well as there, be *persons*. All these expositions vanish the moment we discern aright the structure of vers. 4-7,—see introduction. It is then perceived that the words, "His eyes behold the children of men," in ver. 4, and those in ver. 5, "the Lord tries the righteous," have not merely the significance of passages accidentally parallel, but are also strictly a standard for ascertaining the sense of the passage before us. Against the objection of Boettcher, that יָרָא is never used as an appellative for the upright, it is enough simply to refer to Ps. xxxvii. 37; and against the allegation of De Wette, that the expression, "His countenance beholds," never occurs, but that it is always, "His eye beholds," Ps. xxxiv. 16 is a sufficient proof, where the words, "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous," are followed by "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

## PSALM XII.

The Psalmist complains of the corruption of the world, especially of its prevailing faithlessness and malice, and entreats the Lord to stand by His own, to bring to nought the delusion of ungodliness that it is almighty, to which it had been led by confidence in its own deceptive worth, and, finally, to destroy supercilious iniquity, vers. 1-4. The Lord answers, and promises him a sure fulfilment of his prayer, ver. 5. And on this promise the Psalmist places an undoubting confidence, vers. 6-8. The Psalm may be divided into two strophes of four members, the first of which contains the complaint and prayer, and the second the answer and hope.

Those who set out with the supposition that the Psalm possesses an individual character, differ from each other in regard to the precise period of David's life to which it refers. Some understand it of Absalom's revolt, and especially of Ahitophel; others, of the persecutions under Saul. The Psalm, however, is undoubtedly not individual, but composed from the first by David for the necessities of the Church. The Psalmist never claims help for himself: he does not say in ver. 7, "Thou shalt



keep *me*," but, "Thou shalt keep *them*," the righteous. From ver. 5, also, it is evident that he prays, not specially for himself, but for "the poor and needy." For, their oppressed condition, not that of any single individual, is there assigned as the reason for the Divine interference. Finally, in ver. 8, we have the contrast usually found in Psalms possessing a general character, between the wicked on the one hand, and the righteous, suffering under their oppressions, on the other.

Attempts have been made to refer this Psalm to the relations between Israel and the heathen; but the peculiar prominence given to flattery and deceit would then be without meaning, as the heathen nations acted toward the Israelites, not with cunning, but with open violence. The heathen adversaries did not say, as it is here written in ver. 4, "Through our *tongues* we will prevail," but through our *swords*. The allusion to hypocrisy and deceit is precisely the *individual physiognomy* of the Psalm; and circumstances which it does not suit, must, at the very outset, be regarded as excluded. The Psalm can only be referred to the internal relations of the people of God themselves, and to the great conflict existing within that community, between the righteous and the wicked.

The aim of the Psalm, which Geier rightly describes as "the common complaint of the Church of all times," is to show, how the righteous are to behave in the sufferings which come upon them through the corruption of the world, manifesting itself even in the covenant-people, and especially through the prevailing dishonesty and deception, the artifices of a hypocritical and flattering tongue, which appear to prepare for them certain destruction. The Church must carry this affliction up to God, and with unshaken confidence trust in His help.

On the *Shemini*, see on Ps. vi.

Ver. 1. *Help, Lord*. Luther: "It sounds more impressive, when one says, Deliver, or give help, than to say, Deliver me. As one says also in our language, under circumstances of great distress, or approaching death: 'Help, Thou compassionate God,' looking simply to the danger, and crying out with all one's might; so does the prophet, as one inflamed with zeal on account of the perishing condition of God's people, cry out without any prefatory words, and implore in the most impressive manner, the help of God." *For the godly man ceases, the upright fail from among the children of men.* It might seem as if the

Psalmist, in common with the prophets, complains, in a general way, that piety, truth, and faith had vanished from the land, and the holy land of the Lord had been changed into a dwelling of unrighteousness,—as if the very sting of his pain were this same degeneracy of the people of God, considered in itself, and without respect to the sufferings which were thereby prepared for the righteous. In fact, several expositors, as Venema, have allowed themselves to be deceived by this appearance. But a closer examination shows, that the disappearing of the pious and upright is here brought under consideration only in so far as the righteous man was thereby placed in circumstances of difficulty, and was exposed to the attacks of the reigning impiety. The “help,” at the very outset, implies that; for that it substantially means, “help me, the righteous man,” is evident from the words, “I will set him in safety, who sighs after it” (ver. 5), which form the answer, and assure him of being heard. Then, the same thing is decidedly proved by these other words, in that verse, “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord.” It is not, then, the reigning corruption in itself, but what the righteous have to suffer therefrom, that is set forth as the ground for the Divine interference. Vers. 7 and 8 also confirm this view, since they express the hope, not that God will improve or annihilate the wicked, purge His floor, but that He will preserve the righteous from that race, and raise them out of the low position to which they had been brought by their machinations.—That the expressions, “The godly man ceases,” “The upright fail,” are not to be understood very literally, that the Psalmist had only for a moment lost sight of the small beloved band of pious and faithful men, by reason of his sorrow at the wide-spread corruption, is manifest from his own words afterwards, from the mention he makes in ver. 5 of “the poor and needy.” Still, the truly pious must have been only a very small flock; otherwise, the Psalmist could not have spoken, as he did, of the whole human race as of a corrupt mass. Luther: “That the prophet here speaks in such a manner as to make the matter seem greater than it was in reality, arose from his intense zeal; for there always are holy persons upon earth. In the same style, people still complain from time to time, that there is no longer any honesty among men, they act deceitfully in everything.” The ἄπαξ λεγόμενον, עַם is best taken with Jarchi as synonymous with the related עַם, “to come to an end,” “to

fail." This signification agrees quite well with the parallelism with נָמַר. נָמַר = נֶאֱמָן, properly, "the trustworthy." The words, "the upright fail," stand related to "the godly man ceases," as the particular to the general, or as the consequence, which it is the design of the Psalm specially to consider, to the cause. Were it perfectly certain that אֱמֻנִים is an adj. or part. Pual of נָמַר, it would of course have to be so taken here. For, not only do the paral. words, "the pious or godly," support it, but also the passage in Mic. vii. 2, "The pious is perished out of the earth, and there is none righteous among men," where יָשָׁר corresponds to אֱמֻנִים; and the one passage so remarkably coincides with the other, that the prophet appears to have had the words of the Psalmist before him. However, as אֱמֻנִים often occurs elsewhere as the plural of אֱמֻנָה, *fidelity*, while for the adj. meaning no passage can be adduced (Ps. xxxi. 23, נֶאֱמַר אֱמֻנִים must be compared with שָׁמַר אֱמֻנִים in Isa. xxvi. 2, and be rendered: "maintaining faithfulness"), we are driven to follow the example of those who, with the Vulgate, render: "Truth and faith have disappeared from among men."

Ver. 2. *They speak lies every one with his neighbour, with smooth lips.* Instead of "lies," Luther has improperly: "Profitless things." In connections such as this, the word "neighbour" is not to be taken in the attenuated sense that it commonly bears with us. They refer back to the law, in which רֵעַ, "companion, fellow, friend," alternates with "brother," and forms, in the commands of the second table, the ratio legi adjecta. Here the words, "with his neighbour," point to the abominableness of the conduct spoken of: those whom they deceive, whom they try to cheat through hollow assurances of friendship, are not strangers, but such as God has joined to them by close bonds. When Paul, in the exhortation, Eph. iv. 25, based on this passage, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one with another," makes the οἱ ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη follow upon the μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ, he only gives a development of the same idea, but introduces no new matter. מִרְבֵּה פֶה is most easily explained as the accus., just as אֶרְבֵּי לֵשׁ in Ps. iii. 4, as to, or with lips of smoothness: comp. with this kind of accus., Ewald, Small Gr. § 512. The exposition: They speak lips of smoothness—lips, for that which is spoken by the lips, words, is opposed by ver. 3, as well as by the parallel: with a double heart. *A lip of smooth-*

ness is a flattering lip; comp. in Ps. v. 9, "They make their tongue smooth"—on which Luther: "Soft, cozening, and hypocritical," Prov. vi. 24. Here he substitutes, "They act the hypocrite," for "They flatter." תְּלַקֵּת is the plural of תִּלְקֵת, smoothness.—*With a double heart do they speak.* It is usually expounded: They speak otherwise than they think. But how this sense can be derived from the words without some addition, it is not easy to perceive. The attempts also of Venema to make a distinction: "With a double mind, the one which they express, and another which they conceal, the former bland and open, the other impious and malignant;" and Umbreit: "That is, that they have one for themselves, and another for their friends," are not without difficulties. The words, simply considered, imply a duplicity in the mind itself, just as the ἀνὴρ διψυχος, in Jas. i. 8, is not one who is internally unbelieving, feigns faith, but one who is at the same time both believing and unbelieving—has faith in the surface of his heart, but in its depths, unbelief. Experience shows, that hypocrisy and flattery very rarely manifest themselves in a coarse outward shape; this would defeat their object. The hypocrite and flatterer is so dangerous, precisely because he calls forth momentarily in himself, such feelings as appear to him fitted for accomplishing his aim. He not merely *feigns* love, but he *prepares* it. Yet, while this prepared love is on the surface, the natural hatred still keeps possession of the underground of his heart. In the paral. passage also of 1 Chron. xii. 33, the words בָּלֹא לֵב וְלֹא לֵב mark an internal duplicity of heart. Michaelis: "Not with a wavering and discordant, but with a firm and concordant mind." The diversity is indicated by repeating the word; so Deut. xxv. 13, אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן, stone and stone, a double stone, diverse weights, comp. ver. 14. Ewald, p. 637.

Ver. 3. After the complaint, the Psalmist here follows with the prayer. The Futures must be taken *optatively*, as was already done by the LXX. *The Lord cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks big*—the boastful tongue. Expositors find here a difficulty, through which they have partly been drawn into very forced and false interpretations. Supercilious speeches—say they—proud words against the poor and oppressed, do not square with the design of entrapping by "smooth words." But if we compare the following verse, we plainly see, that the proud speeches are not to be thought of as directed against the poor; that they rather boast of their fancied almightiness, which

they possess by means of their artifices, their skill in lying, hypocrisy, and flattery; so that the meaning is: The tongue, which boasts of its power to deceive. They are the same persons who in Isa. xxviii. 15 say, "We have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." That the rooting out of the lips and the tongue must be accomplished by extirpating their possessors, is shown in the following verse.

Ver. 4. *Who thus speak*—to be supplied from the preceding verse: The Lord cut off: *through our tongues we are strong*,—all we wish, we can accomplish through our tongue. According to some, this exposition is unsuitable, for a twofold reason—לשננו cannot signify "through our tongue;" and the verb has not in Hiph. an intransitive signification; it rather means corroboravit. We must hence translate: Our tongues will we endow with strength; we will so arm them with lies and calumnies, that no one will be in a condition to resist us. Still, however, the reasons against the first exposition are not decisive: לשננו only needs to be rendered, "*in respect to our tongue*;" and חזק may warrantably be taken in the sense of "acting vigorously," the more readily, as the assertion, that it can only mean "to strengthen," rests merely upon the single passage of Dan. ix. 27, where it is connected, not as here with ל, but with the accusative. This exposition also is favoured by the connection and the parallelism. Not the purpose: "we will get strength for our tongues," but only the declaration: "through our tongues we show ourselves to be strong," suits the words, "the tongue which speaks big," and especially "*our lips are with us, who is Lord over us?*" the second member of the verse. On the expression *with us*, J. II. Michaelis: nobis auxilio et praesto sunt; and on the expression, "*who is Lord over us?*" qui impediatur, quod nobis placet et decretum fuit. Our lips impart to us such a power, that we can do what we will—by means of our lips we are omnipotent.

Ver. 5. The Lord answers the complaint and prayer of the righteous, and promises to repress the violence. *Because of the desolation of the poor, because of the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord.* כֵּן is the כֵּן causæ, marking the motion from out of a thing. The misery of the poor is that from which the Divine action proceeds as from its immediate cause; comp. Elwald, p. 601. עָתָה is used with peculiar emphasis. Till now, says the Lord, I have rested; but now I must

act. At the foundation of this lies the consolatory truth, that so soon as the malice of the wicked, and the wretchedness of the poor, has reached a certain point, God must interpose. The last member is literally: *place will I in safety him who sighs after it*. The constr. of שׂית with ב is to be explained in this way, that safety is here considered as a possession, in which God instals the righteous. Till now he had been in distress, now God sets him in safety. Rightly already Calvin: "To the unjustly oppressed God promises a restitutio in integrum." The words contain the answer to the "help," at the commencement. The suff. in לו refers to the deliverance. The pron. relat. is awaiting from the originally looser connection, which latterly is also very common in poetry; comp. Ewald, p. 646. פִּחַ signifies in Hiph. to *pant*, to long earnestly for something; the object after which one does sigh, is connected with it by לו, as in IIab. ii. 3, יִפְחַ אֶחָד לְלֵקֶן anhelat ad finem oraculum, in parallelism with: there is no delay. In a similar way is שָׁאָה used, prop. anhelare, not unfrequently of vehement longings and sighings. Therefore: I shall conduct him to a state of safety, who longs for it, viz. safety. According to this exposition, the second member is quite parallel to the first. On account of the sighing of the needy will I now arise. Others expound: I set him in safety against whom they, or the impious, snort. But this exposition is to be rejected on the simple ground, that the verb פִּחַ in Hiph. is never used in the sense of *puffing*. And besides, the puffing is here not at all suitable. The wicked in the Psalm are not scornful tyrants, but sleek hypocrites and flatterers. The exposition of Gesen. in his Thes.: quem sufflant, contemnunt, is also to be rejected. We already showed on Ps. x. 4, that blowing is never used as a gesture of contempt. Others again, as Calvin and Dereser, expound: I set in security him, who is blown upon, whom the ungodly thinks to blow away like chaff. But we should then have expected not לו, but rather, as in Ps. x. 4, לוֹ. Contrary to usage also is the exposition of Schultens, which takes הִפִּיחַ in the sense of *breathing upon*: it (the deliverance), or he must breath on himself, i.e. recover strength. The word, however, never occurs in this signification; and by that exposition, אֶשִׁית would lose its object, which cannot fail.

Ver. 6. The righteous places firm confidence in this promise of the Lord. For: *the words of the Lord* ("the words of the

Lord" here refer to "thus saith the Lord," in ver. 5) are *pure words*; they are throughout *true*, have no mixture of false in them; they are not like impure ore, from which dross and earth must first be removed, but *they are purified silver of a lord of the earth, purified seven times*. The ב in בעליל we take, with Aben Ezra and Kimchi, as radical, and בעליל as synonymous with בעל dominus, with a reduplication of the last radical letter, as is done in סגור, חבלל, שפרר, עבטט; comp. Ewald, Small Gr. § 332. לארץ is a periphrasis of the stat. constr., placed thus not without reason, as the Psalmist wished to say "of a lord," while הארץ ב would have implied "of the lord of the earth;" comp. Ewald, p. 582. It is remarked by Gesenius in his Thes., p. 730, that "ל stands occasionally after nouns, which signify lord, king, god, and, on the other hand, servant, minister, especially when the noun is used quite indefinitely," as the ל after ארץ Gen. xlv. 8, 9, and after מלך, Isa. xxxvii. 13, and ארץ לנו in the present Psalm. Kings and judges of the earth not unfrequently occur in the Psalms; comp. Ps. ii. 1, 9, cxxxviii. 4, cxlviii. 11. The meaning, according to this sense, is well given by Vatable: "The word of the Lord is like the purest silver, which is diligently and with the greatest care purged from all dross, not for common use, but for the use of an earthly prince." The striking parallel is not to be overlooked, which arises out of this explanation: the word of the Lord of the whole world is pure as the silver of a prince of the earth; it is related to an ordinary word as this silver is to common silver. A great mass of wrong expositions have been occasioned by the belief, that ב was to be taken as a servile. Of these expositions we shall examine only those which are now the most current. Rosenm., Gesen., Winer, and Hitzig expound: "Silver purified in the workshop, in respect to earth, or earthy ingredients." This exposition is objectionable on two grounds. The meaning ascribed to עליל, *workshop*, is a pure invention. The idea of *working* does lie in the root עלל, as the derivative עללה and others show, but still עליל cannot, from its form, signify a workshop. The form קטיל is that of adjectives, partly with a passive, partly with an intransitive signification; comp. Ewald, p. 234; and that we must attribute this signification also to עליל, is clear from the frequently occurring fem. עללה, "that which is worked, done," then, "the work, the deed." This first ground may be urged also against another exposition (that of

Luther, recently Maurer), according to which עליל, without any apparent justification from Hebrew usage—merely upon the authority of Rabbins, guessing from the context, or on the basis of an etymological combination (Hupfeld)—is taken in the sense of *crucible*. But the second reason is still more decisive. לארץ cannot possibly signify “in reference to earthy elements,” for ארץ never denotes the earth as *matter*. For this the Hebrews have a special word, ארמה; for example, “man is of the earth,” taken ex humo, could not be expressed by בן הארץ, but only by בן הארמה. This difficulty Umbreit escapes by rendering: “in the workshop upon earth.” But he still has the first standing against him. He succeeds better, however, with לארץ than the defenders of the exposition, “in a crucible,” who render the words: “upon the earth, into which the crucible is built,”—for that were quite useless and confusing—or even: “of earth, earthy” (Luther). The same may be said against this last, as well as that it is contrary to usage. Others, as Michaelis and Dereser, expound: “as silver purified in a workshop of earth,—as solid silver, which has been found in the mountains, the workshop of earth.” But against this is to be advanced, not only the inadmissibility of the explanation of עליל by workshop, but also, that then the two nouns ought to have been connected by the stat. constr., and not by ל. For the workshop of earth would in that case have been defined by its contrast with a *human* workshop. Besides, one does not see how solid silver, which has never been purified, can be called צורף.

The comparison of the word of God with purified metal is peculiar to David, and occurs again in Ps. xviii. 30. Calvin: “Though such knowledge may appear, at first sight, easy of attainment, yet if any one will consider, more attentively, how prone the minds of men are to distrust and impious doubts, he will readily understand how profitable it is to have our faith strengthened by the testimony, that God is not fallacious, and does not beguile us with empty words, nor unduly laud His own power and goodness, but that He simply offers in His word, what, in reality, He is willing to bestow. There is no one, indeed, who does not profess heartily to believe what David here says, that the words of God are pure; but those who, in ease and retirement, extol the word of God loudly, when matters come to serious conflict, though they dare not openly spout out



blasphemies against God, yet often charge Him with bad faith. For whenever He delays to help us, we consider His fidelity at fault, and forthwith begin to cry out, as if we had been defrauded." Luther remarks: "It is not necessary, by God's words, to understand only such as are taken from Scripture into the mouth; but also what God speaks through men, whatsoever it may be, and whether the speaker be learned or unlearned; also what He spake through His apostles, apart from the use of Scripture, and what He still speaks from day to day, through His own people." In general this is quite correct. The praise of God's word is here, indeed, immediately occasioned by an inward oracle, which the righteous received, and which was designed to serve the purpose of leading him to grasp with firm faith the substance thereof, which should be again repeated for every one that reads the Psalm. We must, therefore, comprehend under the words of God those also of which Paul Gerhard sings: "His Spirit often speaks to my spirit in sweet consoling strains," etc. It is not, however, to be forgotten, that these internal speeches, now that Scripture exists, always rest upon its foundation, as here the word of the Lord, in ver. 5, is only a special application of the promises of the law to the righteous.

Ver. 7. *Thou, O Lord, shalt keep them,*—Thy people suffering wrongfully.—Luther, incorrectly: "Be pleased to keep them." The context demands the expression of firm hope, not of a wish.—*Thou shalt preserve him against this generation for ever.* The singular suffix in the second clause is to be explained as a personification. In order to mark the contrast more pointedly between the pious and the ungodly, and to indicate that it is not one between certain individuals and certain others, "the pious man" is often set in opposition to "the ungodly man," the righteous to the wicked; the former as the object of Divine care, the latter as the object of Divine punishment. The *וּמִן הָרָעָה* is not, "from this sort of men," but "from this generation." Calvin: "We collect from this, that the age was so corrupt, that David could, by way of reproach, throw them all together, as it were, into one bundle." This exposition has the common usage on its side, and perfectly agrees with the general spread of corruption, described in ver. 1. It affords a far grander contrast than the other:—on the one side, the small band of pious men, and, on the other, the immense mass

of the ungodly, who form, as it were, the whole present generation, the bearers of the spirit of the age. This is a contrast which arises out of the character of human nature, and has given rise to the prevailing use in the New Testament of κόσμος, in opposition to the chosen. The signification of κόσμος, Koester would here attribute to עולם. He renders: "Thou wilt keep them from the generation which lives to the world." But the word *never* has that signification; it never means the world, but always eternity; and לעולם is always used adverbially, *for ever*.

Ver. 8. *The wicked walk round about*,—they have encompassed the righteous on all hands, so that, without God's help, deliverance is impossible; comp. Ps. iii. 6. *As elevation is depression to the sons of men*; i.e. although now the righteous are overborne by the wicked, yet their distress is to be regarded in the light of prosperity, because God forsakes not His own, but will richly recompense them for the sufferings they have endured. The sense requires that a *but* should be inserted before the second member. רם, "elevation," is inf. nominascens. The meaning of ולות, which occurs only here, cannot be doubtful. ולל has the same, and only one, meaning in all the Semitic dialects. In the Chal., according to Buxtorf, it signifies, vilescere, vilipendi, despici, ut Hebr. קלה et כלל

quibus quandoque respondet. In Arabic, ذَلَّ abjectus, vilis, despectus fuit. In Hebr. זלל, "the little-worth," stands opposed in Jer. xv. 19 to יקר, "the precious;" the same word denotes, in Deut. xxi. 28, etc., a man of low manners. The Niph. of the verb occurs in Isa. lxiv. 2, in the sense of "to be lowered, despised." So that ולות can signify nothing else than "humiliation, contempt," just as the Chald. ולותא, vilitas, despectus. This signification, as it is the only one philologically grounded, so it is specially recommended by the contrast with רם, which is perfectly obvious, and which all other expositions leave unnoticed. The sense of *terror*, which Gesenius and Hitzig give to the word, is unproved and unsuitable. Still more so is that of *storm*, which Maurer adopts. The greater part of expositors follow Kinchi in their explanation of this hemistich, who thinks that כרם is put for כרעם; it is then rendered: "as they exalt themselves, it is a reproach to the children of men." But this exposition cannot be at all grammati-

cally justified, since for such an omission of the suffix, no analogous example can anywhere be produced. In addition to this, the repetition of the complaint, of the power of the ungodly, without any mention being made of hope in the Lord's assistance, to which the righteous looks for consolation, would here be unsuitable: the conclusion would be quite an unsatisfactory one, such as one should be compelled to wish away. The same reason decides also against the exposition of J. H. Michaelis and Umbreit: "When disgrace exalts itself among men;" and against that also of Ewald, which is of like import: "So soon as baseness exalts itself;" and it is further to be objected to the latter, that *לִיחַ* cannot signify *baseness*, and that *רִם* does not mean "to exalt itself, or to rise," but "to be high,"—which latter difficulty is avoided by Luther, though he follows the same exposition, by rendering: "Where such wicked people reign among men." According to our exposition, the conclusion of the Psalm gathers up, in a short enigmatic saying, the substance of the whole of it. The depth to which the righteous have sunk, through the hostilities of the wicked, is equivalent to an elevation. For, as sure as there is a God in heaven, their suffering is a prediction of their joy, their contempt of their honour. So that they may quietly look on at all the machinations of malice.

### PSALM XIII.

The Psalmist complains of his great distress upon earth, and that in heaven he seemed to be forgotten, vers. 1 and 2. He prays the Lord for help, vers. 3, 4, and is revived by the assurance he obtains of it, vers. 5, 6.

The Psalm contains no indication, from which the time of its composition might be more exactly determined. We are therefore here also justified in supposing, that the Psalm was not, at a later period, first devoted to general use, but that David originally composed it with this design. Already did Luther understand it of every pious man, who was persecuted as David was. The general character of this Psalm, as well as of many others, is falsely viewed by Jarchi, Kimchi, and De Wette, who refer it exclusively to the relation of the Israelitish people to the heathen. Of national enemies, too, there is no trace what-

ever to be found here. As throughout the Psalm a single individual comes into view, it cannot be doubted that he is described from the soul of suffering individuals, oppressed by personal enemies, unless it could be proved on definite grounds, that the people are here personified as an individual. Such grounds, however, have no existence.

The situation is that of one who, through lengthened persecutions and continued withholding of Divine help, has been brought to the verge of despair, and is plunged in deadly sorrow. This particular feature of the Psalm may be recognised in the four times repeated question, *how long?* States of mind such as those here described, must often have crept upon David in the later periods of the Sauline persecution, and with the consolation which he experienced under them he here comforts his brethren.

Ver. 1. *How long, O Lord, wilt Thou continually forget me? How long hidest Thou Thy face from me?* The נָסָה, according to the most obvious exposition, marks the uninterruptedness, and consequently the entireness, of the forgetting. The Psalmist's darkness was illuminated by no ray of Divine favour; his misery had no lucid intervals. This exposition is confirmed by the corresponding יוֹמָם, "the whole day," in ver. 2. It may be doubted, however, whether the נָסָה and the לִנְסָה, which occurs in parallel passages (Ps. lxxix. 5, "How long, O Lord, wilt Thou be angry" לִנְסָה? and again in Ps. lxxiv. 10, lxxxix. 46), can signify *continually*, in the sense of constant, uninterrupted, as it rather appears to mean only, *for ever*—comp. especially ix. 18: "For the needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the meek shall not perish for ever;" where לִנְסָה is parallel to לָעַד, and obviously only a final forgetting is spoken of. It is the more natural to think of this here, as the sufferer, according to ver. 3, "Lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not unto death," believes himself to have already reached the last stage, and prays God that He would still rescue him before the gate is closed. Now, if we attach decisive importance to these doubts with regard to the exposition in question, we must render the clause: "How long wilt Thou forget me for ever?" The weak man, who is always inclined to estimate the grace of God according to his own feeling and experience, is prone, in *every* suffering, to give himself to despair concerning it, to regard himself as wholly and irrecoverably lost. But when a

hard and continuous cross has been appointed, as is the case here, the flesh cries out even to the strongest man, that he is for ever forgotten. On the other hand, however, the Spirit raises its protest; faith lays hold of the declaration, that the poor shall not alway be forgotten. This conflict in the feelings of the sufferer discovers itself also in his address to God; for he prays God at length to restore to him the favour which appearances teach, and the flesh affirms, had completely gone. The sense is quite correctly given by Muis: "Thou showest Thyself to me such as if Thou hadst entirely forgotten me." Calvin: "Not in a human way, or by natural feelings, do we recognise in our misery that God cares for us, but by faith we apprehend His invisible providence. So David, as far as he could gather from the actual state of things, seemed to himself to be deserted by God. Still, however, with eyes previously enlightened by the light of faith, he saw the grace of God, though hidden; else, how could he have directed his groans and desires to Him?" Luther: "Does he not thus paint this most pungent and bitter anxiety of mind in the most graphic words, as one that feels he has to do with a God alienated from him, — hostile, unappeasable, inexorable, and for ever angry? For here *hope itself despairs, and despair, notwithstanding, hopes*; and there only lives the unutterable groaning with which the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, Rom. viii. 26; who moved upon the darkness which covered the waters, as is said at the beginning of Genesis. This no one understands who has not tasted it." Luther also perceived what emphasis lies in the repetition of the "how long," with which the sufferer introduces his "four bitter and violent complaints." "In Hebrew the expression, "how long," is four times repeated without alteration; instead of which, however, the Latin translator has substituted another word at the third repetition, for the sake of variety. But we would rather preserve the simplicity of the Hebrew dialect, because, by the fourfold use of the same word, it seeks to express the emotion of the prophet; and its impressiveness is weakened by the change adopted by the Latin interpreter." The Psalm is prepared for those who have been sighing under long distress, and in the one expression, "how long," its whole nature is, in a manner, expressed.

Ver. 2. *How long must I take counsel in my soul, sorrow in my heart daily?* The expression, "*put or lay counsels,*" has

something strange in it. The simplest mode of explaining it is by taking the word *lay* as equivalent to *lay down*, as in Ex. x. 1, "That I may lay (put down) these My signs in thy midst." The soul and heart appear as a store-room, which is entirely filled with counsels and sorrows. The sense of the words, "How long must I take counsels?" is: How long wilt Thou leave me to myself—how long must I weary myself in finding a way of escape from this misery and distress, from which Thou couldst so easily deliver me? We have here very strikingly portrayed the mental condition of a man who harasses himself in helpless embarrassment, seeking for counsel, falling sometimes upon this, sometimes upon that plan, and then giving them all up again in utter despondency, because he sees them to be all unavailing. This disquiet, which arises in us whenever the Lord turns away His face from us in trouble, the sufferer considers as his greatest evil. Luther: "When the unhappy man finds that God feels toward him in the manner described, he does as follows:—That is, his heart is as a raging sea, in which all sorts of counsels move up and down; he tries on all hands to find a hole through which he can make his escape; he thinks of various plans, and still is utterly at a loss what to advise." What is implied in taking or forming counsels, David knew well in his own experience, especially during the persecution of Saul, when hunted by his enemies "like a partridge upon the mountains:" he sought refuge, sometimes upon the hill-tops, sometimes among the Moabites, sometimes among the Philistines; and amid all the projects which he formed for his deliverance, the mournful reflection still forced itself upon him, "I shall notwithstanding perish one day by the hand of Saul." The sufferer was pained, not merely because of his outward trouble, but still more because God seemed to have turned away His face from him, denying him His favour and assistance. This was the real sting of his pain, the throbbing pulse of his misery. Many render יום improperly: "the whole day," giving it the force of *יום ולילה*. The day, in its more extended signification, comprehends also the night. The word here means, not merely "by day," but also "daily;" comp. Ezek. xxx. 16. "Just as diu in Latin is connected with dies;" Ewald. Against the former view may be urged, that יום and לילה are constantly opposed: and against the latter view, that a combination of such different meanings should only be assumed in an

extreme case. יום rather means "the day through;" here, and in Ezek. xxx. 16, it is equivalent to "from morning to evening." Night, as the time of sleep, is left out of view. *How long shall mine enemy exalt himself over me?*

Ver. 3. The prayer stands in immediate connection with the complaint. Luther: "He here sets something over against each of the preceding points. He had complained of four evil things, therefore he begs for four sorts of good." To the *forgetting* and the *hiding* of the countenance stand opposed the *looking* and *hearing*; to the counsels and sorrow, the lightening of the eyes; and to the words: "How long shall mine enemy exalt himself over me?" reference is made in ver. 4. The Psalmist, however, has avoided all monotony: in the three first petitions, the reference is only in the matter, and never verbally expressed; and in the fourth, even the form of a petition is abandoned. *Look hither.* This is opposed to the hiding of the face, of which the Psalmist complains in the first verse. "So long (remarks Calvin) as God does not actually stretch out His hand to help us, the flesh cries out that His eyes are shut." *Hear me, O Lord my God, enlighten mine eyes.* These words are explained by Luther thus: "As soon as the face of God is turned away from us, presently follows consternation, distraction, darkness in the understanding and uncertainty of counsel, so that we grope as it were in the dark, and seek everywhere how we may find an escape. Therefore, when the Lord lifts upon us the light of His countenance, and turns His face toward us, listening to our cry, then are our eyes again enlightened, and we have no difficulty in obtaining counsel." But, that this exposition is not right—that the enlightening of the eyes here is not to be understood *spiritually*, but *literally*, with a special reference to the words, "the sorrow in my heart," in ver. 2, is evident from the following words: *So that I sleep not unto death.* In the man who is oppressed with sorrow, the feeble and dying, the eyes, which reflect the power of life, become dim; hence to "enlighten the eyes" is as much as to give the vital spark, as Calvin justly remarks. The passage 1 Sam. xiv. throws light on this. The eyes of Jonathan, who was faint almost to death, were covered with darkness; but after he had tasted the honey-comb, his eyes see, according to ver. 27 (where the Ketib alone is right), and are enlightened, אור, according to ver. 29. In Ezra ix. 8, the words, "enlighten our eyes," stand

in connection with "give us a reviving." The Psalmist here, then, represents himself as a dying man, as one already half gone, who will soon be wholly overwhelmed with the darkness of death, if the Lord do not give him new power of life, set him free from consuming grief and sorrow, by granting him deliverance, and so prevent his threatening dissolution. Ewald exclaims: "Pity that we could not more exactly determine the historical circumstances." But with this, after the remarks made in the introduction, we cannot sympathize. The feeling here expressed is not so very singular a one, as to need explanation from the facts of history. How many souls, driven to the verge of death, have found in this verse the record of their own experience!—Nay, who that has been exercised in the cross, has not already passed through such experience? It is also against all experience to maintain, that the man who feels thus, looks to this earthly life as the final limit of his existence.—*To sleep to death*—a bold poetical connection for: To sleep the sleep of death; comp. Jer. li. 39, 57, where sleeping an eternal sleep occurs. Ewald, p. 591.

Ver. 4. *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him.* יכלתי from כל, potuit, stands, according to many, for יכלתי; but this is wrong, if the suff. accus. be understood to designate precisely the dative. The construction with the accus., instead of the common one with ל, is rather to be explained from a modification of the meaning of the verb, "to overpower any one."—*Mine adversaries rejoice not when I fail.* The sufferer says, that it were unworthy of God to give His servant as an occasion of mirth to the ungodly, who were just watching for his fall, to rail at it. He proceeds, therefore, on the principle, that it is God's peculiar business to check the impudence of sinners, as often as they boast of having conquered His people, and through them Himself.

Vers. 5, 6. The Lord imparts to the Psalmist, and through him to all who are in a similar situation; or, rather, He imparts to the righteous sufferer, the assurance of His favour and assistance.—*And I trust in Thy goodness, my heart rejoices in Thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for He has dealt bountifully with me.*—לל, not, as many, "will rejoice," but, "shall rejoice," as even the form, which is the Fut. apocop. for the optative (comp. Ewald, p. 527), and its suitability to the following, "I will sing," suggest. The Psalmist declares his wish and resolu-



tion, that his heart might give thanks to God for his salvation, which, as already inwardly promised to him, he sees with the eye of faith as actually present. In this wish is involved, at the same time, the certainty and greatness of the salvation. The exultation of the righteous man's heart stands opposed to that of the enemies, ver. 4. The object of the emotion of joy is marked by **ב**. The Pret. **לַמֵּלֶךְ** is to be explained from the faith, which sees what is not as if it were. Luther, whom most expositors follow, renders: "That He deals so well with me;" and this exposition is right, and decidedly to be preferred to the other: "That He recompenses me." Comp. upon **לַמֵּלֶךְ** with **עַל**, "to make presents," on Ps. vii. 4.

### PSALM XIV.

The Psalmist begins with a lamentation regarding the frightful power and extent of corruption reigning in the world, vers. 1-3. But the righteous, who have much to suffer from sin, must not therefore despair. As sure as there is a God in heaven, they shall bring upon themselves destruction. From the watch-tower of faith, the Psalmist beholds with triumphant joy the overthrow of impiety, and the establishment of righteousness, vers. 4-6. He closes with the wish, that the Lord would fulfil His purpose, and send salvation and deliverance to His people, and thereby give occasion to grateful joy, ver. 7.

In the first part, the complaint relates to the corruption of the world by itself, without respect to the sufferings which thence arise to the "generation of the righteous." But that the complaint is really closely related also to these sufferings,—that the Psalmist delineates the corruption of the world with respect to the difficult and apparently hopeless position into which the righteous are thereby brought, is evident from the second part, which is occupied throughout, not, after the manner of the prophets, with the judgments coming upon the wicked world in themselves, but only in so far as they affect the salvation of the righteous, and rescue them from the clutches of the wicked. Hence the aim of the Psalm is quite similar to that of Ps. xii.; it is designed to administer consolation to the righteous, when tempted by the sight of the corruption of the world, and the ascendancy of wickedness, which appears to threaten their entire destruction. Should even the whole world

be given up to corruption, and be in league against them, they may still comfort themselves with the thought, that God overcomes the world. Along with this, however, the Psalm contains a forcible warning to the ungodly. And that this is not to be excluded, is evident alone from the superscription of the corresponding 53d Psalm.

The absence of all special allusions renders it certain, that this Psalm also, like the many nearly related ones immediately preceding, was from the first destined by David for the general use of the Church. As regards those who call forth the complaint of the Psalm, and against whom the Lord is entreated, the reference of the Psalm is just as wide as the designation, "children of men," can make it. Whether the corrupt children of men belonged outwardly to the people of God, or not, makes no difference. The former were not proper members of His Church. In the Pentateuch, the standing formula in respect to evil-doers is, "their soul is cut off from among their people,"—it is ipso facto separated, belongs no longer to the people of God, although the theocratic government might lack power and will to accomplish externally, also, the separation, as was constantly—for example, in Deut. xiii. 5—enjoined in the words, "So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." From this it is clear enough how the contrast between עַמִּי and עַמֵּי, in vers. 4, 7, and the children of men, is to be understood. The contrast is that between a righteous generation and a corrupt world, such as has existed in all ages, and will continue even to the end of the present constitution of things. De Wette and others would refer the Psalm exclusively to the relation of Israel to its heathenish oppressors. That the first part is unfavourable to this hypothesis, De Wette himself is forced to admit. Vers. 1–3, he remarks, "has quite the appearance of a general moral delineation." Of a special reference to the heathen, there does not exist the smallest trace. It is not heathenish, but human corruption, that is described. This is confirmed also by the reference which the description bears to Gen. vi. 12, "And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth;" comp. ver. 5, "And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth." This passage refers not to the heathen, but to mankind generally. How little the prophets and sacred bards were disposed to limit corruption merely to the heathen, and exempt Israel

from it, might be shown by a great multitude of passages; but we shall produce only one, in which what is here said of the whole world is just as expressly said of Israel, Jer. v. 1, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find one, if there be one that executeth judgment and striveth after integrity, and I will pardon it." That the view in question is not favoured by ver. 4, "Who eat up My people like bread," even De Wette is obliged to admit. He says, "The oppressors spoken of in ver. 4 might well be sought among the Israelites." That this not merely *could* be done, but that the native oppressors *must* not be excluded, appears from the following passage in Micah, which refers exclusively to the internal relations, iii. 2, 3, "Who also eat the flesh of My people," etc., which is obviously based on the verse in question, and does not comment upon, and carry out into detail, what is here only generally indicated. Comp. also the passage in Prov. xxx. 14, which likewise refers to domestic enemies, "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." De Wette rests his view entirely upon ver. 7, conceiving that the wish there expressed for a return from captivity, points to oppression of a political nature, and most naturally to the circumstances of the exiles under the Chaldeans. But our exposition will prove, that the verse contains not a word of a return from captivity, but only expresses a general wish, that God would have compassion on the misery of His people, whether inflicted by internal or by foreign wickedness.

Other expositors, as Stier, have been led, by opposition to the view just noticed, to assert, that the Psalm refers merely to the domestic conflict between the righteous and the wicked, — that human corruption is described in vers. 1–3, only in reference to its manifestations in Israel, — that the evil-doers, who ate up the people as bread, are to be sought only in Israel, and that it is only the wicked in Israel who are threatened with destruction, and from whom the righteous are to have deliverance. But this view is just as arbitrary as the other: the contrast throughout is that of the corrupt world and the righteous generation; and as this contrast manifested itself in what "the chosen" among Israel had to suffer from heathen malice, one cannot perceive with what justice this relation should be excluded.

The fatal alternative of a domestic conflict, or a reference to external, heathen oppressors, should at last be abandoned ; we must cease to assume that our choice lies necessarily between either the one or the other. The men of God, elevated by His Spirit above a merely national point of view, contemplated heathenish and Israelitish wickedness as one whole, without suffering themselves to be deceived by the difference of costume. So also everywhere Moses, to whose command, "Thou shalt not have diverse weights in thy bag," this here corresponds. Comp., for example, Deut. xxxii.

From the preceding remarks, it is manifest that, with perfect propriety, Paul adduces, in Rom. iii. 10-12, a proof from this Psalm of the scripturalness of his position, that "Jews and heathens are all under sin." He justly puts this passage, vers. 1-3, at the head of his proof ; for the Old Testament contains no passage in which the universality and depth of human corruption are painted in such vivid colours.

What has been alleged against the Davidic origin of the Psalm proceeds entirely on a false understanding of ver. 7.

This Psalm recurs once again, with certain alterations, in Ps. liii. These alterations (with the exception, perhaps, of the omission of the "all," in ver. 4) have all the same character,—everywhere, in Ps. liii., is the rare, the uncommon, the strong, and the elevated, substituted for the common and the simple. The consideration of particulars will show this. The simple superscription of the xiv., "to the chief musician of David," is enlarged in the liii. by a twofold addition, and these additions both possess the character now mentioned. First, in regard to *עַל־מִחְלָה*. That nothing is to be made out of these words, on the supposition that they designate an instrument or a melody, the remark of Ewald (*Poet. Books*, P. i. p. 174) may suffice to show : "A word, on the meaning of which nothing whatever can be said." We conceive that the words contain an enigmatical description of the subject and object, and translate: "concerning sickness." This view is justified, 1. By its being the only one admissible in a grammatical point of view. The verb in Hebrew has no other signification than to be weak, sick ; and the very nearly related forms *מִחְלָה* and *מַחְלָה* occur in the sense of sickness. Before it has been shown that *מַחְלָה* cannot bear this signification, it is quite arbitrary to explain it out of the Ethiopian. 2. In the superscription of Ps. lxxxviii., where the same words

are again used, they are connected with *לְעִיָּת*, which, according to the usage, and the *עֲיִיָּת*, affligis, in ver. 7, and the *עֲנִי*, in ver. 9, can only be explained: "regarding the tribulation," thus admirably comporting with: "concerning sickness." The common exposition: "for singing," must be abandoned as arbitrary.

3. The words, rendered as we have done, suit exceedingly well the purport of the Psalms which they designate. Ps. liii. is taken up with the spiritual sickness of the sons of men. Ps. lxxxviii. is the prayer of one visited by severe bodily sickness.

—The second addition in the superscription is *מִשְׁכִּיל*, a didactic Psalm (comp. on Ps. xxxii.). This designation has been chosen with an ingenious reference to ver. 2. The Psalm aims at bringing the unreasonable, who are there discoursed of, to sound reason. With that is connected its second aim, to instruct the sick, that is, sufferers, how to behave in sickness, and what remedies to apply. In the Psalm itself there is a pervading change in the substitution of *Elohim* everywhere for *Jehovah*. The reason of that is the following: It is not to be doubted that even in Ps. xiv. the sevenfold use of the name of God (thrice *Elohim*, and four times *Jehovah*) is not accidental, especially when the corresponding sevenfold number of the verses is taken into account, which, of evident purpose, is preserved also in Ps. liii., where the extended superscription forms a verse by itself (whereas we find combined in ver. 6 [in Heb.] what in Ps. xiv. forms two); and analogies, such as that in Ps. xxix., where *קוֹל יְהוָה* recurs seven times. Now, while in Ps. xiv. the wish predominated to use the different names of God according to their different meanings, and according to the relation of the Psalm to the former one, united with which it formed a pair, in Ps. liii. another interest prevailed, namely, to render palpable the intentionality of the sevenfold repetition by the uniformity of the name,—a design which was the more visibly accomplished, as the *Elohim* in some of its connections,—for example, "they call not upon *Elohim*,"—sounds rather strange.—In Ps. liii. ver. 1, *עָל*, "crime," is substituted for *עֲלִילָה*, "deed." The "deed" is justified by the contrast with speaking in the heart; apart from this important reference, *עָל*, as being the stronger, is at the same time the more characteristic; so that here, as is generally the case, each of the readings has its peculiar advantage. In ver. 3, *כָּל* is first substituted for the simple and also clear *הַכָּל*, and it is not quite certain how

the suffix should be explained. Then, instead of the common סר, the very rare סנ is substituted, which elsewhere occurs only twice in Kal. In this case a word is manifestly chosen, as nearly related as possible, both in writing and pronunciation, to the other,—just as Jeremiah appears fond of substituting words similarly written and spoken to those of the original; comp. Küper *Ierem. libr. sacr. interpre.* p. 14. In ver. 5, to “there were they in great fear,” there is added, with the view of filling up and strengthening the picture, “where no fear;” and instead of the plain words, “for God is in the generation of the righteous,” are put the far more emphatic and highly poetical ones, “for God scatters the bones of him who encamps against thee,” prop. of thy besieger. So also in ver. 6, the statement, “only put to shame the counsel of the wretched, for God is his refuge,” which stands, so to speak, on the defensive, is supplanted in Ps. liii. by another plainly offensive, and; as the form of address itself shows, much more lively, “thou dost put to shame, for God rejects them.” Finally, in ver. 7, for the singular יִשְׁרָעָה the rarer and more emphatic plural is substituted.

From the representation now given, it is clear that we can never adopt any such account of the origin of the variations in the two Psalms as that espoused by Ewald, who supposes a reader to have rectified for himself, as well as he could, the text of a manuscript that had become illegible. It is not less clear, that the variations could not have sprung from traditional usage. They all belong to one author, who made them with consideration and method. That it was David himself, appears to be indicated by the superscription of Ps. liii., which ascribes the Psalm also in that form of it to him; and it is impossible to bring forward any well-grounded proof against it.

When the collectors gave a place to both forms, the original and the altered, they certainly acted in the spirit of the author of the changes himself, who did not intend by the one form, to set aside the other, but only claimed for it a place beside the other. Each of the two forms has its peculiar beauties and characteristics; and it is most justly remarked by Venema, that “no variation occurs, which does not provide a sense excellent in both Psalms, and suited to the scope.”

Ver. 1. *The fool speaks in his heart, God is not:—not: “it is only the fool that speaks in his heart,” “whosoever speaks*

thus in his heart is a fool;" but: the whole world is full of fools, who speak, or, the fools, of whom the world is full, speak. The Psalmist describes the reigning folly first, according to its internal root in the mind (Muis: *orditur a fonte omnium seclerum impicitate*), and then passes on to describe its manifestations in deed. נבל stands here in its original signification, which, indeed, it never loses, if we examine carefully. For, even when it is used of *crimes*, these are always contemplated in the light of folly. David designates those who, with a renunciation of all fear of God, give themselves up to unrighteousness, as *blinded fools*, in silent contrast to the judgment of the world, and their own, which magnifies them as great spirits, and people of distinguished talent. That נבל is used here in its original signification, appears also from the expression in ver. 4, "know they not," which refers back to this. Their whole course is *folly*, because it proceeds upon the supposition that God is not, does not see and recompense. It is not less apparent from the opposite מַשְׁבִּיל in ver. 2, and from the designation of the Psalm as מַשְׁבִּיל in Ps. liii. The fools ought by this Psalm to be made wise. It is, therefore, quite wrong, when De Wette renders נבל by *ungodly*, and when Sachs, in bad taste also, does it by *the rogue*. The pious and just of Scripture is, at the same time, the wise man, because his frame of mind and his conduct rest upon and are followed by a right insight into the nature of things. This, however, does not imply that the piety and godliness of Scripture are interchangeable ideas, but the spheres of both, and of the qualities opposed to them, continue strictly separate. The discourse here is not of the atheism of the understanding, but of the atheism of the heart (he speaks *in his heart*), whose sphere is an infinitely greater one than that of the former. The world is well nigh given up to the former, although the number of theoretical deniers of God is but small, and with it also the righteous has still constantly to fight. Luther: "The prophet speaks here in the Spirit, sees no person in an outward point of view, goes to the bottom of the reins and hearts, and says: The fool speaks, there is no God, not with the mouth, gesture, appearance, and other external signs—for in such respects he often boasts before the true lovers of God, that he knows God—but in *heart*, that is, in his inward sentiments. These in the ungodly are darkened: thereupon follows blindness of understanding, so that he can neither think rightly of God, nor speak,

nor direct his conduct properly. Accordingly, those alone have God, who believe in God not with an hypocritical faith. All besides are fools; they say in their hearts: There is no God."

*They are corrupt, abominable in their actions, there is none that does good.* The relation of this second part to the first was explained quite correctly by Luther, according to whom "the other evil" is here described, "which is a flowing stream, issuing with force out of the spring of unbelief." Atheism of the heart has corruption of life for its inseparable attendant. It is a question how עלילה, and the corresponding על in Ps. liii., is to be construed—whether, with most expositors, as an accus. governed by השחיתו and הרעיצו, "they make their conduct corrupt, abominable," or as a mere appended accus. which defines more narrowly the sphere of the two verbs, "as to action, crime" (on such accusatives, see Ewald, Small Gr. § 512); as already Luther here: "with their nature," in Ps. liii.: "in their evil nature." The latter construction is favoured first of all by the circumstance, that the contrast between actions and heart, which the Psalmist obviously had in view, and for expressing which עלילה is used, becomes more prominent. Then, according to the other view, we should have expected the plural with the suff., instead of the sing. without the suff.,—comp. השחיתו עלילותם in Zeph. iii. 7. It is also a confirmation of the same view, that השחית has only exceptionally an accus. after it; as a rule, it stands absolutely in the sense of *acting corruptly*—comp. upon this and similar verbs in Hiph., Ewald, p. 189; but הרעיצ, in the only two other places where it occurs, 1 Kings xxi. 26, Ezek. xvi. 52, has the signification of *acting abominably*, not of *making abominable*. על also, "injustice, crime," does not well suit either of the verbs in the sense of corrupting, making abominable. That השחיתו contains an allusion to Gen. vi. 12, where the corruption of men before the flood is described with the same word, we can entertain the less doubt, as in ver. 2 a still more manifest reference is found to that passage. Luther: "He describes the race of the ungodly as equally corrupt then, with what they were at that time." The Preterites in this verse, and the following one, are to be understood just as in Ps. xi. 4, x. 3, and to be rendered by the Present. The sense and the connection of the Psalm are quite destroyed, if we translate, with Ewald and Hitzig: "he spoke, etc."

Ver. 2. *The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children*



*of men, that he may see whether there be one that acts wisely, that seeks God.* That David represents the Lord as looking down from heaven, and finding no fearer of God on the earth, is done for a double reason. First, the greatness and universality of the reigning corruption are thereby well brought out. Not merely the short-sighted eye of man, but God's all-seeing, all-penetrating glance, can find no piety upon earth. Michaelis: *Ex infallibili dei judicio et scrutinio.* This reference is the leading one. But, at the same time, by way of contrast to the delusion of those forgetters of God, who shut Him up in heaven, and do not let Him trouble Himself with earthly things, the representation points to the fact, that His all-ruling providence is ever active, that He continually looks out from the high watch-tower, the heavens, upon the actions of men, in order to hurl down, in His own time, judgments upon the wicked—a truth full of consolation to the fearers of God, full of terror to the ungodly. According to the latter reference, the clause, "The Lord looks down from heaven," forms a contrast to the words of the fools, "There is no God," and prepares for the catastrophe described in vers. 4-6. Both references were noticed by Luther: "This is spoken against the folly of fools, who say that there is no God. As if he would say: There is not only a God, but also a God who sees, nay, who sees all; *i. e.* He penetrates all with His eye, there is nothing too far removed, or too deeply concealed, for Him to grasp. Next, in order that no one might think that these fools, and such as corrupt their ways, were only a handful of people, among whom alone none could be found who did good, he extends his declaration far and wide to all, saying: 'The Lord looked down from heaven,' whence He beholds all people upon earth, and from Him no one is concealed. So that he had in view Gen. vi. 12, where the whole earth is said to be corrupt." Besides this passage, there are two others, which come into view as a type of the representation given—the first of which is Gen. xi. 5, "And the Lord came down from heaven to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded," from which the expression, "children of men," seems to have been derived; and the other is Gen. xviii. 21. Very suitably is Elohim, whose existence the ungodly deny, set over against Jehovah, who looks down from heaven. They deny, forsooth, the existence of a deity; but there is a living, and in the highest sense personal God,

who lives and beholds. מַשְׁבִּיל, one who acts prudently, forms the contrast to : they act corruptly, abominably, just as : "God looks down to see," stands in opposition to the fool, who says : "There is no God ;" so that in this way the order of the first verse is here reversed. מַשְׁבִּיל signifies, not *to be prudent*, and still less *to be pious*, but is always used of the conduct, to *act prudently, reasonably*. The wicked man, while following, instead of the law of God, his own perverse inclinations and desires, treads reason under foot by his actions, does in his waywardness what profits not, and what hands him over to destruction. That the very common phrase, דַּרְשׁ אֱלֹהִים, can only signify, *to seek God*, is clear from the counter expression of *finding* in Deut. iv. 29, "Thou shalt find the Lord, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul," comp. Jer. xxix. 13 ; 2 Chron. xv. 2. To seek God, designates the desire of the heart after Him, the longing directed towards Him : The wicked do not seek God ; they flee and shun Him as their greatest enemy ; but whosoever does not seek God, him God visits with His punishment. The Elohim has here already acquired the nature of a proper name. Hence the אֵת, though the article is wanting. This particle never occurs except before definite nouns. The examples of the contrary, which Ewald still retains, fall away on closer examination.

Ver. 3. *All are gone aside, they are together corrupt ; there is not that does good, not even one.* It may be asked, how this charge of a corruption extending through the *whole* of humanity can be reconciled with ver. 5, where mention is made of a righteous generation. This can only be accounted for by the supposition, that in view of the monstrous corruption, which had spread itself among men, the author overlooked the few righteous persons ; so that his words are to be taken with some limitation, as is done by himself subsequently. Comp. what we have already said on a quite similar statement in Ps. xii. Others, as Calvin, understand by the "children of men," ver. 2, the whole of humanity in its natural condition, as opposed to the children of God, who, through the Spirit, have been delivered from the general corruption. But it is quite improbable, that the expression, "children of men," should be used in this sense without being elucidated by the contrast. Substantially, indeed, this view is certainly the correct one ; for the few righteous persons, whom the Psalmist excepts from the corrupt mass, are

such by the grace of God. Besides, these must have been proportionally very few; otherwise the Psalmist could not have represented the corruption as so all-pervading. Luther: "See how many redundant words he uses, that he may comprehend all men in the charge, and except none. First, he says *all*; afterwards, once and again, that there is not so much as one." There is an emphasis in the *הכל*, "the allness;" the whole of humanity is, as it were, a corrupt mass. The expression, "to go aside," is more closely defined by the contrast in which it stands with "seeking the Lord," just as the being corrupt, and the not doing good, forms the contrast to *משכיל*. In the delineation of the fool, godliness and immoral conduct are constantly linked together; and in such a way, indeed, that the next pair always begins with the same member with which the preceding one had closed. The acting prudently, answers to the acting corruptly—the all going away, to the seeking of God—the evil-doers, who eat up my people, to the being corrupt, and no one doing good. The last member of the description: "They call not upon the Lord," corresponds to the first: "He says in his heart, There is no God." The whole chain is broken, if to the words, "all are gone aside," we supply, instead of God, "from the right way."—*אלה*, originally *to be sour, to corrupt*, here as in Job xv. 16, in a moral sense.—At the end of this verse, some critical helps—in particular, the Cod. Vat., the LXX., and Vulgate—introduce a longer addition, which manifestly owes its origin to Rom. iii. 13–18. There other declarations from the Old Testament, bearing on the same subject, are added to the citation made from our Psalm. And while it has been overlooked, that the Apostle does not confine his citations to our Psalm, but professes to give passages of Scripture in general, it has been thought that an addition should be made to the Psalm on his authority.

Ver. 4. *Know not, then, all evil-doers, who eat my people as bread, and call not upon the Lord?* The Psalmist begins the second part with an expression of wonder at the great blindness of the fools, who do not see what lies before their very eyes, and what is depicted in lively colours in vers. 5 and 6. The designation of the fools as evil-doers, who eat up the people of God, and call not on the Lord, sums up the contents, vers. 1–3, but substitutes for their evil actions generally, their shameful conduct toward the people of God, as the species in the genus, which came par-

ticularly under consideration, according to the design of the Psalm as unfolded in the introduction. The "all" appears only to serve the purpose of joining this to the preceding context, and because otherwise of little use, it is dropt in Ps. liii. : "Know not, then, all *those* evil-doers," that whole troop of miscreants. We must not, with Claus and others, take יד precisely in the sense of "having right knowledge," being wise and prudent. The object is rather left out in consequence of the emotional style, and is to be supplied from the context. This is everywhere, and without exception, the case, where the יד appears to stand absolutely. The deficiency here is to be supplied from that, which was already indicated in ver. 2, according to which the Lord from heaven looks upon all the children of men, and from what is expressly said in ver. 5, with which that here may be united by a colon. Quite correctly already Luther : "Will they then not once perceive, that they are such people as occasion sorrow to themselves?" The question of wonder expresses the magnitude of their folly. The current exposition is : "Will not all evil-doers suffer for it?" But this exposition, in any case, needs modification. יד never signifies exactly to *suffer punishment*, but only "to become wise through experience." Even in this sense, it is never used quite so absolutely as it would be here. Adopting it, we should have expected the Fut. instead of the Pret., which also several expositors, after the example of the LXX. and Vulgate, would substitute here. And, finally, the first-mentioned exposition is put beyond doubt by the manifest reference of the expression, "They know not," to that of ver. 1, "The fool."

*Who eat up my people as bread.* By עמ the Psalmist means the people of God, who belong to him, so far as he does to them. There is no ground for supposing, with Claus and others, that Jehovah speaks ; the contrary seems to be implied by the Lord being spoken of in the third person in the last clause, as, throughout the Psalm, He is nowhere introduced as speaking. In the parallel passage, too, of Micah iii. 3, "Who also eat the flesh of my people," it is not Jehovah that speaks, but the prophet ; and עמ occurs likewise of the people of the prophet twice in Isa. iii. 12. By naming the people *his* people, the Psalmist shows how much he laid the shameful conduct of the wicked towards them to heart. In regard to the eating of the people, it is remarked by Augustine : "Those eat the people, who draw

only profit from them, and who do not employ their office for the glory of God, and the salvation of those over whom they are placed." The expression, "as bread," indicates the heartless indifference of the eaters : he who eats bread never thinks that he is doing wrong. We must not explain, "As they eat bread"—which would either require us to supply *באשר*, and that is not at all allowable, or to suppose that the comparison clause is loosely placed ;—against this interpretation, *קראו*, which connects itself, not with *אכלי*, but with *אכלו*, and which requires us to conceive of *אשר* as standing before *אכלי*, is decisive. We must rather expound : "Who eating my people, eat bread ;" so that the people themselves are described as bread, namely, in a spiritual sense, what in spiritual things corresponds to bread. The exposition of Luther, Claus, and others : "Eating my people, they eat food," they find nourishment therein, gives a tame meaning. The simple *אכלו עמי* would then be more expressive. Even Calvin remarks, that the matter of the verse is more appropriate to the degenerate members of the Church of God, than to heathenish enemies. The abominableness lay precisely in this, that the shepherds spared not their own flock, and that the subjects of Jehovah concerned not themselves about their king. The not calling upon God, is a periphrasis for ungodliness. For without calling upon God, fear of God is inconceivable. The Psalmist here connects impiety with unrighteousness toward men, as its inseparable attendant ; the latter, indeed, necessarily follows on the former. We have already pointed out, that the words, "They call not upon the Lord," correspond to the earlier descriptions of ungodliness, through "saying in their heart, There is no God, not seeking God, and turning away from Him."

Ver. 5. *There, terror overtakes them ; for God is among the righteous generation.* Instead of *there*, many put *then*, at the time when punishment alights on them. But the particle *שם* always denotes in Hebrew, *place*, never, as in Arabic, *time*. Others retain the usual signification of the word, and expound : *There*, in the very place where they have committed their crimes, shall their punishment surprise them. It is best explained by Calvin, who supposes that the Psalmist intended only to mark the *certainly* of the punishment, pointing to it, as it were, with his finger. The *שם*, as well as the Pret. *פחדו*, is a testimony to the strength of the Psalmist's faith, who sets the judgment to come on the wicked as vividly before his eyes, as if it were

actually present. The same strength of faith discovers itself also in the wondering question, "Know they not?" in the preceding verse.—*For God is in the righteous generation*,—He is found amongst them as helper and deliverer. Falsely, Luther : *But God is in the righteous generation*. God's being in the righteous generation, is the *ground* of the destruction, which He suspends over their oppressors. Hence also we must not supply, with Claus : "but not with and among *them*, the ungodly."—After the words פָּהַר פֶּהַר, there is added in Ps. liii. לֹא הָיָה פֶּהַר, where no fear was, *i. e.* in the midst of their prosperity, whilst in a human way nothing of the kind could have been looked for, suddenly. Venema : "Where they were securely indulging themselves, there they began suddenly to be afraid, and so were unexpectedly overwhelmed." Others, incorrectly, and quite unsuitably to the context : "They fall into a blind, groundless fear." The discourse here is not of the remorse of conscience, but of Divine judgments actually inflicted. We are not, therefore, to refer to such passages as Lev. xxvi. 17, 36; Prov. xxviii. 1, where God threatens the transgressors of His law, that they would flee when no one pursued them, would be frightened by the rustle of a falling leaf; but to such passages as Job xv. 21, "The sound of terrors is in his ears, in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him," and 1 Thess. v. 3, "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh on them." The sudden and unexpected nature of the destruction of the wicked, overtaking them while they are still in great prosperity, is constantly brought forward in the Psalms. It is further added in Ps. liii. : בִּי אֱלֹהִים בָּזַר עֲצָמוֹת הָקֶדֶד, "for God scatters the bones of those who encamp against thee," substituting these words for the last member of our verse. הָקֶדֶד, pausal-form for הִקֵּד, of the besieging thee, is partic. of חָנָה to besiege. It is generally construed with עַל. The construction found here is to be explained thus, that חָנָה, "he who encamps," stands for "the besieger;" comp. קָמַי for קָמַי עָלַי in Ps. xviii. 39. The oppression of the pious, by the ungodly, appears here under the image of a siege, which God raises by shattering the besieging enemies, so that their bones, formerly the seat of their strength, cover the field of battle. This addition renders unquestionable the soundness of the exposition given by us of the preceding words. For how could it assign the *ground* thereof, if a *baseless* fear in them were spoken of? "In the midst of their security, destruction

overtakes them,—*for*, O righteous generation, God annihilates your adversaries.” According to this view, the changes in Ps. liii. would not touch the essential meaning. The addition : where no fear was, serves only to complete the picture, and is in substance contained in the preceding words, where already the state of the ungodly is described as one of such perfect security and untroubled prosperity, that they no longer thought there could be a God at all. And in the second member both Psalms contain the same fundamental thought, that God interposes for the good of His people against the wicked, only in Ps. liii. the destruction wrought in their behalf is delineated in striking colours. To the expression, “He scatters the bones,” there is a verbal paral. in Ps. cxli. 7.

Ver. 6. *Put to shame the counsel of the poor, for God is his refuge.* The address is to the enemies. These the Psalmist, in the full strength of faith, tells that he does not grudge the triumph of succeeding in defeating the plans for delivering the oppressed servants of God. For such joy will soon be annihilated, inasmuch as the righteous have on their side a mighty helper, mightier than themselves. בַּיט in Iliph. to *shame*, to *put to shame*. Various commentators render *mock* only; but this meaning is unwarranted. That the בַּיט is not, after Luther’s example, to be explained by *but*, is obvious; and, consequently, it is certain that we must render, not, “ye put to shame,” but, “shame only, I will not hinder you.” The בַּיט assigns the reason why the enemies may put to shame the counsels of the poor. In Ps. liii. we have, corresponding to these words, הַבִּישָׁתָה בִּי אֱלֹהִים מֵאִשָּׁם, *thou shamest*, viz. thine enemy, him who encamps against thee (the naming of the object was unnecessary, because sufficiently plain from the preceding context), *for the Lord has rejected them.* The righteous man, or the righteous generation, is addressed; in הַנֶּקֶד also it had been addressed. In point of sense, these words are almost of one import with ours. Both passages contain the firm hope of deliverance, on the ground that the Lord could not fail to give to righteousness the victory over wickedness.

Ver. 7. The Psalmist closes by expressing his desire after the previously promised salvation of God, in the destruction of the Church’s enemies. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion, and the Lord returned to the imprisonment of His people! Then let Jacob rejoice, and Israel be glad.* The

first clause is literally : *Who will give from Zion the deliverance of Israel?* The *וְיִתֵּן*, who will give, is confessedly used with the force of the optative, as if it were : *might it but come.* From Zion, because there the Lord was enthroned in His sanctuary, as King of His people. It is quite erroneously supposed by De Wette, that the Psalmist must have been far from his native land, and looking towards it. The expectation of help from Zion is found continually in those Psalms, which were unquestionably David's, and in those which were certainly composed after the captivity; comp., for example, Ps. iii. 4, xxviii. 2, xx. 2, cxxviii. 5, cxxxiv. 3. When the pious Psalmists utter this expectation, they remind God that it is His obligation to help, since, as the Head of the Divine kingdom, He cannot abandon it to the devastations of the impious. If the Psalm had belonged to the period of the captivity, the Psalmist could not have looked for salvation from Zion. For the kingdom of God had no longer its centre there, after the destruction of the temple, as Ezekiel indicated, ch. xi. 22, by causing the Shekinah, the symbol of God's indwelling presence, solemnly to depart from the temple. When Daniel also, after the destruction of the temple, turned his face in prayer toward Jerusalem, he did so only in reference to what had once been there, and what should be there again. He did not expect help out of Zion, but he directed his face thither, simply because, in his view, the city was holy, where the temple had stood, and where again a temple was to be reared. The only passage that De Wette can adduce as a proof that, even in exile, help was expected out of Zion, is Ps. cxxi. 1; and this is such only on the arbitrary supposition, that the Psalm belongs to the times of the captivity, the groundlessness of which is proved by the very commencement : "I lift mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help." So here also the words under consideration show that the Psalm could not have been composed, according to the modern hypothesis, in exile; and every interpretation of the following words which proceeds upon that hypothesis, must appear inadmissible. The words, "in the returning of the Lord to the imprisonment of His people," announce more immediately the way and manner in which the salvation of Israel should come out of Zion. It comes thus,—that the Lord, who is throned in Zion, takes compassion on the misery of His people, and returns to them in the manifestations of His grace. Modern commentators for the most part expound :



“When the Lord brings back the prisoners of His people.” They then draw from this a proof that the Psalm could not be the production of David, but must have been composed during the captivity. Others, who still ascribe it to David, have been led thereby to consider our verse as a later addition, as was done also by the present writer, *Beitr.* i. p. 142,—a supposition which is the less probable, as this verse is found also in Ps. liii., and as thereby the sevenfold use of the name of God would be lost. But the whole exposition is demonstrably false; for, 1. שׁוּב never has the signification of *to bring back*, it never is used transitively, but always means to *return*; comp. *Beitr.* ii. p. 104. 2. It is alleged, without the least proof, that שְׁבוּת signifies the *prisoners*; whereas, wherever it occurs, excepting in this form of expression, it rather denotes *the captivity*, the status captivitatis. 3. The entire phrase is unquestionably used in many other places, in a general way, of “grâce, favour,”—imprisonment, captivity, an image of misery, as very often the *prison*, Ps. cxlii. 7, *bands, cords*; comp., for example, Isa. xlii. 7, xlix. 9, etc. So Job xlii. 10, “And the Lord turned the captivity (prop., turned himself to the prison) of Job,” though certainly Job was never confined. Then Jer. xxx. 18, “I turn myself to the captivity of Jacob’s tents,” for, to their mournful condition, as the tents cannot be considered there as imprisoned. Ezek. xvi. 53, “I will return to their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters,” etc.; q. d. I will take pity on their misery; for certainly Sodom and the other cities of the plain of Jordan were not carried away into captivity, but were wholly annihilated; comp. the investigations in my *Beitr.* P. ii. p. 104 ss. On the other hand, there is not to be found one place in which the form of expression can be shown to have been used in reference to the exiles. 4. The original foundation of all the passages where this expression occurs, is that of Deut. xxx. 3, “And the Lord thy God returns to thy prison-house, or captivity.” But that there שׁוּב is employed in its common signification of *returning*, and has the goal of the return beside it in the accus., is clear as day. In vers. 1–6 alone the word occurs no fewer than six times: of these, it is generally admitted to be five times used in the sense of *returning*, and why should it in one case alone signify to *bring back*? Now, if we add to this the special grounds which, in our Psalm, stand in the way of a reference to the bringing back from captivity,

—to wit, the desire of help from Zion; the entire remaining contents of the Psalm, which do not allude in the slightest way to the times of the captivity, but rather concern relations of a general kind, common to all ages; and, finally, the superscription—we cannot entertain the least doubt of the alone correctness of the explanation, “when the Lord returns to the captivity, *i.e.* the misery of His people” (the accus. being used, as is customary in verbs of motion; comp. Ex. iv. 19, 20; Numb. x. 36; Ps. lxxxv. 4; Nah. ii. 3). But to express his wish that the Lord might have compassion on the wretchedness of His Church, in a Psalm destined for the use of the pious in all ages, David had the more occasion, the greater the disorders had been, of which he himself had been a witness in the times of Saul and Absalom. The wish here expressed found its highest fulfilment in Christ; and in this case also the highest stage thereof is reserved for the future, when the triumphant Church shall take the place of the militant. Till then, we shall have occasion enough to make the wish of the pious Psalmist our own. Amid the joy which arises from lower fulfilments, the longing after the last and highest can never be extinguished. יל and יצח, on account of the form of the first, and from a comparison with Ps. xiii. 6,—to similarity with which this Psalm, in all probability, owes its position,—are to be taken as a wish and demand: “Then let Jacob exult, let Israel rejoice.”

## PSALM XV.

In this Psalm the question is answered, what must be the moral condition of the man who would be a true servant of the Lord, and a partaker of His grace. First, the question is put: Who is loved and esteemed by God? ver. 1. Then comes the answer, in two strophes of two verses, each of three members, vers. 2, 3, and 4, 5. The first verse of both strophes describes the nature of piety positively, the second negatively. The Psalm concludes with a declaration, which recurs to the beginning, “He who doeth such things may comfort himself that God will help him.” The fundamental idea of the Psalm may be summed up in the words of the Saviour, “Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

Most expositors suppose that David composed this Psalm

when the ark of the covenant was transferred to Zion, comp. 2 Sam. vi. 12 ss., 1 Chron. xvi. 1 ss., with the view of stirring up the people, on this opportunity, to the true honouring of God, to genuine righteousness. Though this event afforded a suitable occasion, yet in the Psalm itself there is nothing which necessarily refers thereto; and we should have regarded the supposition as a mere uncertain hypothesis, if the xxiv. Psalm, which coincides in a very striking manner with this, had not been undoubtedly occasioned by the circumstance in question.

Notwithstanding the simply positive aspect of the Psalm, when formally considered, it still has an unquestionably polemical reference; it brings out the purely moral and internal conditions of participation in God's kingdom, in contrast to the delusion of the hypocrite, who thinks himself secure of God's favour through the possession of externals, and the observance of ceremonies. This was perceived by Luther: "But this Psalm is dead against the lovers of outward show. For the Jews exalted themselves above all other people, on the two grounds, that they alone were the seed of the Fathers, and alone possessed the law of God." As in perfect accordance with an occasion like that of the transference of the ark, we must especially regard the opposition raised to merely external service of God. David wished to meet, at the very threshold, the errors which so easily connected themselves with the restoration of the cultus effected on the removal of the ark to Zion. It is only when viewed in respect to such a polemical design that the subject of the Psalm can be rightly apprehended. The exclusive emphasis laid on the commands of the second table can only be explained by supposing opposition to hypocrites.

The present Psalm most probably owes its position after the xiv. to an internal relation of the matter of the two. Luther already remarked: "This Psalm follows the preceding one in the finest order. For, just as in that the form and pattern of the ungodly was described, so now in this the pattern of the godly is described." This delineation of the righteous was with the more propriety made to follow Ps. xiv., as mention there occurs of a "righteous generation," which might console itself with the sure hope of God's help. It was important that every one should clearly understand what really constituted one a member of that righteous generation.

That David was the author of the Psalm, appears not only

from the superscription and a comparison with Ps. xxiv., but also from ver. 1. The mention of the *tabernacle* of God in this verse does not permit us to come lower than the times of David. Hitzig, indeed, maintains that the name *tabernacle* was sometimes applied to the temple of Solomon: but this is in itself very improbable, and no satisfactory proof can be brought in support of it.

Ver. 1. *Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle, who dwell on Thy holy hill?* The sum, says Calvin, is this, that access to God is open to none but His pure worshippers. The representation in the verse is a figurative one. The holy hill of God appears as a place of refuge, His tabernacle as a hospitable tent, in which He receives His people to Himself. Parallel passages, in which precisely the same figurative representation prevails, and no reference whatever is found to the outward worship of God, are Ps. v. 4, "The wicked doth not dwell with Thee;" Ps. xxiii. 6, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord all my days;" Ps. xxvii. 5, "He shall hide me in His pavilion in the day of trouble;" Ps. xxiv. 3, lxi. 4; comp. Christol. P. ii. p. 447. The image in all these places is taken from one who is received by another into his dwelling, or his possession. This kindness can be experienced from God only by those whose impurity does not exclude them from His sacred presence; as is here indicated by the expression, "on Thy *holy* hill," and even, indeed, by the emphatic suffix, "in *Thy* tabernacle." The majority of modern expositors have misunderstood this figurative representation, occasioned probably by the external approach of great multitudes to the tabernacle of the Lord. Hence have arisen such expositions as those of De Wette, Maurer, and others, that the tarrying and the dwelling imply here nothing but a frequent approach: as if it had been, "who dare, or who is worthy to tarry?" But such a method of exposition is as little accordant with the words of our text as with the parallel passages. These latter plainly show that the writer refers to a continual social dwelling with God, which the righteous man enjoys, or that the dwelling with God is only an image of intimacy. The close of the Psalm, where "the never being moved" is made to correspond to the "dwelling in the house of the Lord," supports this. Venema: "Conclusio responsi a quæsito discrepare nequit." Dwelling with God is, in general, a designation of intimacy; but protection and stability

are a necessary consequence of it. The Futures are accordingly to be taken as proper Futures, as it depends only upon the Lord who is to be admitted to this intimacy. *Who shall dwell*—whom wilt Thou permit, or to whom wilt Thou grant the favour of dwelling with Thee? That the ground was already laid for this figurative representation in the law, where the sacred tabernacle, by its very name, “the tabernacle of meeting,” is pointed out as the place where God was to hold fellowship with His people, and that hence, in Lev. xvi. 6, the Israelites are regarded as dwelling with God in His holy tabernacle, with all their sins, involving the necessity of an atonement, has been shown in my Beitr., vol. iii. p. 628. The representation extends even into the New Testament. In Matt. xxiii. 38, the temple appears as the spiritual dwelling-place of Israel, and in Eph. ii. 19, the members of God’s kingdom are called *οἰκεῖοι τοῦ Θεοῦ*, inmates of God’s house.—*נָדַב* never signifies to dwell in general, but always specially to dwell as a guest and sojourner. The expression is to be primarily explained from the image of a rich and powerful man, who hospitably receives a poor stranger into his tent,—an image which is more distinctly brought out in Ps. xxvii. 5. But the substance of the figure is, that our dwelling with God is only after the manner of guests; that we are not born and rightful inmates of His house, but have become so merely through grace. That the figure is not to be carried too far,—that it must not be explained: “in whom dost Thou interest Thyself, as one who receives a stranger into his tent?” but only, “who dwells in Thy tabernacle as a stranger, that has been received by some potentate of earth?” is clear from the expression, “on Thy holy hill,” which corresponds to “Thy tabernacle.” At the same time, the mention of the holy hill, which can only signify Zion, shows that the tabernacle of God is not the old Mosaic tabernacle, which was then, without the ark of the covenant, at Gibeon—comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 39; 2 Chron. i. 3, 5—but the tent which David had prepared for the ark on Zion; comp. 2 Sam. vi. 17; 1 Chron. xv. 1, xvi. 1; 2 Chron. i. 4. Nowhere, indeed, have the Psalms anything to do with that old tabernacle at Gibeon, that shell without a kernel; but always, where they speak of the sanctuary of the Lord, that upon Zion is the one referred to. The question regarding the qualifications for a participation in the kingdom of God, which the Psalmist here addresses to the

Lord, he answers in the following verses before the Lord, according to His mind, and through His Spirit. For the purpose of showing that the settlement of the matter belongs to God and to him, who speaks in God's name, he addressed the question to the Lord. Those who suppose that the Psalmist puts the question in ver. 1, while in vers. 2-5 God answers, are wrong in point of form, but right as to the substance.

Ver. 2. *He who walks blamelessly, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.* We must explain: "walking a," for, "as a blameless person." In Ps. lxxxiv. 11, הֹלֵךְ בְּתָמִים, "to walk in an unblameable," stands for, "as an unblameable." De Wette and Maurer would take תָּמִים as a substantive, in the accus.; but it is never so used, not even in Josh. xxiv. 14. The supposition is also opposed by the original passage, which the Psalmist seems to have had in his eye, Gen. xvii. 1, where God says to Abram, "Walk before Me, and be thou unblameable." We may consider the words, "who walks unblameably," as the general sentiment; the second member referring to deeds, and the third referring to words and thoughts, as the carrying out. On the expression, "and works righteousness," Luther remarks: "As if he would say, Not because thou art a priest, or a holy monk; not because thou prayest much, because thou dost miracles, because thou teachest admirably, because thou art dignified with the title of Father; nor, finally, because of any particular work, except righteousness, shalt thou dwell upon the holy hill of God." This is sound exposition. The Psalmist had not in view the particular kinds of false conceit which are specified by Luther, but he certainly had the genus under which they are comprehended. In reference to the exclusive mention of works, which also frequently occurs in the New Testament, for example, Matt. xxv., it is remarked by the same reformer: "And, indeed, it is worthy of notice, that he draws the likeness of a pious people, without showing whence it was to come, or to be derived. Hence, it is true that a foolish person may apply all that is written in this Psalm to the moral virtues and free-will, though it is solely a work of the grace of God, which He works in us." That the Psalmist speaks merely of the works of the second table, arises from his wish to distinguish the true members of the Church from hypocrites, who have a thousand ways of counterfeiting the works of the first table. This Calvin notices: "Faith, calling upon God, spiritual sacri-

fices, are by no means excluded by David; but because hypocrites sought to exalt themselves by many ceremonies, though their impiety manifests itself in their life, which is full of pride, cruelty, violence, fraud, and such things, the proof of sincere and genuine faith is therefore sought in the second table of the law, that such deceivers might be exposed. For if men practise justice and equity with their neighbours, they show by deeds that they fear God." But of what sort the righteousness is, which the Psalmist requires,—that it consists, not like that of the Pharisees, in appearance, but in living reality; that it requires the most thorough agreement, not of the external actions merely, but of the heart, with the law of God,—is very strikingly expressed in the last clause: "Who speaks truth in his heart." The words, "in the heart," show that the writer speaks of internal purity and truth, to which the truth that is outwardly expressed by the lips is related as streams to the fountainhead. This reference to the heart goes through the whole Psalm, and excludes all, who give only an outward satisfaction to its requirements, from any interest in its promises. If in one point the heart is required expressly, in the other points also, though the heart be not mentioned, words and deeds can only be so far considered, as they proceed from a pure and spiritual mind; only in such a case, indeed, can words and deeds be surely and continuously calculated upon. "Hypocrites," says Luther, "can do much, or even the whole of this in appearance for a time, but in a time of evil they do the reverse."

Ver. 3. As the Psalmist, in the preceding verse, had mentioned some gifts which the true members of the Church must possess, so here, he points to certain faults from which they must be free. In regard to construction, this verse, like the following ones, is quite complete of itself. *He slanders not with his tongue.* רָגַל occurs frequently in Piel, in Kal, only here. Derived from רָגַל, *foot*, it properly means, to go hither and thither, whence the signification of *spying out, babbling to and fro, slandering*, very naturally arises. The tongue stands opposed to the heart. Here also we are presented with the trilogy of thought, word, and deed, which runs through the Decalogue. The preposition לְ is to be explained by the circumstance, that the tongue forms, as it were, the substratum of calumnies. Quite analogous is the expression in Gen. xxvii. 40,

“Upon thy sword shalt thou live;” comp. also Isa. xxxviii. 16. There is an allusion to the passage in Lev. xix. 16, “Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer, רביל—רבל=רגל—among thy people.” *He does not evil to his friend, and does not take up a reproach against his neighbour.* The words לרעהו and על קרבו are used with peculiar emphasis. They imply, how unworthy it is to act injuriously toward those who are united to us by so many ties. As this idea is so evidently implied, it is not advisable to take the two words, with Kimchi and others, in the most general sense for any one with whom we have to do: what the latter, indeed, cannot properly signify. They both refer to everything by which the members of the Church of God are bound together,—not merely the general relation of man to man, but also the common bodily and spiritual derivation, through which they become, in a double sense, *brethren*. It is the latter which is peculiarly pointed to in all the laws of the Pentateuch, referring to the injury of neighbours. Israel constantly appears as a nation of brothers; every violation of the duties of neighbours is viewed as an unnatural crime. All this applies to *Christians* in a still higher degree. Comp., also, Ex. xxxii. 27, where רע and קרוב are found united as here, and where the explanation, “Every one with whom we have to do,” is quite inadmissible. נשא cannot be taken here in the sense of *uttering*, which most interpreters give it, as the subjoined על sufficiently shows, but must have the signification, *tollere*; therefore, properly: *Who does not lift up a reproach on his neighbour.* Considered more narrowly, we find that the word may well enough signify to *originate*, but never to *utter*. In Ex. xxiii. 1, to which reference is here made, the proper reading is, “Thou shalt not *raise* a false report;” the raising standing in contrast to “letting lie,”—a contrast which exists also here. That נשא, which is commonly derived from נשא, in the sense of speaking forth, uttering, signifies, not “an utterance,” but a “burden,” has been proved in my *Christology*, P. ii. p. 102. With לש, the verb often occurs in the sense of “lifting on any one;” for example, 2 Kings ix. 25, “The Lord lifted or laid on him this burden,” Gen. xxxi. 17. Reproach is considered as a burden, which the person who spreads the slander, instead of allowing to lie, heaves on his neighbour.

Ver. 4. *In his eyes the rejected is despised, but he honours them that fear the Lord.* נשיא is either “the one who is to be



rejected," "the vile," or "he whom God has rejected." The latter exposition is to be preferred, because of the contrast it presents with the "honourers of the Lord" in the following clause, and because of the parallel passage in Jer. vi. 30, where it is said of wicked princes, "They are reprobate silver, *for the Lord has rejected them.*" The sense is therefore given by Luther: "The righteous One is no regarder of persons; He considers not how holy, learned, powerful, any one may be. If He sees *virtue* in him, He honours him, even though he should be a beggar; but if He does not see that in him, He accounts him, as an evil person, of no value, tells him so, punishes him. Thou despisest, says he, God's word, Thou revilest thy neighbour; therefore will I be open with thee." Hitzig has revived another interpretation, already adopted by some old commentators (Chal. Abenezra): "He who is despised, who is little in his own eyes." The deepest humility and self-abasement would then be given as a mark of a true honourer of the Lord; as is beautifully set forth by David in 2 Sam. vi. 22. But this exposition has already been set aside by the remark of Calvin, that apart from the harshness of the asyndeton, the manifest contrast between the two clauses decides against it. Just as "despised" stands opposed to "he honours," so must נִסְתָּו form the contrast to the "fearers of God." Here, therefore, the writer can only be speaking of the right posture of a man toward the different classes of his fellow-men, or rather, of his fellow-members. To this posture the fearer of God attains, because his eye is pure, because his heart is drawn only to that with which he has affinity, which has its origin in God; and he dreads, as a denying of the Lord, to join those externally, from whom he internally differs, and an external separation from those with whom he is internally united. The exposition of Jarchi is less objectionable: "The despicable is in his eyes rejected;" although this also lies open to the objection, that the *despising* forms a more suitable contrast to the *honouring* than the *rejecting*, and that the word *despised* can scarcely, without some addition, stand for *despicable*. In reference to the words, "He honours them that fear the Lord"—who are to be regarded as honoured by God, just as the dishonourers of God are rejected or despised by Him—Calvin remarks: "It is no common virtue to honour pious and godly men. For, since they are often as the offscouring of the

world, it not unfrequently happens, that their friends also are compelled to share its hatred with them. Hence, most men reject their friendship, and suffer them to remain in dishonour, which cannot be done without great and dreadful offence to God."

*He swears to his own hurt, and exchanges not.* Following the LXX., who pointed להרע, Luther has: "who swears to his neighbour." De Wette, Gesenius, and others, render: "He swears to the wicked, and changes not;" i.e., even the promises which he made to the ungodly, he fulfils with inviolable integrity. According to this exposition, להרע is equivalent to לרע with ה elided. The article is indeed commonly dropt after ב, ג, ל; but in particular cases it has been retained; comp. the ex. in Ewald, p. 175. These cases nearly all belong to a later age, and are taken from Nehemiah, Chronicles, Ezekiel, when the language, gradually falling into disuse, was again written according to the etymology, although one instance does occur in the Psalms of David, בהשמים. Apart, however, from the consideration, that we should only be justified in admitting here so rare a form, if no other suitable exposition presented itself, the sense yielded by this exposition is by no means a suitable one. For who would seek to get rid of an oath, on the pretext, that he to whom it was made, was not a virtuous man? Then, also, it is decisive against this exposition, that it destroys the connection so manifestly existing between this passage and Lev. v. 4,—which is the less to be approved, as the Psalm is throughout so closely connected with the law. We must therefore cast about for another interpretation. The form להרע, in all the places where it occurs—and these are many—is inf. in Hiph. with ל of the verb רע, *to do ill, to bring hurt, to hurt*. So it is found, particularly in Lev. v. 4, where the discourse is of a hasty oath: להרע או להיטיב, "for hurt, or for benefit." Hence: "He swears for hurt, and exchanges not," must mean, Even when he has made a promise or oath which tends to his hurt, he most religiously fulfils it." "Hence," Calvin remarks, "arises such lawless perfidy among men, because they conceive themselves to be no further bound by their pledged word, than may be for their profit. Therefore David, while he condemns that levity, demands of the children of God another sort of stedfastness in their promises." The objection, that the person ought to have been more exactly described, whom the hurt

affects, is unimportant. It is so perfectly obvious who was to suffer damage by the oath, that no further description was necessary. *המיר* may, properly enough, be taken in its common signification, of "to exchange," or "to put something else in the place of;" and there is no reason for substituting the sense of "not to keep," or, "to break." He exchanges not, is equivalent to: "He gives what he has agreed by oath to give, and puts nothing else in its place." Luther remarks, quite in the spirit of the Psalmist: "I believe that what the prophet here says of keeping an oath, is to be understood also of every sort of promise. For its object is to inculcate truth and fidelity among men. But it makes special mention of the oath, because, in a pre-eminent way, good faith is thereby either kept or broken."

Ver. 5. *He gives not his money to usury.* The Mosaic law forbids the lending of money for interest to an Israelite: Ex. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 37; Deut. xxiii. 19; Prov. xxviii. 8; Ez. xviii. 8. In several of the passages referred to, it is expressly supposed that only the poor will borrow money,—a supposition which has its ground in the simple circumstances of the Mosaic times, in which lending, for the purpose of speculation and gain, had no existence. Such lending ought to be a work of brotherly love; and it is a great violation of love, if any one, instead of helping his neighbour, takes advantage of his need to bring him into still greater straits. The Mosaic regulation in question has accordingly its import also for New Testament times: With the taking of interest for capital which is borrowed for speculation, it has nothing to do. This belongs to a quite different sphere, as is implied even by the name *ניצק*, a mordendo, according to which only such usury can be meant as plagues and impoverishes a neighbour. By unseasonable comparison with our modes of speech, many would expound: "his money he puts not to interest." That the *נתן* signifies here to *give*, not to *put*, is shown by *לקח* in the next clause; "evil giving" and "evil taking" are placed parallel to each other. *בניצק* cannot signify: "on interest," but only: "for interest;" the *ב* is currently used when prices are specified, Ewald, p. 607. Opposed to the giving for usury is the giving gratis, whether in loan or as a present; comp. Prov. xxviii. 8. There is a verbal, and even literal, reference to Lev. xxv. 37, "Thou shalt not give thy money for usury." *And he takes not a present against the innocent:* when he has to give judgment on a cause, he does not

permit himself to be seduced by bribes from the rich and powerful to an unrighteous decision. This also is branded in the law of Moses as a great crime: Ex. xxiii. 6; Deut. xvi. 19, "Thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous;" xxvii. 25, "Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person." From these two passages the words before us are literally taken. The last words: *he who does this shall never be moved*, are parallel to the first, "he shall abide," etc. For he whom the Lord takes into His house as a member is secure against all the storms of misfortune. Ps. lv. 23 may be compared as parallel. De Wette's words: "For, according to the notions of the Jews, the pious, as such, is prosperous," may be allowed to pass, if only the addition is permitted: "as also to those of Christians."

## PSALM XVI.

The substance of this Psalm is comprised in its very first words, "Preserve me, O God; for in Thee do I put my trust." All, besides, is at once seen to be merely the development of these thoughts, so soon as it is observed that the words, *preserve me*, have for their foundation the confident hope of such preservation, and include within them these other words, "Thou wilt preserve me."

The first words embody a twofold idea: they express the Psalmist's confidence in the Lord, or that the Lord is his confidence and salvation, and make them the ground of his preservation amid the dangers by which he was surrounded. Both elements appear also among us in the same connection; for example, in the declaration, "Jesus is my confidence and my salvation in life; this I know; must I not therefore take comfort? And why also should I brood over the long night of death?"

The further development of the first idea, "I trust in Thee," is contained in vers. 2-7. He recognises in Jehovah the only Lord of all things, without whom nothing can help, with whom nothing can injure, the sole author of his salvation, with the whole community of the Lord, to which he attaches himself with inward love, vers. 2, 3.

He turns away with abhorrence from the other gods, from which the world seeks salvation, purchasing by their sacrifices pain instead of the happiness desired: he finds his salvation in the Lord, who prepares for him a glorious portion, vers. 4, 5.

He accounts himself blessed in the possession of this inheritance, of the salvation of the Lord, or of the Lord with His goods and gifts, and is full of gratitude to the Lord, who has laid open to him the way to such an inheritance, vers. 6, 7.

The development of the second idea, of the "Preserve me, O God," the exhibition of the hope growing out of the confidence already expressed, is given in vers. 8-11.

His hopeful eye is in the time of trouble directed to the Lord; for He, his Saviour, will not permit him to sink. Therefore is his heart full of joy at the impending deliverance, and of this he reckons himself quite certain, vers. 8, 9.

For God, his Saviour, will not give up him, His pious one, to death—confiding in Him, he shall exclaim, "Death, where is thy sting? Grave, where is thy victory?"—God will endow him with life, joy, and salvation, vers. 10, 11.

The strophe-division follows naturally from the representation of the contents just given. The first verse, which has an introductory character, and contains the quintessence of the subject, stands by itself. The rest has a regular course in strophes of two verses each. Apart from the introduction, the whole is completed in ten verses; and the ten are subdivided into five.

The superscription names David as the author, and even De Wette cannot help remarking that "there is no decided reason for the contrary." The originality of the superscription is confirmed by the circumstance, that *מִכְתָּם* occurs only in those superscriptions of the Psalms which are marked with the name of David—a fact not easily to be accounted for by those who hold the superscriptions to be the work of later collectors. The nature also of this designation, which is quite enigmatical, is what David was peculiarly fond of in his superscriptions. Its correctness is further confirmed by the remarkable coincidences with other Psalms of David, which we meet with here: comp. ver. 1 with vii. 1, xi. 1; ver. 5 with xi. 6; ver. 8 with xv. 5, x. 6; ver. 11 with xvii. 15. We call attention also to such genuinely Davidic phrases as "my glory," in ver. 9 (comp. on vii. 6); "dwell confidently," in ver. 9, comp. with iv. 8; "with

Thy countenance," in ver. 11, comp. with xxi. 6; and "by Thy right hand," in ver. 11, comp. xvii. 7.

The situation of the speaker is that of one who finds himself in great danger, and is in prospect of death. But this danger is nowhere particularly specified; it is only indicated in the most general way. This alone renders it probable that David composed the Psalm, not so much in his own person as in that of the pious man in general; that he presented here for the feelings of such an one a mirror, in which all pious men might recognise themselves—a pattern by which they might develop themselves; not, however, as if for that purpose he imaginatively put himself into a position and frame of mind quite foreign to himself, but only that he, drawing from the source of his natural experience, extended his consciousness so as to embrace that of the pious at large. This supposition becomes a certainty, when we take the reading in ver. 10, "Thy holy ones," to be the correct one. In such a case, it is clear that the person who speaks in this Psalm is an ideal one, embracing actually a plurality, and that every pious man should find himself represented in it, and by its help should rise, on the ladder of confidence in God, to the watch-tower of hope.

*A secret of David.* כִּסְתָם is very variously expounded. Many of the older translators (Chald., Aq., Symm.) considered it to be a compound word; and this has found a modern supporter in Vorstmann, in his laborious commentary on this Psalm, Haag 1829. The word, according to him, is מִן תָּם, probably falsely pointed, and he renders: "The distressed, delivered." This explanation has something, at first sight, that recommends it; for such enigmatical designations of the subject in the superscriptions are quite in the manner of David; and the superscriptions, thus explained, suit admirably to the subject of the Psalms where they occur,—as, for example, besides the present one, also Ps. lvi.—lx. But to say nothing of the punctuation, and the fact that תָּם is always used in a moral sense, it is decisive against this view, that כִּסְתָם never occurs along with מִמּוֹר, "Psalm," or with מִנְחִיל, "didactic Psalm," or even with תְּפִלָּה, "prayer," but always stands in the same position in relation to these words, that is, either before לְדָוִד or after it (the same alternation is found in the use of מִמּוֹר; see for ex. Ps. xxiii., xxiv.). Precisely as we have here כִּסְתָם לְדָוִד, we have in Ps. xvii. תְּפִלָּה לְדָוִד, from which it clearly ap-

pears that the word before us must stand on the same footing as these others. Some again derive it from כהם, "gold." So Aben Ezra, who says that the Psalms were so named because they are as excellent as the best gold. Luther: "A golden jewel." Similar designations also occur elsewhere. Among the Arabians, the seven pre-Mohammedan poems, known under the name of Moallakat, are also called, on account of their excellence, Modliahabat, that is, *golden*. Further, among them the proverbs of Ali are for the same reason named, the *gold of morals*. Among the Greeks we find the *golden verses* of Pythagoras. But it is to be objected to this exposition, that scarcely a single noun can be found with כ, which borrowed its signification merely from a derivative noun, without respect to the idea of the verb, and especially one which occurs in poetry. Others, for example Gesenius, in his *Thes.*, take מכתם as = מכתב, "writing," which is used in Isa. xxxviii. 9, in the superscription of Hezekiah's song of praise. But this view also is to be rejected, on the ground that the roots כהם and כתב are kept strictly separate in the Semitic dialects, no trace being found of their intermixture; and still more decisive is it that *writing* says too little, and the predilection of David for this designation, as also the circumstance that it is peculiar to him alone, cannot then be explained. Others, as Hitzig, take the word in the sense of *jewel*, from כהם, to which they give the meaning of *carefully preserving*. The verb, however, never has this signification, but only: "to conceal, to cover, to secrete." In this sense it occurs in Arabic; the Syriac significations, "to seal up," and "to stain," and "to disfigure" (comp. in reference to the latter, ἀφανίζω in Matt. vi. 16), are but derivatives from it. In Hebrew it occurs in Jer. ii. 22, "Though thou wash thyself ever so much, yet is thine iniquity concealed before Me;" and in כהם, gold, prop. "the covered," comp. כסו in Job xxviii. 15. Hence would the word מכתם (a word first formed probably by David) mean "a secret" = a song with a deep import. Understood in this sense, the designation is in the highest degree suitable. How does the Psalm conduct us into the mysterious depths of the divine life! how deeply mystical is its very language! Its whole subject is quite dark to those who are not experienced in the ways of the Lord. We should greatly, however, err, did we suppose that David, in giving to many Psalms, in the superscription, the predicate of "the secret," denied that character

to the rest. It is rather common to them all, and is ascribed to some particular ones, only because they are parts of the whole; still, of course, to such as peculiarly possess this character. The same also holds good, for example, of the name מִשְׁכִּיל, "didactic Psalm." We must everywhere understand it positively, not exclusively. All the Psalms are didactic; and in many this character is even more prominently displayed than in those which are expressly called such, so that there was no need for any N. B. to that effect in the superscription. From the above remarks, it appears that *Michtam* in the superscription was as a "procul profani;" it cried out, at the very outset, to the readers, "O the heights and the depths which the Spirit of God alone can reveal!" The connection between this word and the מִשְׁכִּיל in Isa. xxxviii., does not need to be wholly given up. It is not improbable that the latter forms the groundwork of our designation, and that David only, by the change of a letter, transformed a word of a very common meaning, into one of deep signification.

Ver. 1. *Preserve me, O God; for in Thee do I put my trust.* What an infinite fulness of matter these simple words conceal within themselves, is shown by the subsequent development. On the words, "Preserve me, O God," Luther remarks: "He here begins like a man who sees his destruction before his eyes, who is abandoned by all, and must presently die. Such a man would speak in the following manner: Behold, I must die; my strength is departed from me; angels and men have forsaken me, nay, devils and men seek to devour me. I cannot escape; no one cares for my soul; every one already looks on me as lost, and bewails me as dead. Therefore, Lord, Thou alone art my preserver and my deliverer, Thou, who savest him that is regarded as lost, and makest the dead to live, and liftest up the oppressed: Lord, deliver me, let me not be brought to shame. As he says elsewhere in Ps. xxxi. 5: Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.—So fares it with the godly: he dies daily, and still is always delivered and preserved. And this is the new life of faith and hope, which is celebrated in this Psalm, namely, the life under the cross, the life in the midst of death. . . . Let us therefore here learn that we must call upon the Lord, especially in distress, when we are ready to perish; in which circumstances the children of men do everything but call upon the Lord, and rather renounce all hope, and give themselves up to



despair." On the other words, "For I trust in Thee," he also remarks: "See how trust here calls upon the Lord. How can he call upon the Lord who does not confide in Him? Confidence and believing trust are reckoned among those things which God, in compassion, will regard graciously, and through which He will make us eternally blessed, as we see here. Nothing can stand, nothing can uphold or deliver, when matters come to such a pass, but a pure and firm faith, which grounds itself solely upon the Divine compassion, and which promises itself nothing from itself, but everything from God. . . . Whenever man places his hope on anything else than on the Lord our God, he cannot say: I trust in Thee. Hence should all persons in misery, and wrestling with despair, take heed that they labour and strive after the state of mind here described. This most excellent and noble emotion, confidence in God, forms the distinction between the people of Christ, who are His property, and those who are not His people; and here there is no respect of persons, no rank nor title." But this confidence is considered here, not simply as an emotion, but also in reference to its object: whosoever places his confidence on the Lord, his confidence and salvation is His. That both are here to be taken into account, that the Psalmist's ground of hope is not a subjective one merely, but also an objective one, is evident from what follows.

Ver. 2. (O my soul) *thou sayest to Jehorah, Thou art my Lord, my salvation is not without Thee.* The אַמְרָתִי, the second person fem., can only be explained by supposing the address to be directed to the soul (fem.). For the soul to be addressed, or introduced as speaking, is no unusual thing: comp. Ps. xlii., xliii., in which the Psalmist constantly addresses his soul anew, and stirs it up to confidence and hope in God; Jer. iv. 19, and especially Lam. iii. 24, 25: "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good unto them that wait upon Him, to the soul that seeketh Him,"—where allusion seems to be made to our Psalm. The difference between this latter passage and the one before us is only this, that here the soul is not expressly named; but such an omission is quite in keeping with the enigmatical character of our Psalm, and the general difficulty of its style; and analogies may be produced for it from the Arabian poets, perhaps also from 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 2 Sam. xiii. 39. The majority of modern expositors would read אָמַרְתִּי, "I speak." But this is opposed both by external autho-

rities and by internal grounds. The expression, "I speak," would be extremely bald and tame; the address to the soul gives dramatic life to the discourse. The Psalmist, after he has uttered the solemn words, "I put my trust in Thee," holds converse with his soul, and brings to its mind that this is in reality its settled feeling, that it cannot despair in times of trouble, without flagrantly contradicting itself. The consequence of this is, that the soul, having again become conscious of itself, "rejoices and is glad," in the sure expectation of God's salvation, ver. 9. Such interlocations, in which the sacred bards still and pacify their souls, like a child weaned by his mother, Ps. cxxxix. 3, have something indescribably moving and touching. The first expression of trust in the true God is this, that we say to Him, "Thou art the Lord;" the uncontrolled ruler over all in heaven and on earth; the possessor of all power; the dispenser of all safety; the One, without whom not a hair of our head can fall, who holds every breath of those who threaten us with destruction; the almighty Lord, whom heaven and earth obey; the supreme God, who has, and can do everything. "Who is it that orders all things? Who distributes all gifts? It is God; and He also is the One who can supply counsel and aid when we are ready to sink." Trust in God manifests itself, further, in the lively acknowledgment that He is the sole author of salvation—that it is to be sought and found only in Him, not in those whom the world calls gods. This knowledge, which is a simple outflow of the conviction, that God is the Lord—for, being this, He must also be the only author of redemption—is expressed in the words, "my good is not without Thee," or beside Thee; to which many analogous passages might be produced from our own sacred poetry, such as: "All that I am and have, comes from the hand of God; all is the gift of the Highest, nothing happens by chance; God alone is everything to me, He shall ever be my helper; all else that is to be found on earth soon vanishes," etc. That special reference is made here to the gods, when preservation is ascribed to God alone, appears from ver. 4. This special reference is, however, a non-essential element: the gods are noticed only as those from whom, if men do not recognise Jehovah to be the Lord, they commonly seek help and safety; and on precisely the same footing stand one's own power, the aid of one's fellow-men, and whatever other objects of trust exist apart from God. In unison with Ps.

lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee," the Psalmist renounces all such helpers and dispensers of good, and thereby proves that he has said in perfect sincerity, "I trust in Thee."

We take טובה, "good," in the sense of preservation and prosperity, resting upon the contrast of "sorrows," in ver. 4, and upon the corresponding words, "my part, my cup, my lot, my inheritance," in vers. 5 and 6. עֲלֶיךָ we expound, "out of Thee, beside Thee," prop. "in addition to Thee," with allusion to Ex. xx. 3, "Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me," עַל פְּנֵי, prop. in addition to Me; LXX. πλὴν ἐμοῦ, Targ. בְּרַ פְּנֵי. This passage is the more important, as the Psalmist obviously had it in his eye; which we shall be the less inclined to doubt, after an examination of the beginning of ver. 4. Just as the words, "Thou art the Lord," are the soul's response to the words in Ex. xx. 2, "I am the Lord thy God," so the words, "Thou alone art my salvation," are the response to the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me;" they are the soul's declaration, that what should be, actually is. The nearest approach to the exposition we have given is that of Sym., ἀγαθόν μου οὐκ ἔστιν ἄνευ σου: that of Jerome, Bonum meum non est sine te; as also that of the Chal. and Syr., "Thou art my highest good." A decisive objection to this last is, the reference to the Decalogue, and vers. 4, 5, 6, according to which, not only the *above*, but also the *beside* is excluded. That עַל does not absolutely require such an exposition, is evident, not only from the ground passage, but also the examples in Gesenius's *Thes.* under עַל 1, b. γ: though these latter need sifting. Still more decidedly objectionable is the exposition of Boettcher, Gesen., and others: "All my prosperity is not above Thee; the best which I have, I prefer not to Thee." The unsoundness of this view appears from the antithesis in ver. 4: "many are the sorrows, etc.;" from the positive declaration in ver. 5 of what is here negatively expressed; from the reference to the Decalogue; and, finally, because this thought cannot be considered as a carrying out of the sentiment, "I put my trust in Thee" (which alone is sufficient), nor as suiting the Psalm as a whole. The same grounds also, for the most part, decide against the exposition: "My good is not over Thee," = I can do Thee no good, which, after the example of the LXX. (ὅτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν μου οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχεις), Calvin propounds. "The sum," says he, "is this, that when we approach

to God, we must lay aside all self-confidence. For if we imagine that there is something in ourselves, we need not be surprised if He repel us, since we rob Him of the chief part of His honour." This thought, however excellent in itself as a development of the words, "I trust in Thee," does not suit the context, nor even the parallelism. But ver. 5 in particular is against it. The contrast with the pains or sorrows, which are experienced by the servants of false gods, shows that by the good of the Psalmist, must be understood, not the good which he does, but that only which he receives, which is imparted to him, namely, prosperity or deliverance: comp. מְנוּחָה in this signification, Ps. cxvi. 5, "Visit me with Thy favour, that I may see the good of Thy chosen," Job ix. 25. Utterly to be rejected also is the exposition of Kimchi and Jarchi, "Thou art not under obligation to do me good;" as also that of Luther, "I must suffer for Thy sake," in connection with the following verse, which he renders, "for the saints, who are upon the earth, and for the honourable." We have then, indeed, a sense which is applicable to Christ alone, but at the expense of the whole connection and train of thought. In his comm., however, he goes along with the LXX.

Ver. 3. *With the saints that are in the land, and the honourable ones, in whom is all my delight.* With this his confidence in Jehovah, the conviction that He alone is the Lord, the sole author of salvation, the Psalmist does not stand alone; he has it in common with the Church of God, which God endows with the highest gifts, invests with high dignity, and to which, on this account, the Psalmist cleaves with a fervent love. As a member of this Church, which has its seat in the land of the Lord, he trusts in the Lord as his only Saviour, disdaining all those whom the world, the surrounding heathen nations, have forged to themselves. According to this exposition, ל has quite its common signification, and Stier's objection, that the ellipsis, *joining myself*, is too hard, is without force; as there is just as little of an ellipsis here, as in the לְדָוִד, "belonging to David," in the superscription. ל is used in a quite similar manner (de eo quorsum quis pertinet, Gesen. in *Thes.* s. v.), for example, 1 Kings xv. 27: Baasha the son of Ahijah, לְבֵית יִשָּׁכָר, belonging to the house of Issachar. By the holy and honourable persons, are not designated certain individuals, or a particular class in Israel, but ideally, all Israelites are holy and honourable, the whole people of the covenant; and this predicate con-

tinues to be applied to the whole, although a great part of the individuals may have excluded themselves, by their own guilt, from an actual participation in this dignity. The souls that are cut off from their people are considered as absent, though they may still be present as to the body. In favour of this reference to the Church at large, decides, first, the expression, "who are in the land;" then a comparison of the original passages on which the designation is based: Ex. xix. 6, "And ye shall be to Me a kingdom of priests (comp. the royal priesthood, as applied in 1 Peter ii. 9 to the whole Church of the New Testament), and a holy people;" and Deut. vii. 6, "For thou art an holy people to the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people to Himself, out of all peoples that are on the earth." As a predicate of the whole people, the term "holy" is found also in Ps. xxxiv. 9, Dan. viii. 24, vii. 21. That the term "holy" here does not designate moral quality, but dignity, appears not only from the passages already referred to, but also from the parallel *אֲדִירִים*, which never denotes the noble in sentiment, but the noble in dignity, and is excellently rendered in the Berleb. Bible by "serene highness." The saints are the chosen ones, those whom God has taken out of the region of the profane world, and raised to be His people. Of this elevation in dignity, an elevation in sentiment is certainly the consequence. The election of God, first of all, and above all, manifests itself in His appointing institutions; providing arrangements, and communicating powers, through which He makes to Himself a people that is zealous of good works.

*בְּאֶרֶץ*, which must be translated, not, "on the *earth*," but "in the *land*," points to the dwelling-place of the holy, and the honourable. The Church of God is a visible community, circumscribed in point of space; its place is the land of the Lord. The opposite of the saints, who are in the land, are the foreign worshippers of idols, of whom mention is made in ver. 4. Out of the land there are no holy and honourable ones, but such only as Jehovah has not chosen, and who do not trust in Him, do not say to Him, "Thou art the Lord, my salvation is not out of Thee," but rather purchase others. This same connection between the people of the Lord, and His land, is brought to view by David, in 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, where he says to Saul, "And if the children of men (have stirred thee up against me), cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day

from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods." Then Josh. xxii. 24, 25, is also very clear, as, according to it, the tribes beyond Jordan, who did not dwell, strictly speaking, in Canaan, were afraid lest those within Jordan might say, "What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? for the Lord hath made Jordan a boundary between us and you, ye have no part in the Lord." We see here how close the union was represented between an interest in the land of the Lord, and an interest in the Lord Himself. So early as in Genesis we meet with this localization of the Church of God. Cain's banishment from the rest of the human family was equally a banishment from the presence of God. Jacob is full of admiring gratitude to God, when Jehovah revealed Himself to him after his withdrawal from the place to which the Church of God was at that time confined. The deep truth which lies at the bottom of this view, is unfolded by Melancthon in his *Loci de Ecclesia*, at the beginning: "By the Church we are to understand the company of the called, which is the visible Church, and are not to dream that we are chosen elsewhere than in this visible community. For God does not wish to be called upon or acknowledged where He has not revealed Himself; and He has nowhere revealed Himself but in the visible Church, in which alone is heard the sound of the Gospel," etc.

The last words properly mean: "The nobles, of the entirety of my pleasure in them;" comp. on the stat. constr. as thus used, Ewald, *Large Gr.* § 303, and the *Small*, § 509. The ground of the Psalmist's satisfaction in the holy and the noble, is their holiness and their nobility; he attaches himself with all his heart to those, whom God has distinguished above all others, whom He has ennobled by His election. Of the erroneous expositions, we shall test only the most plausible and widely diffused. 1. Many, and among the last, Gesenius, expound: "As regards the holy, who are in the land, and the honourable, in them is all my delight." But against this it is to be urged, that the stat. constr. is never used for the stat. absol.; as here אֲרִירִים would stand for אֲרִירִי. Besides, the sense thus obtained, does not at all suit the connection of the Psalm. As everything to ver. 7 is only an expansion of the idea, "In the Lord I put my trust," as it all only utters the confidence that is felt in the Lord, so the satisfaction of the Psalmist in the saints might well be expressed by the way, in a sort of side statement, but could not form a sub-

stantive and independent declaration. We must give up either this exposition, or the connection. Finally, the words, "who purchase another," in ver. 4, immediately connect themselves with: "My good is not out of Thee," in ver. 2, and only in this connection can we understand the word *another*; but this connection is destroyed the moment we assign to the third verse an independent position. Only on our view, according to which the Psalmist, in this verse, merely gives utterance to the thought, that he was not alone in his recognition of Jehovah, as the Lord and the sole author of salvation, but expressed it as a member of the Church of God, does such a connection exist. 2. De Wette and others expound: "The saints who, in the land, are the honourable, in whom is all my delight." This exposition avoids only the first of the objections just mentioned. The two others remain against it in full force. According to it also, the thought breaks in upon the connection. De Wette, indeed, thinks that the sense suits admirably with the sentiment in the following verse: "The sense of the verse, according to our exposition, is: the poet holds with the pious in the land; by way of contrast to which, he declares in the next verse, that he abhors the worshippers of idols." But the main idea placed in the front of the following verse, "that those who purchase another have many sorrows," is thereby left quite out of view, and of a horror of the worshippers of idols, there is no mention in this verse, when rightly expounded. 3. Hoffmann, in his "Prophecy and its Fulfilment," takes the  $\text{ל}$  here as correlative to that before Jehovah. In ver. 2, it is what the soul says to the Lord; in ver. 4, what it says to the saints. But the address is, throughout the whole Psalm, only to Jehovah; ver. 4 contains nothing, in point of matter, which is peculiarly suitable for an address to the saints; in point of form, also, there is not the least trace of such an address. It is also against this view, that it destroys the whole strophic-construction. Besides, this view was advanced before Hoffmann, and was also refuted. Boëtcher remarks against it: "The reference to ver. 2 involves a too wearisome train of thought; in ירבו, in ver. 4, a too indistinct commencement for an address, for ordinary readers, not accustomed to subtleties of exegesis, to perceive it at such a distance from אמת."

Ver. 4. The Lord is the only salvation both of the holy in the land, and of the Psalmist. They who seek their salvation

from others, receive, for the sacrifices through which they endeavour to propitiate their favour, instead of the expected fulness of gifts, a fulness of sorrows; therefore he turns himself away with horror from these others, the idol-gods, he will have no part in their abominable service, and their names he will not take upon his lips. *Many are the sorrows of those who purchase another; I will not pour out their drink-offerings of blood, and not take their names upon my lips.* Instead of "many are the sorrows," Ewald, Maurer, and several others, expound: "many are the idols." But this exposition is against the usage; the reading must then have been עֲצֻבֹת; עֲצֻבֹת are always sorrows. But this assured meaning must be retained here also on account of the contrast with טוֹבָה, in ver. 2: "I seek my salvation from the Lord, for with the others are only sorrows." Further, the mention of the many false gods appears in such a case out of place here; this explanation also deprives the verse of that which constitutes an extension of the Psalmist's declaration, "I trust in the Lord," and disturbs its relation to the following verse, in which the many sorrows, which alone one can obtain from the false gods, are contrasted with the rich blessings which the Lord imparts. So much only in that exposition is right, that the Psalmist probably plays upon the word עֲצֻבֹת, "idols," points to the mournful omen contained even in the name,—an allusion which has the more significance, as the two words, עֲצֻבֹת and עֲצֻבִים, actually stand in close connection with each other, idols having received their name from the trouble and toil it cost to make them. On such a commencement no good end could follow. The sorrows consist, not merely in the disappointed hope, but also in the judgments which God suspends over the apostate; comp. Isa. lxx. 14, "Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit." מִן אֲחֵר כָּהֵר many explain, with De Wette: "who hasten away elsewhere,"—an exposition which was long ago set aside by the older commentators with the remark, that אֲחֵר never signifies, "away elsewhere," and that we are not justified in giving to מִן here the signification of *hastening*, as this signification elsewhere belongs to it only in Piel, while the Kal is used in Ex. xxii. 15, as also in Arabic and Syriac, in a quite different signification, viz. "of buying a wife." Luther, who renders: "they who hasten after another will have great suffering of heart," has avoided the



first objection. But usage admits only one explanation: "who purchase another." Against those who allege that "another" could not be used thus of other gods without some addition, we must not simply appeal, with Boettcher, to the fact, that "Hebrew poets constantly direct their thoughts toward God, and Divine things." The expression, "another," is not used simply by itself for other gods; it is more closely defined by ver. 2, where the Psalmist described Jehovah as the only Lord, as the One, beside whom there is no salvation, and no saviour. Viewed in this connection, "the other" can only be another God beside Jehovah; and when it is maintained that אחר can only signify a false deity, when, as in Isa. xlii. 8, xlviii. 11, it is directly contrasted with Jehovah, nothing, in fact, is demanded which is not found here. A more explicit description was the less necessary, as, in the Pentateuch, the expression, "go away after other gods," is currently used. Here, as there, אחר is employed, not without emphasis, instead of the proper term for idols, by way of teaching that it matters not whom we seek, if it be another than Jehovah, the Lord, the only Saviour. The word thus clearly shows how unimportant the distinction is between idolatry in the strict sense, here primarily referred to, and idolatry in the more general sense. If the only question is, whether another than the Lord is the object of trust, then does mammon (whom our Lord personified for the purpose of setting it on a level with the false gods, commonly so called) stand on the same footing as Dagon.

In מחרו several commentators retain only the general idea of buying, purchasing. They perceive here merely a sort of antithesis to the sacrifices with which the worshippers of idols seek to propitiate their favour, lavishing much expense upon their worship, and reaping in return nothing but sorrows. But there is no reason for omitting here the special meaning which usage has attached to the word, emit dote uxorem. It furnishes here a fuller and deeper sense; and the application of it in such a connection is the more natural, as it is by images borrowed from the married state, that the relation to the true God and to idols is constantly described. These latter received the title מַחֲרֵבִים, "paramours." Applying this idea, the verb itself serves admirably to point out the incongruity of the relation between idolaters and idols. According to the oriental fashion, a man purchases his wife. From the nature of the case, this also

should take place between the divinity and its worshippers. It was the part of the deity to take the initiative, to go forth and win the regard of its chosen. And this is precisely what was done by Jehovah in relation to Israel: He purchased Israel to Himself from the bondage of Egypt; comp. Hos. iii. 2. He met Israel with great demonstrations of love—first loved him, and only seeks his love in return. But it was quite otherwise with idols. These had done nothing to prove their existence, or their love; the relation commences with expensive sacrifices to them, on the part of their servants. Such a beginning could lead to no other end than the one here mentioned. A bought god never can afford salvation; the seed of the sacrifices can yield nothing but sorrows. A god who does not begin the connection by giving tokens of his love, will never show it, and it is a piece of folly to cherish such a hope. Analogous is the representation in Hos. viii. 9, “Ephraim hath bought for himself love;” and in Ezek. xvi. 33, 34, where the prophet brings out the absurdity that, whereas in all other cases presents were given to the person loved, the worshippers of idols gave presents to their lovers, the idol-gods. The suffixes in נִסְכֵיהֶם, “*their* drink-offerings,” and שְׁמֵיהֶם, “*their* names,” are referred by many expositors to those who purchase another, the idolaters; by others, on the contrary, to the idols. The admissibility of the latter exposition cannot be denied, as the אֶחָד is unity only in an ideal sense, in opposition to the one true God, and, in point of fact, comprehends a multiplicity. It is also supported by the undeniable reference which the words, “I will not take their names into my lips,” bear to the original passage, Ex. xxviii. 13, “Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth;” on which also Hos. ii. 17 is based, “And I will take away the names of the Baalim out of their mouth, and they shall be no more remembered by their name.” The words themselves, also, are opposed to the reference to idolaters; the pronouncing of *their* name, that is, of the name of the heathen nations, the Psalmist could have had no desire to shun. Finally, the reference to idols is demanded by the contrast in ver. 5. *The drink-offerings of blood* are understood by various expositors literally; but in this reference to a particular heathenish custom, for which only very few proofs can be adduced, and these with much difficulty, the connection is not attended to, which would lead us to expect a rejection of the worship of false gods

as such, of those who are no saviours, and to whom is only given what is taken from the true God ; not the *how*, but the fact of idolatry, is an object of abhorrence to the Psalmist. One must rather, comparing Isa. lxiii. 3, explain the drink-offerings of blood as follows : “ drink-offerings which are as much objects of abhorrence as if they consisted, not of the wine, which externally they were, but literally of blood.” The expression, “ of blood,” was the more natural, as wine is named the “ blood of grapes ” in Gen. xlix. 11, Deut. xxxii. 14, etc. Drink-offerings, outwardly of the blood of grapes, inwardly of the blood of men.

Ver. 5. Not those others, who only give sorrow, are the Psalmist’s salvation ; the Lord alone is that, and in Him he finds fulness of blessing. *The Lord is my portion and my cup ; Thou makest my lot glorious.* The meaning is given quite correctly by Muis : “ All my good is of God, and in God alone.” That the Psalmist here names God his portion, not after the manner of the pure love of the mystics, does not count himself blessed, as Boettcher supposes, on account of his inward union with God, but rather simply declares that God is the sole author of his salvation, is clear from the circumstance, that this verse further carries out the sentiment, “ I put my trust in Thee ; ” also from the expression, “ Thou makest glorious my lot ; ” but especially from the affirmation in ver. 2, “ My good is not apart from Thee,” which here returns in another form (according to which the Psalmist expressly renounces connection with those who seek good out of God), and, finally, from the contrast of the many sorrows which the service of those others brings in its train. The Lord is viewed here, therefore, according to the entire fulness of the blessings and gifts which belong to Him ; and the declaration, “ The Lord is my portion and my cup,” is substantially the same as if he had said : What the Lord has, and gives, that alone do I seek ; that is for me, and with it I am content. This meaning receives confirmation as the only correct one, from a comparison of the original passages in the Pentateuch, which the Psalmist manifestly has in view here. They are those in which the Lord is designated Levi’s portion and inheritance : Num. xviii. 20, “ The Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them ; I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel,”—

where J. H. Michaelis thus gives very correctly the sense : " From Me alone thou shalt receive what is amply sufficient ; and what things are due to Me, these shall be thine ; " Deut. x. 9, xviii. 1, 2, where the words, " The Lord is his inheritance," are explained by, " The offerings of the Lord and His inheritance shall they eat." Not as if it were demanded of Levi, to be content with the simple enjoyment of the favour of God, and to consider this as compensation for his sacrifices, resigning all happiness besides. Rather was a participation in the rich goods of the Lord assigned him as compensation. So here also the declaration, " The Lord is my portion," is equivalent to : In the possession of the Lord and His goods and gifts, I freely give up to the world its *seeming* givers and goods, which, more carefully examined, are but *sorrows*. Calvin justly remarks, that the opposite state of feeling, unbelieving and ungrateful dissatisfaction with the highest and only good, or the only true source of all happiness, is the basis of superstition and of all false worship. On the form בְּנִי, comp. on Ps. xi. 6. What is the import of, " The Lord is my cup," is evident from Ps. xxiii. 5, " My cup runneth over ; " comp. also Ps. xi. 6. The Lord is for His people a cup which is never empty, and never suffers them to become thirsty, the source of all good ; He provides them richly with everything that can contribute to their refreshment during life, so that it were thankless folly for them to seek for refreshment elsewhere. The last words are commonly expounded : " Thou supportest, or maintainest, my lot." After the example of the older translators, תַּמְכִּינִי is taken as a participle. But such a participle-form is wholly without example. The תַּמְכִּינִי in Isa. xxix. 14, and xxxviii. 5, which is referred to, is manifestly not a participle, but the third person Future. It is to be observed, besides, that the expression, " to support or maintain the lot," has a strange sound ; the Psalmist's lot is not *maintained* by God, but bestowed on him. As the word stands here, it can scarcely be anything else than the Fut. in Hiph. of תַּמְכִּי. Now this verb has in Arabic the highly suitable signification, *amplus fuit* ; consequently, in Hiph. " to make broad, glorious." So first Schmeltens Inst. ad fundam. l. Hebr. p. 298.

Ver. 6. *My possession has fallen to me in bliss ; also a goodly heritage became mine.* The sense is excellently given by Calvin : " He confirms what he had already said in the preceding verse,

namely, that he rested with a composed and tranquil mind in the one God (and His salvation); nay, he so glories therein, that he looks down with contempt on whatever the world might imagine to be desirable apart from God." תבלים, "lines," measuring cord," then the "measured out portion, the possession." So Josh. xvii. 5. The possession of the Psalmist is the Lord, with His goods and gifts. The *falling* is, according to most interpreters, derived from the figure of a lot. But no ground exists for this supposition. נפל with ל occurs, in the signification of, "to fall to any one," without respect to casting lots, in Num. xxxiv. 2, Judges xviii. 1. בנעימים is commonly rendered: "in pleasant places." But against this Boettcher justly alleges, that no example is to be found of an adjective, not of local import, being directly used in regard to localities; that נעימות, in ver. 11, is parallel with שמחות; and that in Job xxxvi. 11, the equivalent בנעימים is used with the signification, "in bliss." These reasons are decisive. The plural is used here, as frequently, to mark the abstract: "delightful things," for "delightfulness, bliss." But when Boettcher further maintains, that "in delightfulness" stands for, "in the most delightful manner," we cannot agree with him. When a noun with ב follows the words, "a possession fell to me," every one expects it to designate the locality of the possession. We consider the bliss and delight as the spiritual region, in which a possession has fallen to the lot of the Psalmist. נא is used here, as also in ver. 9, not as a particle of enhancement, but with a weaker import, in the sense of *also*; comp. Winer, s. v. נחלת is not stat. constr., but a poetical form of the stat. absol. The expression, "an inheritance, it is excellent," is a loose construction for, "an inheritance, which is excellent," a glorious or goodly heritage. על strictly means, *upon me*, for, "it is with me," "I possess it," and is to be explained by the fact, that the possessor of anything is considered as its bearer. Precisely so is על used in Ps. vii. 8, cxxxi. 2, Neh. v. 7. Quite correctly already Luther: "A fine inheritance has become mine." Gesenius, De Wette, and others, render: "and the possession *pleases* me." But then נא, which can only mean *also*, not *and*, must be connected, not with the noun, but with the verb; we should have expected the art. or the suff. at נחלת; and though שפר with על occurs in Chal. in the sense of *to please*, it never does so in Hebrew.

Ver. 7. *I will bless the Lord, who has counselled me; also by night my reins admonish me.* The words, "who has counselled me," receive light by being viewed in connection with what precedes. The Psalmist, placed in the midst of possessions, knows not what to choose, or where to settle. Then the Lord conveys to him the counsel, to choose the pleasant inheritance delineated in the preceding verses, *i.e.* to put his trust in Him, to seek his salvation only in Him, to turn to Him as the only Saviour; and this counsel he celebrates here with grateful praise. Calvin: "Finally, David confesses that it was entirely of the grace of God, that he had come by faith into the possession of so great a good. For the mere gracious offer by itself is nothing, seeing it is made to all alike. We must therefore know that both are the gift of God's free grace—His being our inheritance, and our possessing Him in faith." The object of the counsel is inaccurately defined by Jarchi, "to choose the life, and to walk in His ways;" by De Wette, "that I have remained true to Him;" and by Boettcher, "not to renounce it,"—to say nothing of the arbitrary view of Hitzig. Others render: "because He has cared for me;" but this explanation is philologically baseless. יָצַו with the accus. signifies, "to give any one counsel;" comp. Ex. xviii. 19; Jer. xxxviii. 15; 1 Kings i. 12. In the second clause, that to which the Psalmist is admonished, is manifestly the praise and thanksgivings mentioned in the first. The impulse to thank the Lord for His gracious counsel, springing from the most profound and lively apprehension of the greatness of the salvation, with which the Psalmist had been mercifully favoured, is so powerful in him, that it continues with him even through the night-season, and leads him to praise and give thanks, when the whole world is asleep.

Here begins the second part of the Psalm, in which hope springs out of confidence.

Ver. 8. *I set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.* According to the connection, the eye of the Psalmist continually directed to the Lord, hopes in the very midst of difficulty (ver. 8), or looks to the Lord to be a helper in trouble and death. Luther: "Such a thing gives fresh courage and an undaunted heart to those who have God always before their eyes; so that even adversity, the cross, and sufferings, can then be cheerfully met and borne. Verily,

such a faith can be overmastered and vanquished by no cross and calamity." In the words, *Because He is*, etc., the Psalmist gives the ground of his hope being placed upon the Lord. The hope is based on confidence. The expression, "He is on my right hand," as my Saviour and helper, corresponds to the, "I put my trust in Thee," in ver. 1, and briefly sums up the substance of vers. 2-7, where the Psalmist sets forth that the Lord is his Saviour.

Ver. 9. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also shall rest secure.* Therefore, namely, because the Lord is on my right hand, and I therefore shall not be moved. In the preceding verse, "I hope in the Lord, for He is my Saviour;" here, "He is my Saviour, therefore I hope in Him; I am full of joy and gladness, and sure of my deliverance." The *glory* or *honour* is here also an emphatic designation for the soul. What the heart and soul rejoice in, namely, the certainty of salvation, security in trouble and against death, is clear from the parallel: "My flesh also shall dwell secure," in ver. 10. By the flesh, many of the Messianic interpreters understand the lifeless body, the corpse; to this the Psalmist is considered to promise a safe repose in the tomb; so Luther: "My flesh also will lie secure." But the following reasons are against this: 1. בשר, "flesh," denotes elsewhere, when used in connection with the soul and heart, not the *corpse*; but the *living body*: the soul in such cases is not that which is separated from the body, but the soul in the body. Comp. Ps. lxiii. 1, "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee;" lxxxiv. 2, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh." 2. The expression, שכן לבנה, cannot of itself be properly understood of the rest of the body in the grave; the word, "to dwell," is not very suitable, as is clear from the fact, that these expositors for the most part quietly substitute, "to lie," in its place. And if we compare the primary and parallel passages, this exposition appears all the more inadmissible. In them, the expression denotes a condition of settled prosperity, endangered and disturbed by no hostile assault. So Deut. xxxiii. 12, of Benjamin, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety with him;" ver. 28, "And Israel dwells in safety,"—which passages, in particular the latter, are the rather to be considered as primary or ground-passages, seeing that the expression of, "to dwell safely," when used of an individual, has a certain air

of strangeness, and that there is an unquestionable reference to it in Ps. iv. 8, "For Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety." Comp., besides, Jer. xxiii. 6, xxxiii. 16; Judges xviii. 7. 3. The succeeding context decides against the exposition in question. For, first, the circumstance that there the "soul" is substituted for "flesh," naturally leads us to reject the idea that here the flesh denotes the soulless body. Then, we do not find there, as that interpretation would lead us to expect, the hope of preservation *in* death, but of preservation *against* death.—We may not, therefore, even adopting the strict and direct Messianic meaning, refer the words to secure repose in the grave, but only to salvation and deliverance in general. That Peter understood the words so, appears from his finding in the words of the following verse a declaration of Christ's preservation, not in death, but from it.

Ver. 10. *For Thou, my only good, my portion and my cup, Thou, who makest my lot glorious.* That we must fill up thus, appears from the words, "Thy holy ones," in the second member—*Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell, nor give up Thy holy ones to see the grave.* The confidence of salvation expressed in the preceding verse, is here grounded upon the consideration, that the Lord, as the Psalmist's Saviour, cannot surrender him a prey to death. The corresponding positive idea is presented in the next verse, viz. that He will impart to him life, joy, and bliss. נָתַן with ל, means, "to leave over, to give up to any one;" comp. Lev. xix. 10; Ps. xlix. 10; Job xxxix. 14. The exposition of Luther, and of many others: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," has both usage and the parallelism against it; according to which, the pious is not even to see the grave, and, consequently, his soul will not attain to hell (sheol). Peter, for the sake of whom this exposition has been adopted, has not followed it. He renders, in Acts ii. 27, "Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell," εἰς ᾧδου, or, according to Lachmann, ᾧδην, as also the LXX. have: "not to die and be buried,"—this is the hope Peter finds expressed in the Psalm, and realised in Christ, notwithstanding His death and burial. For a death such as His (and in consequence of His, that also of His people), is but as a passage into life, and does not deserve the name of death. We may here also take into account the words of Christ, Matt. ix. 24: "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Comp. also John xi. 11.—To decide between the two readings, חסידך, "Thy holy



ones," and חסידך, "Thy holy one," is difficult. Were the latter a mere Kri, we should not hesitate to reject it, as of no greater consequence than a conjecture of some modern critic. But the matter is not so. A great many manuscripts, and among them some very good ones, have "Thy holy one" in the text. All the old translations express the singular, and so also do Paul and Peter in their quotations. Besides this, the Jewish polemical interest, their opposition to the Messianic interpretation, favoured the plural reading חסידך. The passages in Jewish writers, in which it is employed for this purpose, may be found collected by Aurivillius, de vera lectione vocis, חסידך. We are still inclined, however, to regard the plural form as the original reading. It is supported, 1. By the preponderance of the external critical authorities; the testimony of the manuscripts, which is chiefly upon its side, cannot be outweighed by the testimony of the old translations, which carry no great weight in such matters. 2. The plural, as the more difficult reading, might readily be exchanged for the more easy singular by those who knew not what to do with it, seeing that, throughout the rest of the Psalm, one individual appears as the speaker. That the Jewish polemical interest favoured the plural, is not enough to counterbalance this reason; for such considerations can never exercise more than a partial influence.—Taking the plural as the correct reading, we perceive here, as was remarked in the introduction, the non-individualistic character of the Psalm, its destination for all pious persons, precisely as in Ps. xvii. 11.—The expression, "Thy holy ones," contains the ground of confidence. It combines all that the Psalmist—or those in whose name, and out of whose soul he speaks—has uttered, in vers. 2–8, with regard to his relation to the Lord; the pious, or holy man, is he who trusts in the Lord, takes Him for his only good, etc.—שחת is rendered διαφθοράν by the LXX.; and that there is a noun שחת with the meaning "corruption," derived from שחח, "to corrupt, destroy," beside the common שחת, which is derived from שח, and signifies, *pit, grave*, is recognised even by Gesenius and Winer. But the passage which is chiefly appealed to, Job xvii. 14, is by no means decisive, since the common signification, "pit, grave," may very well be admitted there as parallel with *worm*; and the most urgent reasons ought to be produced, as it is very improbable that one and the same word can have different derivations and meanings. Here the sense

of *corruption* is the less admissible, as the same expression רָחַם is elsewhere, Ps. xlix. 9, demonstrably used in the sense of, "to see the grave." The defenders of the other exposition have wrongly adduced the authority of Peter in support of it. It appears that Peter, Acts ii., who undoubtedly addressed the "men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" in the Aramaic dialect, took רָחַם (he probably retained the word) in the sense of *grave*, and not of *corruption*; for, to the expression, "see רָחַם," corresponds, in reference to David, the expression, "He died and was buried, and his sepulchre is with us to this day;" as also the expression, "he died," corresponds to, "Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell." Hence it appears, that no stress is to be laid upon the διαφθορά, which Luke may easily have adopted from the received translation. The argument of Peter remains in full force, even if we substitute *grave* for *corruption*, if only we understand by "seeing the grave," something abiding continuous. "Seeing life," is always in such a sense. Christ's death and burial are not considered as death and burial. Paul, also, in his line of argument, Acts xiii. 36, 37, lays no stress upon the idea of corruption, as distinguished from the grave: "David, after he had in his own generation served the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption." The argument is not at all overthrown, if we substitute *grave* for *corruption*. Christ did not see the grave in the same sense that David did; He did not see it in the sense of the Psalmist.

Ver. 11. *Thou wilt make known to me the way of life; fulness of joy is mine before Thy face; blessedness through Thy right hand for evermore.* The Psalmist hopes to receive from the Lord, his Saviour and his confidence, negatively, preservation from death (the preceding verse), positively, life, joy, and bliss. The way of life is, as Luther rightly renders: the way to life. In Prov. ii. 19, the paths of life are the paths which lead to life. Life is in the first instance opposed to that death, from which the Psalmist hopes, in ver. 10, to be preserved; and therefore it is incorrect to interpret *life*, as some do, to mean exactly *salvation*. But that, on the other hand, neither bare life, nor bare immortality is meant, is shown by its connection with joy and bliss. A miserable life is not to be called life at all, in the Bible sense; it is only a form of death. The words, "Thou wilt make known to me the way of life," involve, therefore, a double idea:

"Thou wilt preserve me in life, and endow me with blessing." פִּנֵּךְ אַתָּה פִּנֵּךְ, prop. "with Thy countenance," occur again in Psalm xxi. 6: "Thou enlivenest him through joy with Thy countenance." The joy springs out of fellowship with the Lord's countenance, which was turned towards the Psalmist; light breaks in upon the darkness of his misery. Comp. Ps. iv. 6, "Lift upon us the light of Thy countenance." Ps. lxxx. 3. בְּיָמֶיךָ can only mean, "through Thy right hand;" and the interpretation of Luther and others, "at Thy right hand," is wrong. As joy proceeds from God's countenance, so from His right hand, which is almighty either to punish or to deliver, bliss: comp. Ps. xvii. 7.

It still remains for us, now that we have finished our exposition of the Psalm, to investigate its Messianic import. That it has such an import, is certain, even apart from the testimonies of the New Testament. The situation does, unquestionably, appear to be that of one, who found himself in great danger, and whose life was threatened. But the Psalmist does not express merely the hope of obtaining deliverance from that particular danger; his soul rises higher; he triumphs not only over a particular danger of death, but over death itself; he exclaims confidently, "Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory?" The *ground* of hope leads him beyond that, which was momentarily necessary, and the hope itself is expressed more comprehensively. He expresses quite generally the assurance, that death and the grave can exercise no power over those who are inwardly united to the living God; of this he is confident, nor for the present moment merely, but for ever, נֶצַח, in ver. 11; and on that account, he feels sure, for that present also, in respect to which primarily he gives utterance to the general hope.

Apart from Christ, this hope must be regarded as a chimera, which the issue will put to shame. David served God in his generation; and then he died, was buried and corrupted. But in Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light, it becomes perfectly true. David, in Christ, could speak as he does here with full right. Christ has conquered death, not merely for Himself, but also for His members. His resurrection is the ground of our resurrection; "for can the head fail to draw its members after it?" In so far as what is here hoped for the members, can

only become theirs through its first becoming the Head's, so far the Psalm must be considered as a direct prophecy of Christ.

But how far David himself clearly understood the Messianic substance of his hope, we cannot ascertain. That the prophecy of Christ was not a matter of total ignorance to him, is implied by the declaration of Peter, in Acts ii. 30, 31. Paul, however, contents himself with the simple fact, that the Psalm was fully verified in Christ. That the heroes of the Old Testament, in their more elevated moments, were favoured with a deep insight into the mystery of the future redemption, is presupposed by our Lord Himself, John viii. 56. A more or less conscious connection between the hope of eternal life, and the expectation of Christ, is attended with the less difficulty, as this connection constantly appears, where we find, in later times, the hope of eternal life expressed in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.

Our explanation of the Messianic import substantially agrees with that of Calvin, expressed by him with the greatest clearness and distinctness in his Comm. on the Acts of the Apostles: "When he glories that he shall not see the grave, he doubtless considers himself as a member of Christ's body, by whom death is overcome, and its empire abolished. But if David promised himself deliverance from the grave, only in so far as he was a member of Christ, it is evident that with Christ, as the Head, we must take our start."

Many of the older expositors, on the ground of the New Testament quotations of this Psalm, and not perceiving that the contrast in them lies, not between David and Christ, but between David apart from Christ, and David in Christ, have maintained that the Psalm refers directly and exclusively to Christ, who is introduced by the Psalmist as speaking. But against the Messianic interpretation thus understood, which was also advocated in my Christology, there are certain difficulties not easily disposed of. That the Psalmist should, from the commencement, speak in the person of another, does not comport well with the prevailing subjective character of the Psalmic poetry; and even from the circle of prophetic literature, scarcely can an example be produced, where this is done so directly, and without some previous more exact designation of the person. Further, the matter of vers. 1-8 is too little of a special Messianic character;—a consideration which is unintentionally shown to be of importance by the forced interpreta-

tions to which those are driven, who attempt to introduce a specially Messianic element. Also, that in vers. 9-11, the direct and exclusive Messianic references rest entirely on a false exposition, has already been shown. Further, by this exposition the Psalm is wrested from its connection with so many others, which are unquestionably very closely related to it, and, above all, with the following one, which is united with it into a pair. Finally, we are necessitated by this exposition, to hold the reading *חֲסִידֶיךָ*, in ver. 10, to be incorrect, which cannot be done, at all events, with positive certainty; and the less so, when we compare it with Ps. xvii. 11, where, in a similar manner, the plurality, concealed under the unity, manifests itself all at once. —The only apparent ground for this opinion, the testimony of the New Testament, must certainly be regarded as quite decisive by any one who examines the citation isolatedly; but those will judge differently, who, taking properly into account the whole relation in which the New Testament stands to the Old, have attained to a comprehensive view of the free and genial manner in which our Lord and His Apostles use prophecy for proof

## PSALM XVII.

The situation here, also, is that of one who finds himself in great distress and danger, through hostile oppression. "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth." "Let every one that names the name of God, depart from iniquity." —Therefore does the Psalmist first of all base his supplication to be heard on his *righteousness*; which is so far removed from hypocrisy, that it does not shun the most searching scrutiny of that Divine omniscience which penetrates into the most secret recesses of the heart. He declares his firm conviction, that this scrutiny will bring to light no contrariety between heart and mouth, but rather a perfect harmony between the two, vers. 1-5. On the foundation thus laid, there then arises a more confident and urgent prayer, the reasonableness of which is made clear by a detailed and eloquent description of the ungodliness and wickedness of his enemies, loudly calling for the interference of Heaven; and the conclusion embodies an expression of joyful hope in the salvation of the Lord, vers. 6-15.

The two parts of the Psalm, the first of which may be described as the porch, and the second as the proper building, present themselves to us as distinctly separate. The external dimensions of these parts are proportioned to their internal relation to each other. The introduction, which declares the Psalmist to be in possession of the indispensable condition of being heard, comprises five verses; the main burden of the Psalm is comprised in the number ten, which is the symbol of completeness. To this the formal arrangement appears to be confined. We might, however, conceive another division, analogous to that pointed out in Ps. vii., of strophes, which have an ascending number of verses; only that the one in which all the rest are enclosed, and into which they run out, instead of beginning, forms the conclusion: 2. 3. 4. 5. 1. Each of those strophes would really have pretty much its own proper ideas: vers. 1 and 2, the prayer of the Psalmist about his right; vers. 3-5, the grounding of this his right; vers. 6-9, his prayer for deliverance from the wicked who oppressed him; vers. 10-14, the grounding of this prayer, pointing to their disregard of all Divine and human rights, which called aloud for the interposition of God, and to their hitherto prosperous condition, which, as being contrary to God's word and nature, could therefore not continue. Finally, in ver. 15 we have the expression of hope and confidence in the salvation of the Lord. Still, this division cannot be held with the same confidence as the first: the last strophe especially, consisting of only one verse, renders it very doubtful.

If we assume a particular occasion for the Psalm, it must be one from the times of Saul; to those of Absalom we cannot assign it, because the Psalmist appears through the whole as a private individual who is oppressed. But the absence of all individual traits makes it probable, that the Psalmist does not speak in his own person, but in that of the righteous; and this supposition is confirmed by ver. 11, where, precisely as in ver. 10 of the preceding Psalm, the plurality concealed under the unity comes distinctly out. The individual character is discountenanced also by the introduction, vers. 1-5, in which the didactic tendency—the purpose of directing the members of the Church to the fact, that righteousness is the indispensable, though also the sure foundation of the hearing of prayer, and the bestowment of salvation—can scarcely be overlooked.

This Psalm has many coincidences with Ps. xvi., which are

so important, that they give colour to the idea of both Psalms having been united by the author into one pair. (Venema remarks: "Such is the agreement between this Psalm and the preceding one, that I am almost disposed to reckon them as one Psalm.") First, in both Psalms there is the same formal arrangement, mainly consisting in this, that the main substance is completed in the number ten, with the distinction, that in the former one, the introduction consists only of one verse, while in the latter it occupies five. Then, the situation in both Psalms is precisely the same, that of one who is brought into peril of life by the persecutions of wicked and ungodly enemies. Further, the conclusion of both Psalms remarkably agrees. And, finally, they present many striking coincidences in particular points. Comp. the following expressions: here in ver. 7, "through Thy right hand," with the same in Ps. xvi. 11; "Thou deliverer of them that put their trust in Thee," here in ver. 7, with "I put my trust in Thee," in Ps. xvi. 1; "preserve me," here in ver. 8, with "preserve me," in Ps. xvi. 1; and the plurality which discovers itself in ver. 11, with the plural expression, "Thy pious ones," in Ps. xvi. 10.

Taking into view these several points, they furnish us with the following result. David, intending to prepare a treasure of consolation and confidence for the sorely persecuted and oppressed from his own experience during the times of Saul, presented it in a whole, divided into two parts. Of the different subjects which come under consideration,—namely, confidence in the Lord, affording the sure hope of salvation; his own righteousness; and the unrighteousness of his enemies,—the first is handled in Ps. xvi., and the second and third in the Psalm before us. The subject with which he exclusively occupies himself in Ps. xvi., and which forms the proper theme of that Psalm, is referred to again here, for the purpose of bringing both Psalms into organic connection, and of assigning to Ps. xvii. its proper, even a subordinate place. After the Psalmist had solemnly protested before God his righteousness, he calls on God as the "deliverer of those that trust in Him;" teaching, that when once a foundation of righteousness exists, there, certainly and fully, confidence attains to the prominent position assigned it in Ps. xvi.

Besides this connection with Ps. xvi., there is one also, though not so close, with Ps. vii., which is of importance, espe-

cially in so far as it shows how, in David's case, general principles were evolved out of, and based on, the individual—how his own personal experience lies at the foundation even of those Psalms which he from the first indited, as it were, out of the soul of the Church—how he consoled others only with the consolation with which he himself had been comforted of God. As in Ps. vii. there was a porch of six, and a building of twelve verses, so we have here a porch of five, and a building of ten verses. In both Psalms also the ascent in the number of verses of which the strophes are composed, is alike, in so far as this may be recognised to have any place in our Psalm. The matter of the introduction, the protestation of innocence and righteousness, is in both Psalms the same. Common to both, also, is the "arise," in Ps. vii. 6, and here, in ver. 13; and the expression, "trier of the hearts and reins art Thou, O righteous God," in Ps. vii. 10, agrees with the "proving of the heart," etc., in ver. 3 here; comp. also Ps. xi. 4, 5.

Finally, vers. 1-5, in this Psalm, coincide with Ps. xviii. 20-27. Just as here the prayer for deliverance is grounded on righteousness, so there the deliverance obtained is derived from righteousness. This coincidence probably led the collector to place Ps. xviii. immediately after ours,—a very fitting connection, since confidence in righteousness, as the ground of salvation, must grow when it is manifested as such in so glorious a manner by experience.

The superscription, "A prayer of David," can have had no other than David for its author, as appears from the remarks already made, though it is not to be understood to designate him as the one to whose circumstances the prayer refers. The superscription in Hab. iii. 1, "A prayer of Habakkuk," formed on the model of this, is quite analogous. For, in the whole chapter, the Church, and not the prophet, is the speaker.

Ver. 1. *Hear righteousness, O Lord; attend to my cry, give ear to my prayer, from lips without deceit.* The prayer is here still only as means to an end; only serves the purpose of introducing the Psalmist's protestation of righteousness: the proper commencement of the prayer is at ver. 6. The Psalmist begs that the Lord would hear righteousness. Instead of the righteous, he puts righteousness, with the view of giving emphasis to the fact, that he sought nothing from the holy and righteous God, with whom there is no respect of persons, as a



matter of party preference or favouritism; that he laid claim to His help and salvation only in so far as righteousness appeared to be personified in him. He is inwardly penetrated by the conviction, that the *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*, of which men do but falsely boast, holds true of God in the fullest sense, and he wishes to communicate this conviction to others. It has often been found a stone of stumbling, that the Psalmist seems here to make his reception of the Divine help depend on a condition, which lies beyond the reach of sinful men. Several expositors have been induced thereby, either to refer the Psalm exclusively to Christ, or at least, to maintain that it has its full truth only in Christ. So Amyrald remarks: "In the exposition of this Psalm, and of some others, the left eye must be so fixed on David, that the right may be kept intent on Christ." Luther says: "The Hebrew text says simply, 'Lord, hear righteousness,' without attaching the word *my* to it. We shall here pass by the error of the Jews, who feign, that David, in consequence of the sin here committed of boasting of his own righteousness, afterwards fell into adultery; and we only bear in mind, that some of ourselves also have taken such offence at this word, as to have ascribed all that is said here to Christ." Others seek to avoid the difficulty by substituting the righteousness of the cause for that of the person. So Luther: "He says, Though I who beg do indeed possess no righteousness as to my person, yet is the cause in itself worthy, because it concerns Thy word and the faith; it is truly righteousness, and worthy that Thou shouldst not leave it to be overthrown;" and Venema, who gives a somewhat different delineation of the idea: "Righteous is my cause, which I bring before Thee, O God; and I have neither in thought, in word, nor deed, been guilty of any such things as they lay to my charge, and on account of which I am persecuted." To the like effect, also, J. H. Michaelis, De Wette, and others. But it is to be objected, that neither here nor in the succeeding verses is a trace to be found of any special reference to a particular cause: righteousness and integrity in general the Psalmist ascribes to himself, protests that his heart is pure and upright, and that he has constantly adhered to the ways of God. To the righteousness of his cause, the parallel section in Ps. xviii. 21 ss., cannot possibly be referred. And, finally, even the righteousness of the cause is not of itself suffi-

cient to constitute a foundation for the hope of deliverance, it is possible for the wicked also to have a righteous cause, without having on that score any claim to the Divine help. The righteousness of the cause can only be of importance, in so far as it arises out of the righteousness of the person; and hence the Psalmist, even if he did in the first instance assert the righteousness merely of his cause, would still, at the same time, have laid claim to righteousness of person. The legitimate removal of the difficulty presents itself as soon as we define more accurately the idea of the personal righteousness, which the Psalmist ascribes to himself: it is not perfect holiness—how far David was from laying claim to that, appears from such expressions as Ps. cxliii. 2, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no flesh living be justified,” Ps. xix. 13,—it is upright moral effort. If the main bent of the mind is towards the fulfilment of the Divine law, God graciously pardons many weaknesses; and such a man is termed righteous. Righteousness in this sense is as certainly a distinctive feature of the elect, an indispensable condition of Divine help, as that true religion has a thoroughly ethical character, and addresses to those who dream of being able to put God off with idle feelings, the solemn admonition, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” It is not less required in the New Testament, than it was in the Old. John, indeed, says in his First Ep. i. 8, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;” but he says also, ch. iii. 6, “Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not (leads no life of sin—sin being used there in the narrower sense, just as righteousness here); whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him;” and in ver. 9, “Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” That *here* the term, “righteousness,” can only refer to the general tenor of the life, may be inferred even from the contrast in vers. 1 and 3, with hypocrisy. To draw a more exact line of demarcation between the righteousness of endeavour and absolute sinlessness, could the less occur to the Psalmist’s mind, as the deep consciousness of human guilt, which was peculiar to the Old Testament, did not permit such an idea as the latter to present itself either to him or to his readers. As he here brings into view the one side, righteousness, because he was now concerned with it alone, so elsewhere he lays stress on the other

side, without ever dreaming that the one excluded the other. There are times also when the prayer, "Hear righteousness, O God," is for us also the only suitable one; and again other times, when the *juste judex ultionis, donum fac remissionis ante diem ultionis*, rushes with power from the heart. Besides, what the Berleb. Bible says is quite correct, "The soul is never in a state to desire that its righteousness may be heard, unless it have already lost all its own righteousness." The righteousness which the Psalmist here urges, always and only shoots forth from the soil of pardon of sin, which presupposes the renouncement of all one's own righteousness. Righteousness of life is the fruit of righteousness of faith, according to the Old Testament plan, as most clearly laid down in Ps. li.; and also according to that of the New Testament. Still, we must not here, against the plain letter, put the righteousness of faith in the room of righteousness of life. The question here is not one about justification, but one about help against enemies, and deliverance from distress, which can only be claimed on the ground of an already existing righteousness of life.

The majority of expositors consider the second petition as terminated with the words, "attend to my cry," and the words, "with lips without deceit," as belonging solely to the third. According to them, the ground is twofold on which the Psalmist rests his prayer; first, the righteousness of his cause (or of his person),—then his faith, which impelled him to seek help from God, and which God ought not to put to shame. They maintain that the first requisite could have existed without the latter. "It often happens," remarks Calvin, "that even profane men justly boast of having a good cause; yet, because they do not consider that God governs the world, they shut themselves up in their own consciences, and bear injuries more stubbornly and stedfastly, because they seek no consolation from faith in God, and supplication to Him." The Psalmist must then, it is thought, in the last clause, have united both elements together. But it is decisive against this view, that according to the whole tenor of the first part, it is impossible for any other element than righteousness to be brought out independently; the unity thereof would be broken, if we deny the reference of the petition, "attend to my cry," to that which follows. The *crying*, like the *prayer*, is in place here, only in so far as it proceeds from *lips without deceit*. That these words belong to both the last peti-

tious, is indicated also by the accentuation, which is opposed to the too close and exclusive connection with the third. Every one has lips of deceit who comes before God praying for, and claiming salvation, without being a righteous person. For, as it is certain that salvation is bestowed only on the ground of righteousness, that God only hears the righteous, so every prayer involves a declaration of righteousness, whether uttered in words or not. Whosoever prays without being a righteous person, is a hypocrite of the worst kind; not content with deceiving men thereby, he would also impose on the all-seeing God, imagining, in the blindness of his folly, that God looks only on his countenance, and not on his heart.

Ver. 2. *Let my right go forth from Thee, let Thine eyes behold uprightness.* The Fut. of the verb may be regarded as expressive either of the wish or of the hope. Both are much alike as to the sense. The emphasis, in any case, is upon the מִיֶּשֶׁרַי, and on the מִישְׁרִים. Only on the ground of his right and his integrity, does he either expect or desire God's help. The word, "my right" (Luther, falsely, "Speak Thou in my cause"), stands opposed to partial favouritism: it is not this the Psalmist desires, but only the salvation which God, the righteous One, has promised to righteousness; and because he desires only this, only what God must necessarily grant, and cannot refuse, without denying His own nature, and the expression thereof in His word, the prayer cannot possibly remain unheard, just as little as it could have been heard if it had not sprung from such a root, if the Divine help had been claimed as a reward of merely saying, Lord, Lord. In the second clause, the uprightness is that which is to be beheld, as, in ver. 1, the righteousness is that which is to be heard. Because, with a righteous judge, to recognise and to deliver uprightness are one and the same thing, it is said of God, in the language of emotion, that He does not see uprightness, when He allows it to be overthrown. We must reject the exposition of Hitzig and De Wette, who, taking מִישְׁרִים adverbially, render, "Thine eyes behold rightly." The word signifies, not correctness, but integrity, honesty; it is never used adverbially, not even in Ps. lvi. 1. The idea is foreign to the context; this is not the place to say that God is upright, but that the Psalmist is upright; uprightness is on the same footing as righteousness, as the lips without deceit, the right. The words, "His countenance beholds the upright," in Ps. xi. 7, are parallel.

Luther remarks: "So that we see, how everywhere zeal and hatred break forth against hypocrisy, which the saints avoid with as great a horror in themselves, as they bring accusations against it."

Ver. 3. The Psalmist had grounded his prayer for help, in the preceding context, on his righteousness. This indispensable condition of salvation actually existed in him; he did not merely feign righteousness before the eyes of short-sighted men; and therefore (woe to him who cannot do the same) he appeals to the judgment of the all-seeing God, who knows the purity of his heart, whose inmost recesses are open before Him. Luther: "He had prayed that the Lord would regard his righteousness; now he declares what sort of confidence he had to rest on, in begging this." *Thou provest my heart, Thou examinest it by night; Thou purgest me, Thou findest not; my thought oversteps not my mouth.* The Preterites of the verb mark the past reaching into the present. The Psalmist appeals to the result of trials already held: God is constantly putting men to the proof; and there is no reason for rendering, with some, "when Thou provest, etc., Thou findest not;" or, with others, to put a demand in the place of a simple declaration. The night is named as the time when good and evil thoughts in the soul of man spring up in greatest force, because he is then free from outward business and influences; and having nothing to scatter them, and not being restrained by any regard to, or fear of others, they come forth with the greatest force. That the Psalm was an evening song, is rendered probable by this allusion alone; comp. on ver. 15. In the words, "Thou purgest or purifiest me," there is an allusion to the purifying of gold and silver. Pure gold and silver is what stands the test, and is found free from dross. Dereser expounds falsely: "Thou purgest and purifiest me through tribulations from defects." There is nothing here of a purifying through tribulation, though it is often referred to elsewhere. God's proving is only represented under the image of purifying, so far as in both alike a sure result is obtained in regard to the purity or impurity of the object; comp. Prov. xvii. 3. *Thou findest not*—namely, anything that would show the affirmation I made of my righteousness to be untrue, or prove me to be a hypocrite; one who presents a fair exterior, but within is full of ravening and unrighteousness. It is obvious, that the purity and righteousness of heart, which the Psalmist here lays claim to, is not opposed to the testimony, that the

righteous falls seven times a day. This is clear, especially from the last words, which show that the Psalmist only asserts his freedom from *hypocrisy*, and not from *frailty*. We take זמתי as inf. from זמם. The fem. form of the inf. in ת, according to this form of verbs in עע, occurs in Ps. lxxvii. 9; Ezek. xxxvi. 3. It is to be explained from the affinity between verbs עע and לה. The זמתי is accus., the פִּי nominative. That the common sequence of the words is departed from, the object preceding the subject, arises from the fact, that it was not the mouth, but the thought, the state of feeling, which was the object of the Divine search; comp. the words, "Thou provest my *heart*." From the proving of his internal disposition, the result is derived, that the Psalmist's mouth had not gone beyond it, in that, coming before God, he gave himself out as a righteous person. Luther, though he errs in his translation, yet explains quite correctly in his comment.: "The mouth overpasses the thoughts when it utters more, and otherwise, than the heart thinks, so that the mouth and heart do not correspond with each other." We must reject the other expositions. Gesenius takes זמתי as the plural of זמה, which must be of like import with זמה, and explains, "my thoughts overstep not my mouth." But we conceive that this contains three philological difficulties—זמה never occurs elsewhere, the singular suffix in זמתי would stand in the room of the plural זמתי, the verb in the sing. masc. would be joined to a noun in the plural fem.—and the meaning, purchased at so dear a rate, is after all not suitable. The question is not, whether the Psalmist thinks otherwise than he speaks, but whether he speaks otherwise than he thinks,—nor whether his feeling agrees with his words, but whether his words agree with his feeling—comp. the expression, "not with deceitful lips," in ver. 1. He appears before God asserting his righteousness; and the proving of his heart shows that his mouth had spoken the truth. Others take זמתי as the first person Preterite. So Luther: "I have purposed to myself, that my mouth shall not transgress." But this exposition is contrary to the accents, according to which the word has the tone upon the last syllable; and the sense, besides, is a quite unsuitable one; "the transgressing of the mouth," is out of place here. Ewald, De Wette, and Koester, connect זמתי with what precedes: "Thou dost not find me meditating evil, my mouth transgresses not." But the external authority of the accents, the Masorah, and the old

translations, are all against it: the expression, "my meditation," for, "that I meditate evil," is hard. עבר cannot, without some further explanation, signify "to transgress," and the proving of the *heart* has nothing to do with the transgressions of the *mouth*. According to the connection, the only thing here in question is, whether the utterances of the mouth are confirmed by the condition of the heart. That the *heart*, with its thoughts and inclinations, should here be represented as the proper seat of righteousness, and that the hope of salvation should be considered well-grounded only where the heart did not need to shun the sharpest Divine search, is characteristic as to the moral platform of the Old Testament, which, even in its original legal enjoinders, did not limit its claims to word and deed, but extended them to the whole sphere of thoughts and inclinations.

Ver. 4. *As for the doing of man: by the word of Thy lips I observe the ways of the transgressor.* The Psalmist protests that he has constantly kept far away from the paths of transgressors, while pointing at the same time to that which the treading of these paths at once suggested, namely, the common corrupt bent of the hearts of men, and to the word of God, which he carefully followed, as a guide. ל is not rarely used, especially at the beginning of sentences, in the signification of, "in reference to," "in respect of," "as regards;" see Gesen. *Thes.* p. 732. פִּעֻלוֹת stands in its common meaning, *doing, manner of acting*: 2 Chron. xv. 7; Jer. xxxi. 16; Ps. xlviii. 5. The doing of man is the course of action that is natural to man, in whom the imagination of the heart is only evil from his youth, and that continually (Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21), who has been born in guilt, and conceived by his mother in iniquity (Ps. li. 5). It is one of the strongest testimonies for the natural corruption of man, that a corrupt line of action, a walking in the ways of the transgressor, is here spoken of simply as the doing of man. There is a parallel passage in 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, where David says to Saul, "Wherefore hearest thou men's words?" and in Hos. vi. 7, "And they as men transgress the covenant" (Manger: more humano levitatis; Hitzig's interpretation, "like Adam," deserves rejection simply on the ground that Adam did not transgress the covenant); also in Job xxxi. 33, where hypocrisy is described without further explanation as natural to man, "If I covered my transgressions as man, hiding mine iniquity in my bosom;" and in Job xxiii. 12, where the law of man, the course

of life which his natural inclination leads him to take, is described as directly opposed to the law of God, "More than *my* law I have respected the words of His mouth." We should, then, entirely mistake if, by the doing of man, we were to understand merely the power of evil example, which would also be opposed to the parallel passages now adduced, and likewise against the quite analogous declaration in Ps. xviii. 23, "And I kept myself from *mine* iniquity." The Psalmist does not place himself in contrast to men, but comprehends himself amongst them. That evil-doing is the doing of man, renders it exceedingly difficult to keep far from the paths of the transgressor, which one has not first to be at pains to discover, but into which one is apt to slip quite naturally and imperceptibly. Whosoever would shun them, must not follow his natural disposition, but must deny it. Many expound, "in the doing of men;" but this signification of the *ל* is doubtful (comp. Gesen. *Thes.* p. 733), and the sense is rendered tame by such an exposition, as the Psalmist would then except himself from the number of men. The expression, "in the word of Thy lips," points to the authority which the Psalmist followed in shunning the ways of the violent, to which natural inclination drew him, or to that from which he received an impulse in the better direction. *ב* denotes the relation of effect to cause: "in the word" = "at the word." *ברבר* is used precisely in the same way in Numb. xxxi. 16, "These taught the children of Israel, at the word of Balaam, unfaithfulness to the Lord,"—the word of Balaam is the cause, in which the effect abides, that from which the impulse proceeds, the authority—1 Chron. xxi. 19, "at the word of Gad;" comp. *במצות דוד*, "at the command of David," on the *ground* of his command, in 2 Chron. xxix. 25. The word of God is the only light on the otherwise dark way of man; from it alone can the good impulse proceed, through which we keep ourselves unspotted from the world within and without us—withstand the corrupt inclinations of nature, and the spirit of the world—swim against the stream which, with gigantic and resistless force, carries everything along with it. The contrast here implied between men's natural inclination and the word of God, lies also at the basis of the Decalogue. To it is due the negative form which predominates in the ten commandments. Everywhere we are forced to add in thought: "where-to thy corrupt heart is prone," just as in a command in the



positive form the word, "remember," points to the tendency toward forgetfulness.

אני is used emphatically in opposition to the enemies, the wicked, who, according to ver. 11, direct their eyes to turn aside in the land. שמר, "to observe," in connection with the way, commonly with the design of keeping it, comp. Ps. xviii. 21; Job xxiii. 11; only here with the design of shunning it. The Psalmist opposes his own observation of the way of the transgressor, which was under the guidance of the word of God, to the foolish eagerness with which the world blindly enters them. There is probably a witty allusion to this current mode of expression, "I have, observing the ways of God, in order to keep myself in them, at the same time observed the ways of the transgressor, in order to shun them"—a reference which becomes still more plain, as soon as we set in thought a dash after שמרה. The verb פרץ, "to break through," is used in Hos. iv. 2, of the breaking through of all the limits of good and right; and derived from it, the term פריץ signifies *the transgressor*. Luther's translation, "I keep myself in the word of Thy lips from the work of man on the path of the murderer," gives, on the whole, the true sense, only that for *transgressor*, the far too special and gross name of *murderer* is substituted.

Ver. 5. *My steps hold fast by Thy paths, my feet slide not.* The paths of God, which the Psalmist held fast by, are contrasted with the ways of the transgressor, which he shunned. The verse contains still, like the preceding one, a protestation of the Psalmist's righteousness, and forms a suitable conclusion to the whole section, vers. 1-5, which is entirely taken up therewith. Exactly parallel is Job xxiii. 11, "My foot holdeth fast, אחזה, His step; His way have I kept and not declined." "To the protestation of his innocence," remarks De Wette, "the Psalmist now adds a prayer for the maintenance thereof, that moral power might be given him." But the sense which this exposition affords, is so unsuitable to the context, that any other might be held equally valid; we should then have an isolated thought, a genuine ejaculation before us. The Psalm has nothing at all to do with a prayer for moral support. The object of prayer in it is merely salvation from enemies, grounded upon his own righteousness already existing, and the wickedness of his enemies. Then, the exposition is also objectionable in a philological point of view. The force of the inf. absol.,

bringing out the simple action, is always more carefully defined by the context. But this points here decidedly to the Preterite, that goes before, and follows in the parallelism. *הִמָּךְ*, "to seize, take hold," never signifies, with *בִּ*, "to maintain," but always *to take hold of, to hold to, to keep fast by*; comp. Ps. lxiii. 8, where the idea of holding fast is required by the parallelism, "My soul cleaveth to Thee, Thy right hand holdeth me fast:" Ps. xli. 12; Ex. xvii. 12; Isa. xlii. 1.

Ver. 6. The prayer of the Psalmist, which had only been indicated before, comes out in full force now, that the right foundation has been laid in his righteousness. It receives afterwards a second foundation, that of the wickedness of the enemies, which constitutes a call to God for vengeance. *I call upon Thee, for Thou God hearest me: incline Thine ear to me, hear my speech.* The *הִשְׁמָעֵנִי* is either, "Thou wilt hear me," or, "Thou art accustomed to hear me." The latter view is supported by the corresponding words in the next verse, "Thou deliverer of those," etc. Luther: "It comprehends both in itself, the past as well as the future. The meaning of it appears to be this,—I have confidence, that my words shall not be in vain, since I know how, according to Thy grace, Thou art wont to hear me. Thus the compassion of God is celebrated, which consists in His hearing when we cry. This moves us, and is the cause why we can presume to call." According to the exposition, "Thou wilt hear me," the Psalmist would refer to his righteousness, as set forth in the preceding context. To this, at all events, points the *אֲנִי*, "I," the righteous person.

Ver. 7. *Single out Thy loving-kindness, Thou deliverer of the confiding from the revolters, by Thy right hand.* Upon *הַפְּלֵה* to single out, separate, not, "to make wonderful," comp. on Ps. iv. 3. The tokens of favour which the Psalmist desires, must be distinguished from the common ones. This indicates the greatness of the danger. De Wette thinks, that this almost presumptuous-looking prayer, like the similar one following, should be ascribed to the spirit of Hebraism, which was not yet penetrated by the resignation of Christianity. But if this prayer be presumptuous, so also is the prayer of the Canaanitish woman, who also supplicated: "Single out Thy mercies, have compassion on me, O Lord, for my daughter is tormented;" and yet the Lord does not appear to have regarded it so, otherwise He would not have replied to her: "O woman, great is

thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." If the Stoic resignation of De Wette were Christian, then Christ's wonder-working activity would be unchristian, and the prayer also for our daily bread, in the Lord's Prayer, must be erased. Were a doctrine so unhuman Christian, then the Old Testament, which places the whole of human existence in a relation to God, would stand higher than the New. The words, "Thou deliverer of those," etc., contain the ground of the Psalmist's hope of being heard. Calvin: "As often as we draw near to God, we ought first to bear in mind that we are not to be afraid of God's being ready to help us, because He is not in vain called the deliverer of those who put their trust in Him." The *חֹסֶה* is used in Prov. xiv. 32 absolutely, as here, without any designation of what the confidence is placed on. In the case of those who revolt or rise, the object of resistance must be the same as in the case of those who confide, the less so, as, in the latter case, the person on whom the confidence is placed is not named. The former, therefore, could only be revolvers against God. Luther: "By this he seeks to bring his enemies into great hatred, as persons whose madness swelled against God." *בְּיָמֶיךָ* is to be coupled with *מְרִשֵּׁי*, "Thou who deliverest by Thy right hand;" it points to the plenitude of power with which God is provided for the defence of His people. That we must not expound: "from those who rebel against Thy right hand," as Luther, or: "who confide in Thy right hand, from those who set themselves against it," appears by a comparison with Ps. xvi. 11, and ver. 14 here, and by what was already remarked by Venema: "The pious are more properly said to be preserved by the right hand of God, than enemies attacking the pious, to rise up against it." Luther: "See how quickly emotion makes an excellent orator. He recommends to God his cause in the most favourable light, he seeks to put himself on good terms with Him, he makes complaint against his adversaries, he tries to have these made hateful, and this he does in very few and choice words. But he does so, not as if they were necessary in order to prevail on God, but for the sake of faith. For the more vigorous and fervent our faith is, the more always does God work through it."

Ver. 8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye, in the shadow of Thy wings hide me.* That reference is made in the first clause to Deut. xxxii. 10, "He kept him (Israel) as the apple of His eye,"

is the more probable, as there the similitude of the eagle caring for her young ones immediately follows. On עַן, not "little man," but "the male," "the masculine," see my work, Balaam, p. 98. בַּת עַן, prop. "the daughter of the eye." Son and daughter, in the Semitic dialects, are applied to what belongs to another thing, or is dependent on it; for example, arrows are named, in Lam. iii. 13, "sons of the quiver." Luther: "In this verse he employs many words to say one and the same thing; since he magnifies the danger, and, by expressing his great anxiety strongly, gives us, as it were, to understand that he cannot be made secure enough against the snares of the wicked. Therefore in these words there is embodied the emotion of a person oppressed with fear, and who flees from a very great danger; such as we observe in little children, who run to the lap of their parents, and hang around their neck, when they are alarmed at danger." The figure in the second member is found enlarged in Matt. xxiii. 37, probably in allusion to this passage.

Ver. 9. *From the wicked, who disturb me, mine enemies, who against the soul compass me about.* Many interpreters take עָרַד in the Arabic sense of *seizing hold*; but the Hebrew one is quite suitable, if it only be remembered that the Psalmist represents himself under the image of a city destroyed by enemies, or of a land laid waste. שָׁרַד is also used in Judg. v. 27, of a slain man. בְּנֶפֶשׁ, prop. "in soul," in matters of life, so that it is equivalent to life. Many expound it, after the example of Aben-ezra, by, "in desire." But in doing so, they overlook the relation in which the words, "deliver my soul," stand to the בְּנֶפֶשׁ here. "They think to destroy my soul," in Ps. xl. 14, is parallel.

Ver. 10. *Their fat they close up, with their mouth they speak proudly.* How the expression, "their fat they close up," is to be understood—that it is equivalent to "they have closed it upon one another, wholly covered themselves in fat," appears from Judg. iii. 22, "the fat closed upon the blade." The fat here, however, is not corporeal, but spiritual; it denotes the spiritual deadness, and hardening, by which their whole mind was overlaid. In this sense fat is very often used. So, first, in the ground-passage, Deut. xxxii. 15, "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked; thou didst wax fat, thou didst grow thick, thou art covered;" where many quite erroneously think of an external condition, a state of prosperity granted by God,—a view which leaves the sudden address and the threefold repetition altogether

unexplained. The reference is rather to becoming fat internally, which so easily results from prosperity, and from the undisturbed enjoyment of the Divine gifts. Then Job xv. 27, "Because he covered his face with his fatness, and made collops of fat upon his flanks;" where the fat, from the connection, can only be understood morally—for the verse contains the ground of a proud revolt against God—q. d. he resembles such an one spiritually who covers his bodily face, etc., he is spiritually as devoid of feeling, as that person is corporeally; comp. Ps. cxix. 70, where the abbreviated comparison comes out in a complete form, "Their heart is as fat as grease." Finally, Ps. lxxiii. 7, "Their eyes stand out with fatness." Modern expositors, for the most part, suppose that the חֶלֶב, from the contrast with the mouth, must necessarily mean the *heart*. Rosenmüller, departing from the Hebrew signification of that word, attributes to it, from the Arabic, the import of *heart*. Others leave to it its common and alone certain signification, but maintain that the words, "your fat is, etc.," are equivalent to "your fat, unfeeling heart." So Ewald: "While from hardness they have closed their unfeeling heart against compassion, their haughty mouth opens itself so much the wider for reproach." But there is no ground for such an interpretation, as, according to our view also, full justice is done to the contrast with the mouth; the closing in of the fat, the covering itself in fat, indirectly describes a state of heart and mind, carnal-mindedness. And, on the other hand, we can appeal to the parallel passages, which everywhere speak, not of unfeeling hardness toward brethren, but of carnal-mindedness in general; also to the fact, that the expression, "to close the heart," as a description of unfeeling hardness, is found nowhere else in the Old Testament; and, finally, to the consideration that the enclosing of the heart in this connection is too tame. פִּימוּ, like אֲשֶׁרנו in ver. 11, and חֶרֶבךָ in ver. 13, the accusative, "after their mouth," "with their mouth." The predilection for this sort of accus. is one of the peculiarities of our Psalm.

Ver. 11. *After our steps they compass me about now; they direct their eyes, to turn aside in the land.* אֲשֶׁרנו, "after our steps," "whithersoever we turn ourselves:" everywhere our enemies pursue us, and cut off from us all escape, take from us every hope of deliverance. To take the word, with some, as nom. absol., does not accord with the predilection just noticed, which the Psalmist

shows for this sort of accusative. For the more difficult reading of the text, סִבְבוּנִי, explicable on the ground that the speaker is the *righteous* person, so that he can speak in the sing. of himself, not less than in the plural (comp. the sing. in reference to enemies in ver. 12), the Masorites have put סִבְבוּנוּ, "they have compassed *us* about," corresponding to the suffix in אֲשֵׁרֵנוּ. The Psalmist has, without doubt, intentionally conjoined thus closely the sing. and the plural, on purpose to show that behind the ideal unity there was concealed a multiplicity. The *now* points to the fact, that the greatest danger had arrived, and consequently, also, the time for God to help. לָנֶטַח בָּאָרֶץ is commonly explained, "in order to cast down to the earth, or in the land." This mode of explanation does not allow us to supply, with De Wette, "*me or us*;" but we must consider, as the object thrown down, whatever is high or stands erect. Calvin: "The godless, as if they must fall, when the world stands, would fain see the whole human race destroyed; and hence they apply themselves with vigour to throw everything to the ground." But it is against this exposition, that though נָטָה may properly enough be taken in the sense of "to bend or bow;" comp. lxii. 3, "a bowing wall," yet, in the present connection, that is too tame; not so, however, "to beat down," "to throw to the ground." The right exposition is seen on a comparison with ver. 5. Whilst the righteous directs his eye to the object of holding fast the ways of the Lord, *they* are equally zealous and bent on turning aside from God's ways, and hence are as much the objects of God's punishing, as the others of His saving, energy. נָטָה is constantly employed to designate the turning aside from God, from His ways and His laws; to set up which as the task of life, and to sin boldly and with a high hand, is a mark of the most thorough abandonment. Comp., for example, Job xxxi. 7, "If my foot hath turned out of the way;" 1 Kings xi. 9, "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel." Ps. cxix. 51, 157. נָטָה, "to turn aside," as here, is used absolutely for, "to turn out of the way," in Jer. xiv. 8. On בָּאָרֶץ, not, "upon earth," but, "in the land," "in the land of the Lord," compare Ps. xvi. 3.

Ver. 12. *He is like a lion greedy to tear in pieces, and a young lion, lying in covert.* Luther: "But the pride and haughtiness of Moab is greater than his strength. He undertakes more than he can execute." The sing. suffix is here also to be explained

from the circumstance, that the whole host of wicked ones is represented in one person.

Ver. 13. *Arise, O Lord, surprise his face, cast him down, deliver my soul from the wicked through Thy sword.* The "face" is named, because it threatened destruction to the Psalmist: comp. the פָּנַי in ver. 3. קָרַם, "to anticipate," then, "to surprise," is used, as here, in Ps. xciv. 2, with חֶרֶב, "as to Thy sword," through Thy sword. Several Jewish expositors interpret, "from the ungodly, who is Thy sword;" in the following verse also, where Luther adopts the same view, they render, "from the men, who are Thy hand;" overlooking, however, the Psalmist's marked predilection for the accusative, and besides, disregarding the connection, which does not permit such a mode of considering enemies as that found in Isa. x. 5, where Assyria is called the rod of Divine wrath. This trait would have broken the strength of the Psalmist's prayer, which is founded on his own righteousness and the enemies' wickedness.

Ver. 14. *From the men through Thy hand, O Lord, from the men of continuance, whose portion in life, and whose body Thou fillest with Thy treasures; they have sons in plenty, and leave their affluence to their children.* The Psalmist believes that he can the more confidently present the prayer uttered in the preceding context, and hope with the greater certainty for its fulfilment, since it does not consist with God's nature and word, that those who, in alienation from God, despise Him, and lift themselves proudly up against Him, should be richly endowed by Him with goods, and become partakers of the blessing which is promised to the righteous. This contrast between the reality and the idea, must God, as certainly as He is God, remove by His judgment; He must abolish the abnormity which is so fitted to strengthen the wicked in his wickedness, and to cause the pious to fail in his piety, and which can only be regarded as a temporary and passing state of things. Preparation is made for the contrast which is here unfolded between the reality and the idea, by קִמָּה, "stand up, arise," in the preceding verse, which presupposes the existence of such a contrast. The length of the verse shows, that the theme is one in which the Psalmist is peculiarly interested. The repetition of מִמֶּת is emphatical, as was justly remarked by Calvin. מִמֶּלֶךְ is in the main correctly expounded by Calvin, "Qui sunt a

seculo." By the preposition, says he, David expresses, that they had not raised themselves as of yesterday, but that their prosperity had already continued for a long series of years, which, however, ought to have vanished in a moment. So also Venema, according to whom the מַחֲלֵךְ כְּהַלֵּךְ are, "florente et durante in fortuna constituti." That the primary signification of חַלֵּךְ is that of *continuance*, appears from the Arabic. Dscheuhari in Scheid. in cant. Hisk. p. 51, says: "חַלֵּךְ denotat existentie continuationem; de homine dicitur חַלֵּךְ quando persistit et viget." From this primary signification, which here obtains, flow in Heb. the two derived ones of life and the world. Life is named continuance, as what usually belongs to existence; comp. Job xi. 17; Ps. lxxxix. 47, xxxix. 5, in which two latter passages allusion is made to the primary import; in the last: חַלֵּי, my life, which has its name from continuance, is as nothing before Thee.

The world bears the name of *continuance*, as the general, abiding, while individual parts are transitory. In Arabic, "chytropodes, rupes et saxa dicuntur חַלֵּךְ, quia semper manent, deleantur licet domuum, etc. vestigia," Dscheuh. by Scheid. So in Ps. xlix. 1, חַלֵּךְ is used of the world. Hezekiah alludes to the יֹשְׁבֵי חַלֵּךְ there, the inhabitants of continuance, when in Isa. xxxviii. 11, he calls the dwellers in Sheol יֹשְׁבֵי חַלֵּךְ, "inhabitants of ceasing;" an allusion which presupposes that חַלֵּךְ, even when used of the world, retains its common signification. Parallel to the expression here, "of continuance," is that in Ps. x. 5, "His ways are strong at all times."—Most modern expositors, after the example of Luther, render, "of the people of this world," i.e., De Wette remarks, whose whole striving terminates with this temporal, finite world, and does not pass over into eternity; חַלֵּךְ marks the temporal, perishing, sensible, as opposed to what is eternal, above sense. But a false meaning is forced by this exposition upon the word. It signifies neither, as Gesenius maintains, *vita eaque cito præterlabens, fluxa et caduca*—for in Ps. lxxxix. 47, xxxix. 5, the idea of fleetness and transitoriness, which is not suitable in Job xi. 17, is not contained in the word itself, but in the connection—nor *hic mundus, ejus res fluxæ et caducæ sunt*. In order to obtain this signification, we must violently tear the Heb. חַלֵּךְ from the Arabic. Further, a contrast between the temporal and the eternal, so sharply expressed, and so briefly indicated, cannot



be expected in the Psalms. It will not do to compare the οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, of the New Testament, as the contrast here rests upon a clear recognition of a future state of being. In such a contrast, also, we should have expected the article. Finally, what follows the words, "whose part in life," cannot possibly be understood otherwise than of the prosperous condition of the ungodly. According to this, however, the beginning of the verse must refer, not to the disposition, but to the course of the wicked. The verse is miserably torn asunder if this reference is overlooked.

חלקם בחיים is sometimes rendered, "who have their firm and secure portion of life;" but better, "whose part is in life," so that life is the sphere in which they obtain their part, their lot: comp. חלק in this signification for ex. in Job xx. 29, "This is the portion of the wicked man from God," xxvii. 13; xxxi. 2, 3, "For what is the portion of God from above? and what is the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is not misfortune to the wicked, and misery to the evil-doers?" which last passage especially serves to throw light on the one before us, whose complaint it answers. *Life* stands here in an emphatic sense for prosperous life, because a disastrous one is rather to be accounted a death: their part is that they live and prosper. Calvin: "I understand these words to mean, that they are free from all discomfort, and riot in joy, and therefore are quite exempt from the general lot, as inversely is said of the miserable man, that his part is in death." Expositors generally interpret it, "who are of an earthly disposition." "Inheritance," according to De Wette, "is equivalent to the highest good or aim; life is opposed to eternity after death." But as both the preceding and the subsequent context refers to the lot of the wicked, this word cannot possibly denote their disposition; and that חיים by itself can denote the earthly life as opposed to the eternal, is destitute of all proof. Such a contrast of necessity requires a more pointed description.—צפון, for which the Masorites, without any necessity, would substitute צפון, the part. pas.; properly, "thy concealed." Calvin: "The concealed goods of God here mean rare and peculiar dainties, since God often endows the wicked, not merely with all the common comforts of life, but also with thoroughly special ones. It is a strong temptation, when a man measures God's favour by earthly prosperity. But we must remember, that in his

complaint, the pious man seeks alleviation; he does not murmur against God, so that we may also learn to direct our sighs toward heaven." The state of things in which the wicked, who lie under the Divine anger, are replenished by Him with goods and gifts, considered as a permanent one, would be the perverse world; but on that very account it cannot possibly be a permanent state.—*יִלְבְּעוּ בָנִים* is rendered by Luther: Who have children the fulness; and he remarks: "This refers not merely to the great number of children, but rather to their state and condition;" quite correctly, since it is only strong and healthful children that can be considered as a token of prosperity. But according to the current exposition, *בָּנִים* is to be taken as the nominative, not as the accus., "full are their children." De Wette: "They hunger not, like the children of the poor, who cry for bread." The first construction is the only right one. It is supported by the want of the suffix, and the analogy of the words, "I shall be *satisfied* with Thy likeness." It is further supported by the parallel passages, in which a blooming host of children is spoken of as a reward for the fear of God; comp. Ps. cxxvii. 3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is His reward;" Ps. cxxviii. 3, 4, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house," etc. "Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." Or complaint is made, that this blessing, which properly belongs only to the righteous, is lavished on the ungodly; comp. Job xxi. 11, "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance," magna fecunditate emittunt (Michaelis), in contrast to the pious Job, who lost all his children.—The expression, "they leave their superfluity to their children," can only refer to the outward appearance. For God is called upon to interpose against the parents themselves, and bring on their ruin. They will not be able to leave their overflowing abundance to their children, notwithstanding the seemingly well-grounded prosperity of their house, notwithstanding their confident thoughts, and the actual state of affairs, which decidedly favours them; for God has threatened the ungodly in His word, that He will punish their sins in themselves and in their children, even to the third and the fourth generation. Those words give a fearful emphasis to the prayer of the Psalmist: "Arise, O Lord."

Ver. 15. The prayer uttered in the preceding verses con-

tains even within itself the germ of hope and confidence, in consequence of the foundation on which it stands, and of the opposition between the contrast, in the reality, considered as permanent, and God's word and nature. That germ comes here into development. "The Psalmist raises himself on the wings of faith to a serene repose, in which he sees everything in order. He mocks the proud boasting of the enemy; and although, as it seemed, quite cast off by God, he still promises himself the enjoyment ere long of his confiding look." *I shall behold Thy face in righteousness, satisfy myself when I awake with Thy form.* with emphasis, "*I*," very different from my enemies, for whom the Lord is preparing destruction. Righteousness is here, according to the common view, named as the ground upon which the Psalmist rests his hope of seeing the face of God. As matters then stood, his righteousness appeared to be of no avail; God seemed to make nothing of it. But as certain as that God is righteous, such a state of things cannot last, the Psalmist's righteousness must still bear its proper fruit. We may also expound, "as a righteous or justified person;" and it is in favour of this latter exposition, that according to the former, we should have expected the suffix. Now the Psalmist was represented by his position and experiences as an unrighteous person. But he trusts the righteous God will represent him as the person he really is, will justify him by facts; so that righteousness is here considered as the gift of God. The words, *I shall behold Thy face*, refer to ver. 2, where the Psalmist wishes that his right might come forth from God's presence, that His eyes might behold uprightness. This wish he sees here fulfilled. For, to behold God's face, presupposes that God's face is turned towards him, that God's eye looks on him and his uprightness. Just as it is said of God, that He hides His countenance, when He withdraws His favour and help, so is He said to turn towards us His countenance, when He shows Himself gracious,—comp. Ps. xi. 7, "His countenance beholds the upright." To see God, or God's face, therefore, is nothing else than to enjoy the Divine favour, to experience the friendship of God, to be assured of His love, and through it to obtain deliverance from the hands of our enemies. So unquestionably is the seeing of God used in the prayer of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 11, "I said, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living." Precisely similar also is Ps. xvi. 11, where

the Psalmist expects fulness of joy in the presence of the Lord; so that the Lord sees him, and he the Lord. The expression, "when I awake"—inasmuch as the figurative view, already adopted by Calvin, according to which a person freed from suffering is represented as one awaking, and the rendering, "as often as I awake," every morning, are arbitrary—obliges us to suppose, that our Psalm contains an evening prayer of the Psalmist, or was designed by him to be an evening prayer for the faithful. In the stillness of night, the righteous man on his bed complains to the Lord of his distress, and receives from Him inward consolation and the assurance of His help. Calmed, he now sleeps, certain that on his awaking the Lord will grant him the promised aid. That the custom of prayer at even, springing from the very nature of the case, was then also prevalent with the pious, is evident from Ps. iii. 5, iv. 8,—passages which are plainly opposed to every explanation of the expression, "when I awake," other than the one just given; the existence also of the custom of morning prayer distinctly appears from Ps. v. 3.—*הַמִּנָּח* always signifies *form*. The Psalmist refers here to Numb. xii. 8, where God, to indicate the confidential relation of Moses to Him, says, "With him I speak mouth to mouth, and face to face, not in dark speeches, and *the form of the Lord he beholds*." A like confidential relation to the Lord is here meant, a like visible (namely, by the eye of faith) and felt nearness to Him; the *form* in opposition to *image* and *shadow*; the Psalmist means God to take, as it were, flesh and blood, to meet him in the most concrete, living manner. The Psalmist consoles himself justly therewith, regarding what happened to Moses as a real prophecy for all righteous persons. This hope of the righteous, of satisfying themselves with the form of the Lord, grows out of the same feeling of need, which was met by the appearances of God under a corporeal veil in the time of the fathers, and which had its highest satisfaction in the incarnation of the Word. There is so strong a craving in the human heart for a *near, human* God, that, anticipating the incarnation of God, it figuratively attributes corporeity to Him, lends to Him *form*, that it might be able to love Him very intimately, and to derive full comfort from Him. The received exposition of this Psalm we cannot set forth better than in the words of Luther, with whose translation ours agrees, only that he improperly connects *הַמִּנָּח* with *בִּהְיִי*: "when I awake

after Thine image." "He sets these words over against what he had said of the ungodly. These strive only after earthly things, are full of children, and place their portion in this life: to me, however, this life is contemptible; I hasten toward the future, where I shall behold, not in riches, but in righteousness, not these earthly things, but Thy face itself. I shall also not be satisfied with children of flesh, but when I shall awake in Thine image." In recent times this exposition has gained much currency by having been espoused even by De Wette. Many thought, that a reference to a blessed immortality must surely be well grounded, which was admitted even by so great a sceptic. Already, however, did Calvin designate this exposition as one not supported by the text, as *subtle*. It has nothing, indeed, on its side. The supposition, that a striving after the eternal, after eternal blessedness, is here spoken of, and that this appears from the contrast to the striving of the ungodly after temporal goods, mentioned in the preceding verse, rests simply and exclusively upon a false exposition of that verse. How it can be maintained, that the seeing of the Lord's face, and being satisfied with His form, must necessarily be understood of the seeing of God in the life to come, one cannot easily see. There cannot be a corporeal vision even in that life; even on that view, the satisfaction with the *form* of God must be figuratively understood. The seeing of God in the present, and the seeing of Him in the future life, are different only in degree, not in kind. This is most manifest from the declaration of our Lord, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" the promise in which, as in all others, is to be referred not less to this life, than to the future one. But what thoroughly refutes this exposition, is the circumstance that, according to it, not merely would there be expressed here a knowledge of eternal life more clear and confident than we could expect to find in a Psalm of David, but especially that the Psalmist would be declaring his entire resignation in regard to earthly things, wholly abandoning them to the wicked, and would express hope only in regard to what is heavenly. The rest of the Psalm stands in direct opposition to this rationalistic, rather than Christian sort of resignation; for a strong and healthy faith in regard to a future recompense, always rests on the foundation of a present retribution. Besides, in ver. 13, we find the Psalmist calling upon the Lord to deliver his soul from the ungodly by

His sword, and in ver. 14, making complaint of the temporal prosperity of the wicked.

### PSALM XVIII.

Full of thankfulness, David praises the Lord for having heard his prayer, and delivered him out of great danger, vers. 1-3. He delineates in vers. 4-19 the first part of his dangers and deliverances, which are particularly mentioned in the superscription, by a variety of elevated figures. He affirms, in vers. 20-27, that he had received the Lord's assistance only in consequence of the righteousness of his endeavours, and his devotedness. The deliverance from Saul had been referred back to this source; and now the representation of the second part of the Divine goodness, in vers. 28-45, namely, of the assistance which God had in part already given him against foreign enemies, the opponents of his kingdom, and which He was still to give by means of His promise, both to David personally and to his posterity, starts from the same point. The conclusion in vers. 46-50, consists of praise to God for the whole of His wonderful deeds.

We have thus five parts: the introduction, at the end of which, in ver. 3, the theme is announced, "according to His glory I call upon the Lord, and am delivered from mine enemies; the conclusion, a twofold representation of the wonderful deeds of God; in the middle, a representation of the subjective conditions on which the Lord imparts His aid, connected alike with what is behind and what is before.

That we have here an artistically composed whole, is obvious from this view of the subject and the train of thought. No traces of a strophe-arrangement are discoverable. We cannot overlook, however, the respect had to the number *three*, pointing to the Mosaic blessing, which in the Psalmist had met with so remarkable a fulfilment. In the superscription, the name Jehovah is thrice used; and thrice also in the introduction, which consists too of three verses. The names of God in ver. 2, in which the Psalmist has concentrated the entire fulness of the Divine grace, fall into three divisions. The first and the third of these divisions contain three names, whilst that in the middle, only one. The whole number of names is seven; so that along-

side of the number of the blessing, occurring five times, goes the number of the covenant. As in the introduction we meet the number three, so also in the beginning of the conclusion. It can hardly be accidental also, that the whole is made up of fifty verses, five decades, in correspondence with the five verses of the conclusion.

The strongest scepticism has not ventured to deny here the Davidic authorship. With the solitary exception of Olshausen, in the "Emendations," it is universally recognised. Ewald urges in support of it, that here there are expressed, with the greatest clearness, David's nature, his views, and his lofty consciousness, and his experiences, so peculiar in their kind. That the Psalmist was a king, is quite manifest from ver. 50, as also from ver. 43. The same confidence in the blessing of God, in respect even to his latest posterity, discovers itself in the last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. The separate words have quite the Davidic hue. The recurrence in the Books of Samuel is also to be regarded as an external ground, and of the greater importance, as all the other songs which these books contain, as of David, are certainly his genuine productions. Hitzig remarks, "The author is a warrior, whom the armies of his enemies had often threatened with death, ver. 29. But Jehovah had delivered him from them all, because of his piety, withdrawn him from their power, and enabled him finally to subdue them. He not only brought him forth unscathed from domestic wars, and set him upon the throne of Israel, but subjected to him also, far and wide, the heathen nations.

One of the most important indications of the hand of David, is to be found in the relation, to be investigated afterwards, in which ver. 28 ff. stand to the promise in 2 Sam. vii. Another also will be pointed out in the course of our exposition.

In regard to the situation, we are told in the superscription, that David sung this Psalm after the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies. The Psalm is thus designated as not having arisen from some special occasion, but as a general thanksgiving for all the grace and the assistance which he had received from God all his life long, as a combination of the thanks which David had uttered from time to time on particular occasions, as a great halleluiah with which he retired from the theatre of life. In the Books of Samuel this Psalm is expressly connected with the end of David's life, immediately before his

“last words,” which are presently after given in ch. xxiii. With this account the matter of the Psalm entirely agrees. In it the Psalmist thanks God, not for any single deliverance, but has throughout before his eyes a great whole of gracious administrations, an entire life rich with experiences of the loving-kindness of God.

Without foundation, Venema and others would conclude from ver. 20 ss., that this Psalm must have been composed before the adultery with Bathsheba. That deed, though a dreadful sin, yet being one only of infirmity, from the guilt of which David was delivered by a sincere repentance, cannot be regarded as inconsistent with what he here says of himself, if his words are but rightly understood.

In 2 Sam. xxii., this Psalm is repeated with not a few variations. The supposition which is now commonly received, and which has been specially defended by Lengerke<sup>1</sup> and Hitzig, is, that these variations have arisen from carelessness, discovering itself in both forms of the text, though principally in that of Samuel. But the following reasons may be advanced against this view: 1. If such were the correct view of the origin of these variations, it would follow, that before the collection of the canon, the text of the books of the Old Testament had been very carelessly treated. For it is improbable that this particular Psalm should have had a specially unpropitious fate. And in that case, conjectural criticism must have a very large field assigned it. We should have to proceed on the expectation of finding one, or even more faults, in almost every verse. But even the rashest of our critics do not consider the text to be in such a state, and the more judicious confine conjectural criticism within very narrow limits. 2. In other places where similar variations are found, where there are texts that come in contact with each other, these variations are uniformly not the result of accident and negligence, but of design. So, for example, in Isa. ch. ii., comp. with Mic. iv., and in Jeremiah, comp. with the numerous passages in the older Scriptures, which he has appropriated. 3. The text in each of the forms is of such a nature, that one would never have thought of regarding it as faulty in any particular place, were it not for the comparison with the corresponding place. If negligence had here played its part,



there would inevitably be a multitude of passages in which the fault would be discoverable at a glance, and could be shown incontestably to be such. 4. A great number of the variations, nay, the greater part of them, are of such a kind that they cannot be explained by accident. This circumstance forbids the derivation from accident, even in those cases where it might fairly be allowed to have had place, since it is improbable that the variations should have flowed from a double source. The proof of this will be found in considering the particular variations. 5. It is not difficult to discover certain principles by which the variations in the Books of Samuel are governed. That which has had the most powerful influence, is the tendency already found in Ps. liii., as comp. with xiv., to substitute for the simple, plain, and common, the far-fetched, elevated, emphatic, and rare. Besides this, there is also perceptible the desire to explain what is dark. Such pervading tendencies cannot be shown to exist in the sphere of accident.

It has been advanced in support of the view we oppose, that the variation in a number of cases consists only in the change of a single letter, and sometimes, indeed, of such letters as are, either in form or pronunciation, similar to each other; for example, ver. 11, וִירָא and וִירָא, in ver. 12, חִשְׁבָה and חִשְׁבָה, etc. But this appearance is found even where the variations have unquestionably arisen from design; and wherever a text is revised, the author of the variations will take particular pleasure in expressing a different sense by the greatest possible similarity of form. The fact in question could only have been of moment in the case of the sense being unsuitable in one of the readings. But no trace of this is at all discoverable.

We derive the variations altogether from an intentional revision; and as both the texts are prefaced by the superscription of David, the revision must have been undertaken by himself. As to the object of the revision, we do not consider it to have been that of antiquating the earlier form, but of producing variations which should be placed alongside of the original and main text. The text in the Psalms appears to us to be this original and main one, partly on the external ground, that this Psalm was given up by David for public use, as we learn from the expression, "To the chief musician," in the superscription, partly also on the internal ground already noticed, that in a considerable number of variations in the Books of Samuel, design

is unmistakeable ; and finally, because the text in Samuel, though excellent when considered simply as a variation, is, apart from that, decidedly inferior to the text of the Psalms.

From this view we derive the advantage of being wholly delivered from a line of procedure, the arbitrariness and inadmissibility of which experience has sufficiently shown ;—the course, namely, which leads writers constantly to extol the one text at the expense of the other, and to use every means for making one of them appear deserving of utter rejection.

What has been objected to this view by Lengerke, that such an artificial mode of procedure was not to be expected of David, rests upon a view of the Psalms as mere natural poetry, the falseness of which has been sufficiently proved by our previous exposition ; nor can it have much weight, at any rate, in a Psalm like the present, which was already designated by Amyrald as *artis poeticæ luculentissimum specimen*, and by Hitzig as “an unrivalled production of art and reflection.”

*To the chief musician, of the servant of the Lord David, who spake to the Lord the words of this song, at the time when the Lord delivered him from the hand of his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.* In this superscription, the form of introduction to the song of Moses, in Deut. xxxi. 30, seems to be imitated : “And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song,”—a supposition which is the more natural, since in the song itself the reference to Deut. xxxii. is unquestionable, from which, in particular, David has borrowed the designation of God as the rock, צור ; and since the introduction to the last words of David, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, rests in like manner upon the introduction of Balaam to his prophecies, in Num. xxiv. 3. Especially noticeable is the coincidence in the expression, “the words of this song,” for which, elsewhere, we find simply, “this song,” Ex. xv. 1, etc. Instead of, “in the ears of the congregation,” we have here, “to the Lord,” which occurs also in Ex. xv. 1. The expression, “of the servant of the Lord,” indicates the dignity and importance of the person, who constituted the ground-work of the deliverances granted to him, and corresponds to the words in the conclusion, “who makes great the salvation of his king,” equivalent to, “my salvation because I am His king.” To this dignity of the person, to its importance in respect to the kingdom of God, are to be attributed the words,

“To the chief musician.” A song so thoroughly individual in its character as this is, could not have been consecrated to the public worship of God if its author and object had not represented the whole of the Church, and that his blessing and grace were its also. Every pious man, in a general sense, is named the servant of the Lord; so Job, in ch. i. 8, ii. 3, comp. also Ps. xix. 11, 13. Even in this general sense, the designation has respect, not merely to the subjective element of obedience, but also to the *dignity* of him who is thus denominated: it is an honour to be received by God as among the number of His servants, who enjoy the support and protection of their rich and mighty Lord. But the designation is more commonly used in a special sense of those whom God employs for the execution of His purposes, to whom He entrusts the management of His concerns, and whom He fits for the advancement of His glory. David, who is said in the Acts, xiii. 36, to have “served the will (purpose) of God in his generation,” was the first, after Moses and Joshua, who in such a sense was called the servant of God. He is so designated here—in the superscription of Ps. xxxvi., which is nearly related to ours, and must consequently have proceeded from the author himself—and again in his own words, in 2 Sam. vii. Analogous also is the description in the last words of David, “The man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob”—a passage which fully justifies the remark of Venema, that the designation is not one merely of *modesty* and *humility*,—though these qualities are recognisable in it, so far as David seeks his honour in what God had given him, not in what he had of himself,—but also, and pre-eminently, of *honour*. Not that he acts presumptuously in assuming to himself such an honourable appellation; for the position which he vindicates to himself belonged to him according to unquestionable testimonies on the part of God, both in word and deed, and in such cases it is only false humility to decline claiming that which God has openly bestowed. With ביום the entire following period stands in *stat. constr.*: in the day of the Jehovah delivered him; for: in the day that Jehovah delivered him. To the words, “from the hand of all his enemies, and (especially) from the hand of Saul,” correspond those in Ex. xviii. 10, “Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of Egypt, and out of the hand of Pharaoh.” The deliverance of David from the hand of Saul was too im-

portant not to be specially referred to in the superscription, and in the Psalm itself. It was the first of all; it was by means of what he experienced in these necessities that his faith in God's fatherly care first developed itself; and in all his subsequent difficulties, David's mind always fell back on those experiences which formed the basis of his inward life. That deliverance was for him the same as the redemption out of Egypt was for Israel. The danger, besides, was for David the greatest of all. In later times, he stood as king over against other kings, or his own rebellious subjects; but here as a private man, without power or resources, over against the king, who employed all his power to persecute: never afterwards was he so much alone, and immediately thrown upon God. This distinction is impressed upon the Psalm itself. In the section which celebrates the deliverance from the hand of Saul, David is represented as entirely passive: the hand out of the clouds lays hold of him, and pulls him out of great waters. On the other hand, in the section which is taken up with his deliverance from the hand of his other enemies, we see him throughout active: God delivers him by imparting His blessing to the use of the means which he had himself furnished. He is no longer like a "flea," is no more "hunted like a partridge upon the mountains;" but as a warrior he places himself in opposition to warriors, "runs in the Lord upon troops, and in his God springs over walls."<sup>1</sup> He must first learn to read with larger characters, and then the smaller shall become legible to him. Finally, in no later deliverance did the height to which David was raised form such a contrast to the depth to which he had sunk, nor in any later catastrophe was there, in reference to his enemies, such a contrast between the depth to which they fell, and their former elevation: he, raised from tending flocks to be the shepherd of a people—out of the deepest misery to kingly power and glory; Saul, abandoned to despair and an ignominious death, his family thrust down to a low condition. One can only read with surprise the assertion of Lengerke, that the words, "and from the hand

<sup>1</sup> This important distinction was first noticed by Venema, whose remark, however, appears to have been quite overlooked by later writers: "In the former section he had ascribed his deliverance to God alone as a just Judge, and had reserved no part to himself; here, however, while he acknowledges God as the source of power and victory, he yet represents himself as an instrument in the hand of God, whereby the enemies were subdued."

of Saul," are a latter addition. It is justified as genuine by the division of matter in the song itself. The deliverance from Saul is treated as a separate whole, and is disconnected from the mass of the other deliverances and gracious acts of God.<sup>1</sup>

The introduction occupies vers. 1-3; and in it the Psalmist first declares his tender love to God, and then draws attention to its grounds, as well through the number of epithets applied to God, as in ver. 3, through an open exhibition of the actual facts.

Ver. 1. *And he said: Heartily do I love Thee, O Lord, my strength.* Luther: "Our sweet and joyful affection ought to impel us with great force to those to whose goodness we owe deliverance from huge evil and misfortune. So says he now: I have a sincere and childlike longing toward Thee. He thus confesses the warmest love, and that he has had pleasure in our Lord God, for he has found His kindness to be unspeakable; and from this constraining desire and love it arises that he ascribes to God so many names." Love to God, even in Deut. x. 12, and in a series of other passages in the Pentateuch, is declared to be the sum of the whole law. The manifestations of God's love are designed to lead to Him; but this aim is not accomplished in all: many embrace the gifts, and forget the Giver—their hearts become colder toward God the more eminent His gifts are. Of Israel it is said in Deut. xxxii. 15, "But Israel waxed fat and kicked; he forgot God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." In David, however, the manifestations

<sup>1</sup> That the superscription is not, as some have supposed, borrowed from 2 Sam., is shown even by its formal agreement with the introduction (the threefold number of the names of God), which bespeaks its origin with the Psalmist himself. The same thing is still more decisively proved by the internal character of the superscription,—in particular by the words, "and from the hand of Saul," as compared with the contents. The variations in 2 Sam. are just so many intentional changes. First, the words, "To the chief musician," are left out, because here the song comes under consideration only as the personal confession of David. Then the words, "of the servant of the Lord," are omitted, for no other reason than that in 2 Sam., in the superscription and introduction, the entire arrangement, and the predominance of the number three, which rendered these words necessary, are abolished; of the genuineness of the words, one can scarcely doubt after comparing 2 Sam. vii., xxiii. 1, and the corresponding, "His king and His anointed," of the conclusion. Finally, instead of *לִי*, there is used a second time *לִי*, for conformity sake, while the original *לִי* was probably employed on purpose to distinguish the deliverance from the hand of Saul more clearly from that out of the hands of the other enemies.

of God's love to him kindled the flame of a corresponding love, and caused it to burn ever clearer and brighter. רחם, diligere ex intimis visceribus, *to love heartily*, occurs in Kal only here; Piel could not have been used, for that always marks the tender love of the stronger toward the weaker, compassion. It appears that David made the word for himself, because no existing term was sufficient to express his feeling. The word, "my strength" (פִּי, also ἀπαξ λεγ.), is referred by Luther to that strength "with which a man is clothed from above, and by which he is inwardly strengthened and fortified,—the firmness which braces weak and delicate minds." This strength, he says, we have not, excepting from God. For when it depends upon ourselves, we are quite weak, in good as well as in bad times, and we melt like wax before the sun. This view would lead to the comparison of 1 Sam. xxx. 6, "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." But that "my strength" is at least not exclusively, or even pre-eminently, to be referred to internal strengthening, is evident from the following names of God, which all refer to the external aid granted by God, and also from the entire sequel, which treats of actual deliverances, and may be said to be involved in this one word.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 2. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God is my stronghold, in whom I trust; my shield and horn of my salvation, my citadel.* The first thing to be considered here is, how the words in the middle, אֱלֹהֵי צוּרִי אֲחֻסָּה בוֹ,

<sup>1</sup> This first verse is altogether wanting in 2 Sam. Its internal character bespeaks its genuineness; the judgment of Lengerke, *inanis est et frigidus versiculus*, is characteristic only of him who uttered it, not of the saying, which was the source of two of our finest hymns (*Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, O Herr*, and *Ich will dich lieben meine Stärke*). The ἀπ. λεγ. רחם is a further proof of its originality; and also the fact, that the threefold use of the name Jehovah fails in the introduction, if this verse is held to be of later origin. Finally, as an external ground, the name of King Hezekiah, which, in all probability, was derived from this verse. Against the opinion of Hitzig, that the words were dropt in 2 Sam. from negligence, we would say, that such a degree of negligence precisely at the commencement is scarcely to be conceived. But it is quite conclusive that this omission goes hand in hand with the longer addition in ver. 3, which was manifestly designed to supply the place of what was omitted, and which therefore must have been known to the author. If we should attribute to the author of the text in 2 Sam. the design of supplanting our text by the addition, "my Saviour, who savest me from violence," he would certainly have done very ill. But this was obviously not his design. He only wished to give a variation.

are to be understood. Generally two names of God are found here, "my God, my Stronghold, in whom I trust." We, however, render, "my God is my stronghold, in which I trust," so that only this, the term, "my Stronghold," belongs to the series of appellatives applied to God. This view is supported, first, by the consideration that the quite general term, "my God," interrupts the series of appellatives, which all bear a special character. In the second place, that on the other view, in place of the number *seven*, so significant, and such a favourite with David, and which we rather expect here, as the number plays so conspicuous a part in the superscription and introduction, the meaningless *eight* would be found. In the third place, אֱלֹהִים does not form one of the series of the other names of God; as is shown also by the corresponding, "my rock-God, in whom I trust," in 2 Sam. The author divides the seven names, with which he would praise God, into three parts. The first and the third contain three names; for the intermediate part only one remains. אֱלֹהִים alone would have been too isolated and bald; hence was אֱלֹהִים prefixed, and אֱלֹהֵינוּ added. If then we must render, "my God is my rock or stronghold," it is certain that the whole verse, precisely as ver. 3 (comp. also Ps. xlv. 1, "God is our refuge and strength"), speaks *concerning* Jehovah, and that the current exposition, which regards it as containing direct addresses, dependent on the words, "I love Thee," is to be rejected. So long a series of vocatives also would have something formal and cold about it, and would not accord with the calmness appropriate to an introduction, and which is observed in the two other verses. Our construction was already adopted by the Vulgate.

The designations of God in this verse, as also that in the preceding, "my strength," contain not only an expression of thankfulness for what is past, but also, at the same time, expression of hope in respect to the future; not the Lord *was*, but the Lord *is* my rock, etc. David's relation to God is a standing one, out of which the future salvation *will* proceed, just as the past salvation *has* proceeded. That the designations must be thus understood, is evident, first of all, from the expression in the next verse, "I *am* delivered," not, I *was*. Then it is clear also from the body of the Psalm, which refers not merely to the deliverance already received, but also to the future, inclusive even of that which David *was* to receive in his posterity.

The two first names, and also the last, are taken from the natural features of Palestine, where the precipitous rocks, surrounded by deep ravines, afford protection to the flying: comp. "He sets me up upon a rock," in Ps. xxvii. 5, for, He delivers me, Judges vi. 2; 1 Sam. xxiv. 22; 2 Sam. v. 8. David's predilection for this figurative description of the Divine protection, which shows itself, not merely in the threefold repetition, but also in its forming both the beginning and the end, comprising everything else, appears to have originated in the persecution of Saul. Then he often had to betake himself to rocks for refuge. He grounded the hope of his security, however, not upon their natural inaccessibility, but his mind rose from the corporeal rock to the spiritual, which he beheld under the form of the corporeal. The mode of contemplation, to which he then became familiarized, suggested such figurative designations of God, his deliverer, as his rock, his fastness, his stronghold. Placed upon this rock, he could say: *non curo te Cæsar*, with infinitely better right than he who, according to Augustine, on Ps. lxx., from a lofty cliff addressed the Emperor with these words, as he passed beneath. The third designation, "my deliverer," the only proper one amid others solely figurative, is intended to explain the two first, pointing to their real substance. In the fourth designation, "my mountain, in whom I trust," it is not the height and inaccessibility, as in the case of the rock, which are considered, but the immoveableness, and unchangeable firmness. It directs attention to the immutability of God, His constancy and inviolable faithfulness. The etymology also suggests this sense; *אֲבִיבָה* properly signifies, not, "rock," but, "stone." Such decidedly is its import in the first passage, where it is used as a designation of God, Deut. xxxii. 4. There it is manifestly equivalent to *אֲבִיבָה*, "fidelity," and the meaning, *tutissimum asylum*, is quite unsuitable. That David borrowed the *אֲבִיבָה* from this passage, which with singular predilection he used for his last words, is evident from ver. 31. Similarly dependent on that original passage, *אֲבִיבָה* is found in Ps. xcii. 15, "To show that the Lord is upright, my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." The Psalm celebrates God's love and fidelity, *אֲבִיבָה*, ver. 2. *אֲבִיבָה* frequently occurs in close connection with Jehovah, the One who absolutely is, the unchangeable (see my Beitr. Th. II. p. 244 ss.), and especially in Isa. xxvi. 4. The name in Gen. xlix. 24, "the stone of Israel," is analogous. This stone is the



touchstone for the interpretation of צור, showing what is the quality in it that comes under consideration. To suppose that this quality here is the inaccessible height, would only be justifiable, if we could take חסה with ב in the sense of "to fly to," whereas it always signifies "to trust in." To the trusting exactly corresponds unchangeableness and fidelity.—The epithet, "My shield," occurred already in Ps. iii. 3. In Deut. xxxiii. 29, God is named, "the shield of the help of Israel."—*Horn of deliverance*, is either equivalent to "delivering horn" (so Luther : It signifies an horn of salvation, because it overcomes the enemies, delivers from the enemies, and gives salvation)—or the literal term יַעַזְרִי is the explanation of the figurative one קַרְנִי, "my deliverance-horn," *q. d.* "my horn," that is, "my deliverance;" His power affords me the deliverance which horns afford to beasts. In any case, the image is taken from beasts which defend themselves with their horns, and in these have the seat of their strength. To the interpretation of others, who take the word in the sense of *height*, there is the objection, that this signification occurs only in one passage, namely, Isa. v. 1, and even there it means, not mountain-top, but hill; whereas it is found in a great number of passages in the sense adopted by us, with a reference to beasts, whose strength resides in their horns; comp. for ex. Deut. xxxiii. 27; 1 Sam. ii. 10; Job xvi. 15. It is a confirmation also of this view, that the epithet, "my high place," of the conclusion, may better stand alone than "my shield." For it only rounds off, and points back to the commencement. In Deut. xxxiii. 29, parallel with the "helping shield," is "the imperious sword," defence and offence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. יָצָא is added to יַעֲזֹרֵנִי, my deliverer, which is neither, with Lengerke, to be declared original, nor, with others, to be characterized as wholly to be rejected. It bears the character of the unusual, which distinguishes so many of the variations in 2 Sam. It is found also in Ps. cxliv. 2, a passage grounded upon ours, and cannot therefore be regarded as a corruption of late origin. Of the passages in which Lengerke has sought to find a similar use of the יָצָא, Ps. xxvii. 2, xxxi. 4, the first has nothing to do with it, and the second is uncertain. Instead of, "my God is my rock," there is in 2 Sam., "my rock-God," יְהוָה יְצָאֵנִי, a variation which is shown to be intentional by ver. 47, where the designation, "rock-God," again occurs. Such a regularity is incompatible with an accidental origin. The solitariness of יַעֲזֹרֵנִי is in 2 Sam. relieved by the addition יְצָאֵנִי, my refuge. Then there is also appended a fuller conclusion: my Redeemer, who redeemest me from violence. It is impossible to account for such an ad-

Ver. 3. *As on the glorious one I call upon the Lord, and from mine enemies I am delivered.* The Fut. of the verb are to be taken aoristically, "as often as I call upon Thee, I am delivered;" so that the sentiment refers at once to the past, the present, and the future. Luther: "He would teach us by this, that there is nothing so bad, so great, so mighty, so tedious, which may not be overcome by the power of God, if we only put our trust therein. Likewise, that we have pre-eminent cause to hope that the power of God will be mighty in us, when many great, strong, and continuous evils forcibly press upon us, inasmuch as it is a property of Divine strength to help the little, the feeble, the dejected, not merely amid the evils of punishment, but also of guilt. For what sort of power were God's, if it could only prevail over punishment, and not also over sin in us? So full is this passage of consolation; because the state of things it contemplates seems to be wholly against nature, and that one must abandon all hope, when not evil merely, but also great, weighty, and long-continued evils break in." The first clause is translated by many, "I call upon the Lord as one that has been praised," i. e. "after that I have already praised Him." So Luther: I will praise the Lord, and call upon Him. "This doctrine," says he, "is in tribulation the most noble and truly golden. It is scarcely credible what a powerful assistance such praise of God is in pressing danger. For the moment thou beginnest to praise God, the evil begins to abate, the consoled courage grows, and then follows the calling upon God with confidence. There are people who cry to the Lord, and are not heard, ver. 41. Why this? Because they do not praise the Lord when they cry to Him, but go to Him with reluctance; they have not represented to themselves how sweet the Lord is, but have looked only upon the bitterness. But no one is delivered from evil by simply looking upon his evil, and becoming alarmed at it; he can only do so by overcoming it, clinging to the Lord, and having respect to His goodness. O doubtless a hard counsel! And a rare thing, truly, in the midst of misfortune to conceive of God as sweet, and worthy of being praised; and when He has removed Himself from us, and is incomprehensible, even then to regard Him more  
 dition by accident. Our text maintains here throughout the character of the ground-text; but considered as a variation, that in 2 Sam. is quite unexceptionable. No one would think of bettering it, if we had it alone.

strongly than our present misfortune, which keeps us from regarding Him. Only let any one try it, and endeavour to praise God when he is not in good heart: he will presently experience an alleviation. All other consolation profits not, or profits in a deceitful manner; in other words, is highly injurious." Though the sense, however, is given here with substantial correctness, yet the view taken of מְהִל cannot be grammatically justified. To take "praised," for, "after that I have praised Him," is harsh, and everywhere else the word is used in the Psalms as an epithet of God: "praised" = glorious, Ps. xlviii. 1, xcvi. 4, cxiii. 3, cxlv. 3, comp. 1 Chron. xvi. 25. So must מְהִל be understood here also. It marks that property of God which David vividly realized to himself in calling upon Him; points out that it is not enough simply to call upon the Lord, comp. ver. 41; but that the full recognition of His glory must be coupled therewith, which only dwells in the heart that has undoubting faith. This it is that distinguishes the prayer of faith from that of the doubter, who prays merely by way of experiment, and dares not hope that he shall receive anything; comp. Jas. i. 5. מְהִל stands in the accus., comp. Ewald, § 510, c.; and the position at the beginning, which has led many astray, is to be explained from the design of giving emphasis to this word.

After the introduction, there follows now, in vers. 4-19, the first part of the description of the Divine help which David had experienced amid the great necessities and manifold dangers of his life, referring to the period of the persecution under Saul. This is opened in vers. 4 and 5, by a description of the necessity. Then, in vers. 6-19, he sets forth how the words, "I call upon the Lord as the glorious one, and am delivered from mine enemies," were fulfilled.

Ver. 4. *The cords of death compassed me about, and the waters of mischief frightened me.* Ver. 5. *The cords of hell compassed me about; the snares of death surprised me.* The question first of all arises, Of what distress in the life of David does he here speak? The proper answer is, that David here masses all the necessities of the Sauline period together. This view is favoured by the superscription, which divides all the distresses of David into two great halves,—the Sauline ones, and the others; and also by the relation between the two sections, vers. 4-19, and 28-45, already referred to: in the for-

mer, David is delivered by God, without his co-operation; while in the latter, he is represented as at once the instrument and the object of the Divine deliverance. The supposition, that David comprehends all the distresses of his life into one, is discountenanced by the division of the matter into two parts; and the opinion of De Wette and Lengerke, viz. that the Psalmist speaks of one particular danger and deliverance (De Wette is uncertain what, Lengerke thinks of David's escape from the treachery of the Ziphites), is not suited to the occasion and to the general character of the Psalm; it is based on the supposition, that the Psalmist spoke too largely, without being able to explain why he should have given such prominence to one particular event at the expense of others. Instead of *cords*, several have, "the pains of death." מָוֶת can certainly signify that; but the sense of *cords*, to which the *compassing* is also more suitable, is decided for here by מִקֶּשֶׁת, parallel to the second הַבִּלְיָה, with which the first must accord in meaning. Death is represented under the image of a hunter, from whom the animal can no longer escape, when the fatal net has been thrown over it. *Belial* is taken here by many expositors in the sense of "destruction." The brooks or waters of destruction must be a figurative description of great misfortune, which in a manner overflows a man. But *Belial* always signifies unprofitableness in a *moral* sense, worthlessness. In this sense it occurs even in Deut. xiii. 13, xv. 19. In that sense it was quite familiarly used, especially in David's time, and is so used in the last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, which are so closely related to this Psalm: worthlessness as *abstr. pr. concr.*, or personified. For the signification, "misfortune," "destruction," Gesenius produces only, in addition to our passage, Nah. i. 11; where, however, יֵצֵן בִּלְעֵל is explained by Michaelis, "consiliarius Belial, i.e. nequam, diabolicus," and according to chap. ii. 1, it must be so rendered. If we follow the only certain meaning of the word, as already the LXX. χείμαρροι ἀνομίας, then by the brooks of unworthiness, we can only understand, with Muis and others, the unworthy (Saul and his company), who overflow as brooks. This view is supported also by what follows. If *Belial* is explained by destruction, no clear description of the distress is given at all. One might think, for example, that the Psalmist had been sick unto death. But that is contrary to the conclusion in vers. 17 and 18, where it is clearly intimated, that

the troubles proceeded from enemies. In this conclusion there is, further, as good as an express comment on the brooks of Belial. In ver. 17 we find parallel with the preceding words, "He drew me out of many waters,"—which refer to the brooks of Belial,—“He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from my haters, for they were too strong for me.” Also in Ps. cxliv. 7, which is based on the present one, “Deliver me out of many waters, out of the hand of strange children,” the waters are not the image of misfortune, but of its cause, the enemies. The Fut. *יִבְעָתִי* is to be explained from the lively realization of presence. *קָרַם* is, “to surprise;” comp. on Ps. xvii. 13.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 6. *In my distress I call upon the Lord, and cry to my God; He hears out of His temple my voice, and my cry comes before Him, in His ear.* Just as before the distresses had been all comprehended in one great distress, as also again at the commencement of this verse, so here, and in the subsequent context, the manifold Divine hearings and helps are united into a single grand hearing and help. The Futures of the verb are again to be explained from the lively realization of presence.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. we have first, at the beginning of ver. 5, *כִּי* added. This addition bears the character of an explanation. The *כִּי* marks precisely the relation in which the section just begun, stands to the preceding. Luther: “In what precedes he had said and taught, that we must call upon the name of the Lord with praise and love, if we would be delivered from the hand of our enemies; and now, further, he relates that he had done this, and relates his own history as an example of the doctrine which he had taught.” Then, instead of *הַבִּלְיָה*, the cords of death, stands *הַגִּבְעָה*, the waves of death. Thereby the first member is made more conformable to the second, and the repetition is avoided. But we are not to conclude from this, that *הַגִּבְעָה* is the original. If it had been so, certainly no one would have thought of substituting *הַבִּלְיָה* for it. With the reading *הַבִּלְיָה*, the two verses are made only too regular. If Belial denotes mischief, then there is the less reason for wishing anything exactly corresponding to *הַבִּלְיָה*, the brooks. The repetition of *הַבִּלְיָה* has an analogy in vers. 12 and 13. The thought of the *cords* is so peculiarly attractive to the Psalmist, that he involuntarily, as it were, returns to it. Bound, entangled by death, a helpless victim of it, this is the most suitable description of his case; and to this he returns again, after having slightly employed another image, and thus indicated the source of his deadly distress. From all which it is clear, that *הַגִּבְעָה* has only the import of a good variation. The antiquity of the *הַבִּלְיָה* is also secured by Ps. cxvi. 3. Finally, for *הַגִּבְעָה*, the fuller and more sonorous poetic form, there is in 2 Sam. the common *כָּבֵד*. The two readings taken together correspond to *כָּבֵד נָה כָּבֵד* in Ps. cxviii. 11. The *כָּבֵד* in 2 Sam. serves the purpose of pointing to the emphasis in *כָּבֵד* here.

Faith knows no past and no future; what God has done and will do, is present to it. Stier would take צר as the third person Pret. But as צר unquestionably occurs in Job xv. 24 as a noun in the sense of distress, we have no occasion to prefer here the more strained exposition, "in the distress to me," for, "in this my distress." צעק, stronger than קרא, denotes the cry for help uttered by him who is in the greatest danger and extremity. On the expression, "my God," Calvin remarks: "In calling God *his* God, he distinguishes himself from those gross despisers of God and hypocrites, who, indeed, confusedly invoke a heavenly power, when impelled by hard necessity; but neither with a pure heart, nor as on terms of intimacy, draw near to God, of whose fatherly grace they know nothing." By the temple of God is here indicated His dwelling-place in the heavens, not for the reason adduced by Theodoret, that the earthly temple was then still unbuilt—for הֵיכָל is used, as was formerly noticed, also of the tabernacle; and it was only from this being named the dwelling of God, that heaven was also named so—but because, by this exposition, we obtain a finer contrast: the servant far below on the earth cries, and the Lord hears high up in the heavens; nay, the more highly He is enthroned, the better does He hear, the more easily does He help; because the following context represents how God comes down from heaven, in order to help His servant; and lastly, also, because of the parallel passage in Ps. xi. 4, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven."<sup>1</sup>—Berleib. Bible: "Has thy God now heard thee, O thou oppressed

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. there is צעק instead of צעק here. This throws the emphasis upon צעק, whereas its import does not come out so decidedly with our reading, which, by the increased force of the expression, "I cry," rather draws attention to the singular intensity of emotion and the greatness of the distress. That it is appropriate thus to distinguish צעק, and to draw attention to it by employing the same verb, is clear as day. On the ground that Jehovah was David's God, rested the confidence of his prayer, and, indeed, the whole result reported in the sequel. But that צעק is the original reading, is manifest from צעק, by which it is again resumed. The צעק is wanting in 2 Sam. Our reading has the advantage of picturesqueness and vividness: we see how the prayer with winged speed travels the long way from earth to heaven, comes before God's throne, and enters into His ear. The reading in 2 Sam., on the other hand, has the advantage of impressive brevity. Both readings stand peacefully beside other, and expositors in vain try to bring them into collision.

king; then let us know how it has turned out with thy cry and prayer for redemption."

Ver. 7. *Then the earth shakes and trembles, and the foundations of the mountains move and shake, because He is wroth.* The Psalmist's cry for help has penetrated from the deepest depth to the highest height. It had kindled in his God, who heard him, indignation against those who oppressed His servant; and, before the wrath of the Almighty, the earth heaves in frightful anticipation of the things which are soon to come to pass. "The foundations of the mountains," for, "their lowest base."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 8. *Smoke goes up in His nose, and fire out of His mouth devours, coals burn from it.* In the whole verse there is a further expansion of the words, חרה לו, prop. "He is inflamed," with which the preceding verse had closed (*Michaelis* rightly: *ascendit enim*), and so the Divine wrath is represented under the image of a fire, just as in Deut. xxxii. 22, xxix. 20, "Then the anger of the Lord, and His jealousy, shall smoke against that man;" Ps. lxxiv. 1. With the thunder-storm, smoke, and fire, and coals have primarily nothing to do here; this is here only prepared. The nose is named, because it is commonly considered the seat of anger,—the mouth, because it consumes. That נא signifies "nose" (LXX. : ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐν ὀργῇ αὐτοῦ; Vulgate: *in ira ejus*; so also *Stier*), is clear from the juxtaposition with *mouth*; and that נפיו is to be rendered by, "out of His mouth," is clear from its juxtaposition with *nose*. Quite falsely has the ascension of smoke in the nose been connected with the observation, that furious beasts, such as horses, lions, snort dreadfully; and then *Stier* finds occasion, in the "unpolished, nay, monstrous nature of the image," for adopting his false exposition. Smoke has nothing to do with snorting; it is only the inseparable accompaniment of fire. The relation of the two to each other is discovered in Ex. xix. 18, "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire." To the nose

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. we have, instead of the foundations of the mountains, the foundations of the heavens, יסודות שמים. Our reading takes into view alone the shaking of the earth, because it is concerned with the judgments of the Lord, which now begin to discover themselves in wrath. On the other hand, the reading in 2 Sam., with the view of marking very strongly the frightfulness of the wrath of the Almighty, represents the whole fabric of the universe as trembling before Him. This could only be regarded as unsuitable if, misunderstanding the whole verse, we should imagine a thunder-storm to be spoken of.

is attributed the fire of the Divine anger, in its smoking aspect, simply because, in its burning, consuming aspect, it is best attributed to the mouth. The word *devours* stands purposely without an object, and we must not supply *the enemies*. It is the burning power only which is here considered. The whole scene in vers. 7 and 8 still belongs to the heavens. By the coals we are not to understand lightning. This is only the later product (comp. ver. 12) of the glow of fire and wrath, here first kindled. The suffix in כִּינֹר refers to the mouth. "Coals burn out of it," is not equivalent to "burning coals go forth out of it," but to, "the flame of burning coals bursts forth from it," as out of a burning oven, חֲנֹךְ אֵשׁ, Gen. xv.

The second point comes now: the expression of the anger, whose growth had been described in the preceding verses. The wrath which was kindled in the heavens makes itself felt upon the earth, which had called it forth, and embodies itself in a storm upon the heads of the wicked, whose destruction is at the same time the deliverance of the servant of the Lord.

Ver. 9. *He bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under His feet.* He, God, as burning fire. The heavens appear to let themselves down in a storm. Luther: "When there is a clear heaven, the clouds are high; but when a storm comes, one might fancy them pushing against the roof." There seems to be some allusion to this here. However, as is justly remarked by Stier, the words, "He bowed," are in themselves a fit introduction to the strong expression, "He came down." He appeals to Isa. lxiii. 19. It is a proof of the living nature of faith, when, in times of judgment and help, one sees not merely the working of a God far removed, but Himself in bodily manifestation. What is to be understood by the *darkness*, we may best learn from Ex. xix. 16, "And there were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount;" and Deut. v. 22, "All these words spake the Lord unto all your assembly in the Mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness," הַחֹשֶׁךְ. The Lord approaches, marching upon the black thunder-clouds. These are, to His enemies, an indication of His anger, and a proclamation of His judgment. Michaelis: "That the wicked might not perceive His serene countenance, but only the terrible signs of His severe anger, and of His punishment."

Ver. 10. *He rode upon the cherub and did fly, and He flew*



*upon the wings of the wind.* "The cherub," remarks Baehr, *Symbolik*, Th. i. p. 341, who, of recent authors, has given the most correct and profound investigation of the nature of the cherub, and with which my remarks on Egypt and the Books of Moses, p. 154 ss., may be compared, as supplementary of his,—"The cherub is a being which stands on the highest pinnacle of created life, and combines in itself the most perfect kinds of creaturely life, is the most complete manifestation of God, and of the Divine life. It is an image of the creature in its highest form, an ideal creature. The powers of life, divided amongst the creatures that occupy the highest place in the visible creation, are in it combined and individualized." The cherub is a personification of creation. When the Lord is represented as enthroned on the cherub, as in the sanctuary, or as riding upon it, as in this place and in Ezekiel, it signifies that creation belongs to and serves Him, that He is the God and Lord of the whole earth, its Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler. When He comes to judgment, woe to those on earth who have awakened His anger. In the passage, Ps. civ. 3, which is based on the one before us, the clouds are substituted for the cherub: "Who makes the clouds His chariot." That the appearance of the Lord must not be measured with an earthly measure, that He comes in the majesty of the Lord of the whole creation, not in human weakness,—to this also the second clause refers: "He flew upon the wings of the wind."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 11. *He makes darkness His covering, round about Him in His tent, dark waters, thick clouds.* This verse is related to the last words of ver. 9, precisely as ver. 8 is to the last words of ver. 7. It further expands the words, "darkness was under His feet," for the purpose of introducing, at ver. 12, the description of the lightning, thunder, and hail, which broke forth from these dark tempest-clouds. The abbrev. Fut. *שׁוּת* is used poetically with the meaning of the usual Fut. Thunder-clouds are designated, just as here, the tent of God, in Job xxxvi. 29, comp. also Ps. xcvii. 2, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him."

<sup>1</sup> For *שׁוּת*, "He flew, hovered," there is in 2 Sam. *שׁוּת*, "and He appeared;" the *appearing* of God, in contrast to His concealment in the heavens. Quite fruitless are the efforts made to represent this reading as unsuitable; it offers rather a pleasant variation. As *שׁוּת* frequently occurs, Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. xlviii. 40, xlix. 22, the reading cannot be explained with Hitzig, from the offence which was taken at the rarer form.

Calvin: "When God covers the heavens with darkness, He in a manner prevents men from beholding Him, as when a king, displeased with his people, withdraws and hides himself." To "dark waters," and "thick clouds," we must supply: "He makes His tent." Dark waters are a designation of thunder-clouds. עֲבֵי שָׁחִים, prop. "clouds of cloud," equivalent to "the most dense clouds," such as are not scattered, but form one entire cloud. שָׁחִים denotes clouds more as a whole, compacted together; hence it never occurs in the singular, as עַב, and stands for the clouds of the entire heaven. There is a corresponding phrase in Ex. xix. 9, עַב הָעָנָן, thick clouds. Gesenius improperly takes עַב, in both places, in the sense of darkness.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 12. *From the brightness before Him His clouds passed, hailstones and coals of fire.* The storm of the Divine anger discharges itself. Amid frightful thunder (ver. 13), from the sea of fire, with which the Lord in His indignation is encompassed (comp. ver. 8), there shoot forth lightnings, dividing the clouds, and hailstones pour down,—the weapons with which the Lord fights against His own and the Psalmist's enemies, as heretofore against the Egyptians, Ex. ix. 24, comp. Ps. lxxxviii. 47, 48, and the Canaanites at Bethhoron, Jos. x. 11. The deep floods under which the Psalmist lies buried, disperse themselves under God's almighty hand, until the earth is laid open in its inmost recesses, even to the chambers of the dead, and God's hand reaches into the deep abyss, the yawning jaws of hell, and lays hold of His servant. The first clause was quite correctly expounded by Luther: "It is a description of lightning. When He pleases, He rends the clouds asunder, and darts forth a flash, such as the clouds cannot restrain; it breaks through just as if there were no clouds there. As we see that the whole heaven, as it were, opens when there is lightning." In the second clause, the verb cannot be supplied from the first—עָבַר does not suit. "Hailstones and coals of fire" stands rather as an exclamation, referring to the frightful nature of the unexpected manifestation. Lengerke, whom De Wette follows, expounds: "From the brightness before Him went forth His clouds, hailstones, and coals of fire;" the latter being taken as explanatory: but עָבַר does

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. כִּי־יָרָא is wanting, and for כִּי־יָרָא stands כִּי־יָרָא. An intentional abbreviation. For כִּי־יָרָא stands the *ἀπαρξάνω*, according to the Arabic, *gathering*. The rare and select כִּי־יָרָא is poetical in its form; the כִּי־יָרָא, water-darkness, for dark rain-clouds, is the same in its import.

does not mean "to go forth;" and the clouds, which may not be identified with lightning and hail, do not proceed from the brightness, but cover it.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 13. *And the Lord thundered in the heaven, and the Highest gave His voice, hailstones and coals of fire.* In Ex. ix. 23 it is said, "The Lord gave voices and hail, and the fire ran upon the earth." The comparison with this ground-passage shows, that the words, "hailstones, etc.," are still dependent on *וַיִּבֹרֶךְ*, and at the same time confutes those who, following the LXX., would set aside "the hailstones and coals of fire" as spurious, and as interpolated from the preceding verse. The repetition is the more in its place, as the coals of fire, or the lightning and the hail, are the very things by which the enemies of the Psalmist were annihilated,—the rest were but the circumstances which rendered the scene of annihilation more frightful.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 14. *And He sent out His arrows, and scattered them; much lightning, and discomfited them.* The Lord is represented under the image of a warrior who comes to the help of David. The arrows which He sends upon them, are the lightnings and the hail. The former are alone named in the second clause, as being the most destructive weapons. The suff. here also require us to understand by the brooks of Belial, in ver. 4, the enemies.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. it runs merely: out of the brightness before Him *וַיִּבֹרֶךְ* *וַיִּשְׁלַח*, coals of fire burned. It is there more distinctly brought out, that these coals of fire are the effect of the brightness. The variation cannot be accounted for by accident, it is too great; and there are also analog. var. in the superscription and ver. 6.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam., instead of, "*in the heaven*," there is, "*from the heaven*," *מִן*. Both are equally good. Hitzig maintains, that *מִן* is to be rejected, especially since, ver. 9, Jehovah is no longer in the heaven. But the Lord is *perpetually* there; even when he comes down, God is still said to be in heaven. Comp. Gen. xi. 7, where the Lord, after He had already come down, ver. 6, says, "Go to, We will go down," etc.; Gen. xviii. 21, where the Lord says, at the time He was walking upon the earth, "I will go down;" and John iii. 13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man that is in heaven," where the Son of God is said to have been in heaven at the very time of His sojourning on earth. In 2 Sam. there are also wanting the words, "hailstones and coals of fire." The hail, therefore, altogether fails in 2 Sam. The destruction of the enemies is accomplished merely by lightning. This constancy argues against those who would derive the variations from accident. So also the fact, that the recension in 2 Sam. remains uniform in its predilection for abbreviations. The text in Ps. xviii. is proved to be the original by its closer approximation to the original passage in Ex. ix.

For no other designation of them had been given before. רַב, the pausal-form for רַב, is either an adverb, *enough*, comp. Gen. xlv. 28; Ex. ix. 28; Num. xvi. 3, 7; Deut. i. 6; or, we may also render, "so that there is much of them," comp. רַב, coll., multum, for multi, Ex. xix. 21; 1 Sam. xiv. 6; Num. xxvi. 54. The latter exposition, according to which a comma is to be supplied before רַב, *quorum multum erat*, is the simplest. There is a corresponding expression, "from my enemy, strong," in ver. 17. It shows a strong predilection for strained expositions to drag in here the verb רָבַב, "to shoot arrows," which occurs only in Gen. xlix. 23: "He hurls forth lightnings." On the וַיִּהְיֶה, "and He discomfited, confounded them," Ex. xiv. 24 is to be comp.: "And God troubled (confounded), וַיִּהְיֶה, the host of the Egyptians,"—the more so, as there also it was effected by lightning. Further, Ex. xxiii. 27, "I will confound all thine enemies, against whom thou shalt come, and give all thine enemies against thee to the neck;" which passage the Psalmist also, in ver. 40, considers as a prophecy, that had now met with its fulfilment.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 15. *Then were seen the brooks of waters, and discovered the foundations of the earth, before Thy rebuke, O Lord, before the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.* The signification channel as regards נַחַל is quite uncertain: in Isa. viii. 7, "And he (Euphrates) goes over all his brooks," i.e. "overflows all his canals," the common signification is perfectly suitable, as also in Ezek. xxxii. 6, comp. xxxi. 12. נַחַל here is against that signification. The brooks are in a manner invisible, so long as their waters are not divided, and not discovered even to their lowest bottom, in which the Psalmist lies buried. The becoming visible of their lowest depths, refers to the brooks of mischief, in which the Psalmist, according to ver. 4, lay sunk; comp. Ps. cxliv. 6, "Deliver me out of many waters, out of the hand of strange children;" on the other hand, the laying open of the inmost parts of the earth, even to the cords of sheol, with which he was bound, ver. 5. In the preceding verse, it was the vanquishing of the enemies; here, and in the following verses, it is the deliverance of the Psalmist from their hands, and from the

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. for, "His arrows," there is simply רַבָּרֵב; for "lightnings many," the simple רַבָּרֵב; for, "He discomfited them," merely, "He discomfited." All these variations have sprung from the disposition to impart an elevated character, by abbreviating the discourse. The author of Ps. cxliv. had, in ver. 6, at once רַבָּרֵב in 2 Sam. and רַבָּרֵב of our Psalm in his eye.

misery which they had prepared for him. The nose here also is employed as the seat of anger.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 16. *He sends from above, takes me, draws me out of many waters.* מֵלָח stands absolutely in Ps. lvii. 3, as here. In Ps. cxliv. 7, the object, "His hand," omitted here, as being sufficiently indicated by the words, "He took me," is expressly mentioned. That the many waters are an image of the enemies, is evident from the explanation in ver. 17. That there is a reference to Ex. ii. 10, "And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water,"—that David marks himself as the second Moses,—is clear, especially from the use of מִשֶּׁה, which occurs nowhere else but here, and in that original passage. Luther already called attention to this reference. It is the more important, as Moses was a type of the Israelitish people; the waters, an image of the hostile oppression, in consequence of which Moses was exposed; and the event, a prophecy constantly fulfilling itself anew under similar circumstances.

Ver. 17. *He delivers me from my enemy, strong, and from my haters, because they are too powerful.* The discourse, as Ewald remarks, passes on more quietly to a simpler representation, after the exhaustion of the great image. That by the enemy is to be understood, not an individual, but an ideal person, who was most completely represented by the individual Saul, appears from the parallel, "my haters." The *strong* properly forms an entire period, *i. q.* "who was strong." This also appears from the corresponding words, "because they are too powerful," in the second clause, which rest on the supposition, that our weakness necessitates the Lord to employ His almightiness in our behalf.

Ver. 18. *They surprised me in the day of my calamity; but the Lord was my stay.* The words, "in the day of my calamity,"—as Amalek surprised Israel on the way, "when he was faint and weary," Deut. xxv. 18,—are explained by facts, such as are recorded in 1 Sam. xxiv., where David, helplessly wandering about, and feeling like a dead dog or a flea, ver. 15,

<sup>1</sup> Instead of מִן, we have in 2 Sam. נִי. In 2 Sam. the enemies appear under the stronger image of sea-brooks. Then instead of מִן, מִן, and for מִן, מִן. The address to Jehovah is laid aside, in accordance with the preceding and subsequent context, where Jehovah is spoken of in the third person. The reading in 2 Sam. has the advantage of uniformity, the other of liveliness.

is pursued by Saul with three thousand men, and finds himself in the back part of the cave, in whose entrance Saul took up his abode.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 19. *And He brought me into a large place; He delivered me, for He delighted in me*, the righteous, comp. vers. 20-27; while, on the other hand, mine enemies, by their malice, have drawn on them His wrath.<sup>2</sup>

There follow, in vers. 20-27, as a further expansion of the last words of the verse, the grounds which moved God to deliver David in so glorious a manner, set forth with the design, not that the prophecy contained in this fact should be appropriated by those to whom it did not belong, but of bringing the Church of God to the conviction, *that righteousness is the only path of salvation*. The arrangement of the section is as follows:—The Psalmist first sets forth the thesis, that his salvation was the fruit of his righteousness. Then he goes on to prove this thesis in vers. 21-23, by showing that he actually possessed righteousness. He next repeats the principle, as proved in ver. 24, with the view of connecting therewith a general declaration in vers. 25-27, in accordance with the didactic and admonitory design, which he pursues throughout the whole section, in order to show how, in what was peculiar to himself, there was realized a general law; so that every one possessing righteousness is sure of salvation, while none without righteousness can comfort himself with the hope of it.

Ver. 20. *The Lord regards me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands He recompenses me*. In order to set aside the least appearance of arbitrariness or partial favour, and to show that what happened to himself was grounded on the eternal laws of the Divine government, David points to that as existing in himself, which, according to the faithful word of God, as already declared in the law of Moses in a multitude of passages, but most expressly in Deut. xxviii., forms the indispensable condition of every exercise of Divine help. Amid all

<sup>1</sup> Instead of לִבְדֵּן, there is in 2 Sam. בָּדַן. Excellently Schultens: hoc est elegantius, illud vero simplicius. The use of ב in such cases is certainly the common custom.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam. וַיֵּצֵא לִדְרֹב אֶרֶץ אֲרָם brings out the *me* more pointedly, quite suitably to the context: here, "He brought me into a large place;" there, "He brought into a large place, me." אֶרֶץ belongs not merely to prose, but also to poetry, though certainly rarer in it; see Ew., p. 593.

the infirmities common to men, they still fall into two great divisions, between which an immense gulf is fixed, the wicked and the righteous; and only the prayer of the latter can be heard. The reproach of self-righteousness, we must not, with Calvin, endeavour to meet by the remark, that David had a peculiar reason here for insisting on the righteousness of his endeavours, in the manifold calumnies which were circulated against him, whose injurious consequences affected not his person merely, but the whole Church and cause of God; nor with Muis, by the remark, that David attributes to himself righteousness here, rather with respect to his enemies, than in reference to God; nor yet with Geier, that he laid claim, not to righteousness of person, but to righteousness of cause. The *legitimate* removal of the objection rests upon the three following remarks: 1. Righteousness forms a contrast, not to infirmity, but to wickedness. 2. David owed this only to his faithful and inward adherence to God, who kept His servant from wickedness, that it might not reign over him. In both respects, this Psalm, as well as Psalm xvii., is necessarily supplemented by Psalm xix., which, not without reason and design, immediately follows. 3. Finally, the reason why David here so insists on his righteousness, is not a vain bepraising of self, but the design of enlivening within himself and others, zeal for the fulfilment of the law. The reproach of self-righteousness, were it just here, might also be brought against a multitude of assertions in Christian songs. Quite analogous, for ex., in the fine song of Anton Ulrich: *Nun tret' Ich wieder aus der Ruh*, is the stanza: "Thus my heart is refreshed, when I feel myself enclosed by the guardian care of the Highest; still, in order to be assured of this, I must live free from sin, and walk in the way of God. My God will never go my way, unless I go His way."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 21. *For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and was not evil against my God.* שָׁמַר, "to observe, keep," stands opposed to the reckless conduct of the ungodly. This becomes quite clear from the corresponding expression in next verse, "all His judgments were before me," also Ps. xvii. 4. בִּטְלָהּ, prop. from my God: in that I turn myself away in vile ingratitude from

<sup>1</sup> For שָׁמַר in 2 Sam. כִּדְבָרָה. That the difference is not accidental, appears from ver. 25, where the same variation again occurs. But it affects not the essence of the idea: שָׁמַר is, "the being righteous," and דְּבָרָה "righteousness."

Him who is the guardian of my life. For wickedness, as Luther remarks, is a departing and turning away from God. Calvin : "The word which he employs denotes, not a single transgression, but apostasy, which entirely alienates man from God. But though David, through infirmity of flesh, had sometimes fallen, yet never did he give up piety of life, or abandon the warfare committed to him."

Ver. 22. *But all His judgments were before me, and His commandments I do not put away from me.* וְ corresponds to our *but*. To institute the one contrast, involves the negation of the other. Whoever has all the commands of God before his eyes = observes the ways of God, he cannot be evil from his God.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 23. *And I was blameless toward Him, and kept myself from mine iniquity.* With the first member is to be compared Gen. xvii. 1, Deut. xviii. 13, and the Divine testimony for David in 1 Kings xiv. 8, "My servant David, who kept My commandments, and who followed Me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in Mine eyes;" and xv. 5, "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that He commanded him, all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." By the וְ, prop. *with Him*, David, in the opinion of some, opposes himself to the hypocrites, who succeed in appearing before men as unblameable. But that the expression is rather equivalent to, *toward Him* (comp. 1 Kings xi. 4, "His heart was not upright with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father"), appears, 1. From the corresponding וְ in 2 Sam. ; and 2. By a comparison of vers. 25, 26,—grounds which are equally conclusive against the exposition of Venema, "adhering to Him, remaining with Him." By the words, "from my guilt," *i.g.* "from the guilt into which I may so readily fall," to which I am so exposed, David shows that he is not a spotless saint, but a sinner, who had to take care by watchfulness and conflict that his indwelling corruption did not regain dominion over him, and entangle him in guilt. He who was born in sin, Ps. li. 6, must call sin *his* all his life long, and be continually on his guard against it. Compare Ps. xvii. 4, where David characterized

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. וְאֵלֶּיךָ אֶתְּנֶנּוּ, I depart not therefrom. Ven. : rotundior et facilius constructio in Ps. The reading in 2 Sam. is closely related to that in Deut., comp. v. 29, xvii. 11.



sinful doing as the doing of man. To suppose, with De Wette and others, that the expression means, that iniquity might not be mine, that I might not contract guilt, is groundless, as the simpler exposition affords so beautiful a sense, and one so nearly allied to other declarations of David. Much light is thrown on the words, *from my sin*, by the narrative in 1 Sam. xxiv. David's cutting off the skirt of Saul's robe is to be regarded as the first step on the path to murder. This is clear from the connection in which it stands with the speeches of David's companions urging the killing of Saul, with which the act in question is immediately connected, and from ver. 5, which can only be explained on this supposition, "And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt." We see here how near the guilt lay to him, but, at the same time, how he kept himself from it. At the first step in the course of sin, he starts back, and expels from his heart, with abhorrence, the evil thoughts that arose in it. Certainly the Psalmist had here, as also in the preceding verses, his conduct toward Saul pre-eminently before his eyes, to whom he said in 1 Sam. xxvi. 23, 24: "*The Lord renders to every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness; for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation.*" What he there confidently *hopes* for on the ground of his righteousness, that he here describes as accorded to him on the same ground.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 24. *Thus the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands before His eyes.* The Psalmist returns, according to the plan already announced, to the proposition laid down in the introduction, in order to connect therewith the following general statements.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. ל is used for עמי—a valuable explanation, as the false renderings of עמי show. Then we find there the forms עָמִי and עָמִי. The form with He occurs in the Fut. with v. conv. in the Dav. Psalms, comp. iii. 6, vii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam. stands here, as in ver. 21, נִשְׁכָּרְתִּי. We find נִשְׁכָּרְתִּי likewise in 1 Sam. xxvi. 23, in David's mouth. For, "according to the cleanness or my hands," there is merely in 2 Sam., "according to my cleanness," כְּנִי. It also would not have been placed there, if the more common כְּנִי

Ver. 25. *Toward the pious Thou art pious, toward the upright Thou art upright*: Ver. 26. *Toward the pure Thou art pure, and toward the perverse Thou art perverse*. The transition here from the particular to the general, equivalent to, "for so Thou dost *always* act," shows why David laid so much stress on the particular; that he had therein a didactic purpose in view, spoke of himself, not from vain self-conceit, but rather self-denyingly,—had in view, not his own honour, but God's honour, and his neighbour's edification. The expression has something peculiar, which vanishes, however, as soon as it is perceived that the Psalmist here, in order to express as pointedly as possible the thought, that God regulates His procedure toward men exactly according to men's procedure toward Him, so describes the conduct of God toward the wicked, as it would appear apart from the abnormal relation in which they had placed themselves toward Him. That which, considered in itself, would be unloving, impure, perverse, appears, when done by way of reprisals towards the unloving, impure, perverse, as alone worthy of God, as the necessary outflow of His holiness: that which, considered in itself, seems perverse, is the only right. But to the sinner, who lacks the sense of sin and its damnableness, the conduct of God, which is determined by sin, and is justified thereby, appears really unloving, impure, and perverse. He imagines God to be a hard, envious, and malignant tyrant and despot. Against such an imagination the whole of the 32d ch. of Deut. is directed. A similar mode of speech prevails in Lev. xxvi. 23, 24, "If ye will walk perversely toward Me, then will I also walk perversely toward you." The נָבַר is the rarer poetical form for נָבַר. The Hithpael of all the four verbs seems to have been first formed by David expressly for the purpose of painting, in the most vivid colours, the Divine justice. The Hithp. of בָּרַר is found only once elsewhere, in Dan. xii. 10, and of the three other verbs nowhere else.<sup>1</sup>

had not been used before in ver. 21. It is justified by the נָבַר in ver. 27, to which it forms the transition.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam., instead of נָבַר stands נָבַר, which is as little to be rejected, as it is original. נָבַר means only hero, and the other significations are to be derived from this, according to the pattern in Isa. v. 22, "Woe to the heroes in drinking wine." The expression, "a hero, unblameable," denotes either one who excels in unblameableness, or better, it indicates that heroic power belongs to unblameableness, equivalent to, "with the unpunishable man, who is to be esteemed as a hero, who is a hero in the spiritual sphere"—

Ver. 27. *For Thou helpst the poor people, and the lofty eyes Thou bringest down.* The reason implied in *for* consists only in the further enlargement. עני, which always, and without exception, consequently also here, means *poor*, not *humble*, meek, is more exactly defined by the preceding context (Muis: "whom he had before called holy, innocent, clean, he now names afflicted, intimating that it is almost the destiny of the pious in this life to be afflicted with innumerable evils") and by the contrast, though it necessarily involves this meaning in itself, inasmuch as only the righteous are, in the strict sense, sufferers; comp. the illustration in the introd. to Ps. vi.—עם, "people," characterizes the עניים as a society, as an exclusive class of men, which stands opposed to another class just as exclusive. The lowering of the lofty eyes denotes the humiliation of the proud, who exalt themselves superciliously above all, and, despising the Divine law, tread their neighbours under their feet. The general sentiment of our text is best exemplified by the relation of David and Saul, which was the particular case on which the general declaration is here based.<sup>1</sup>

comp. in ver. 23: from mine iniquity. Further, there are in 2 Sam. the two forms עָרַף and עָרַף. These forms, of which the last in particular can with difficulty be justified grammatically, are formed on account of euphony and similarity of sound, the first with reference to עָרַף, the second on account of similarity of sound to עָרַף. If one reflects, that the Hithpael of these verbs does not occur elsewhere, that the formation itself was undertaken in the interest of the context, and that every uncertainty was thereby removed from the existing original text, one will be inclined to defend these readings from the attacks which some recent critics have brought against them.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. stands first, *and Thou deliverest*, instead of *for Thou*. As עז is only an explication, there was no way of avoiding its frequent repetition, recurring as it does at the beginning of ver. 29 and ver. 30, but by substituting the mere copulative ו, which is important for the exposition of the עז. Instead of simple עז there is in 2 Sam. עז וְעָרַף. The וְ draws attention to the fact, that even without the article the word must have a determinate sense, comp. Ewald, § 524; the article being only left out poetically. The second member runs in 2 Sam.: וְעָרַף עֵינֶיךָ בְּעָרְפִי, "and Thine eyes are against the high, that Thou mayest bring them down;" comp. Isa. ii. 12, "For the day of the Lord of Hosts is upon everything that is high, עז, that it may be brought low, עָרַף;" also ver. 17. Here again in 2 Sam., the more select expression is employed. Lengerke and Hitzig explain, "Thine eyes Thou lettest down against proud men." But the deviations in 2 Sam. are only variations, having the same radical sense,—a circumstance which decidedly contradicts the accidental origin of the differences; then the ex-

We come now to the second great representation of the Divine grace and help, reaching from ver. 28 to ver. 45. This is connected with the preceding by *for*. David had described his deliverance from the hand of Saul as the consequence of his righteousness, and then, rising from the particular to the general, had laid down the principle, that righteousness is always the ground of salvation. Here he descends from the general to the particular, confirms the general principle from his own experience, and shows how its truth had been manifested in the help already received, and would still further be shown in that which the Divine promise made him sure of still further receiving. In regard to the Divine favour, which David celebrates in this section, a twofold view presents itself. According to the one, the whole representation refers merely to the past; according to the other, to the past, present, and future alike: David is supposed to glorify the grace which, without including the deliverance from the hand of Saul, spoken of in the preceding section, he had already in part received, and which, in part, the Divine promise gave him reason to expect, not only in his own person, but also in his posterity. The last view is the only correct one. It is supported, 1. By the almost uniform use of the Future in this representation, designative, according to this view, of continued action; whereas this use cannot be explained on the other view. 2. יִרְדֵּף, "I will pursue," in 2 Sam. ver. 38, which must at once be considered erroneous on the supposition that the whole representation has respect only to the past. 3. The express declaration of David at the close of the whole in ver. 50, which alone might suffice, affirming the object of his praise to be the favours which God manifests *to David and to his seed for ever*. There was the more reason for David's uniting the future with the past, as he possessed, in reference to it, a sure word of promise, which rendered the future salvation just as certain as the past. If we take this promise into account, and the deep impression which it had made upon the mind of David, we shall feel it to have been impossible for him to have wholly confined himself in this general song of thanksgiving to the past. The joyful confidence regarding the fulfilment of the promises made by the Lord towards  
 presson, "to make low the eyes," never occurs as a description of displeasure. Ps. cxiii. 6, to which Lengerke refers, has nothing to do with this; nor also Jer. iii. 12, Job xxxvi. 27, which Hitzig appeals to.

his house, David gives utterance to besides, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, in his last words. Nathan, in his address to David in 2 Sam. vii., connects both together, the past salvation and the future, the salvation of the person himself and that of his seed: comp. ver. 9, "And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name;" ver. 12, "And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, and I will establish his kingdom." How deep root this announcement of the future salvation struck into the mind of David, appears from vers. 18, 19, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come;" ver. 25, "And now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said;" vers. 28, 29, "And now," etc. By holding fast the right view in regard to the object of the representation, it follows also, that it unfolds a Messianic element. If it respects David and his seed for evermore, it can find its complete truth only in Christ.

Ver. 28. *For Thou makest my lamp clear; the Lord my God makes my darkness light.* The shining of the lamp is an image of prosperity, just as its extinguishment is an image of misfortune; comp. Job xviii. 5, 6, "The light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his lamp shall be put up; on him;" xxi. 17. The Lord had enlightened David's darkness; raised him from the state of inferiority, contempt, and misery, in which he was, especially during the days of Saul, to high honour and great prosperity; and the Lord will further also enlighten David's darkness, by causing to shine upon him and his seed, amid every season of darkness and distress, the light of His salvation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. the verse runs, "For Thou art my light, O Lord; and the Lord makes my darkness light." The admissibility of לְאִישׁוֹ נֵר, doubted by Hitzig and others, shines out still more clearly than in Ps. xxvii. 1, Job xxix. 3, from 2 Sam. xxi. 17, where David is named the lamp or light of Israel. His people say to him, "Thou shalt no more go out with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel." Probably these words

Ver. 29. *For in Thee do I rush upon troops, and in my God I spring over walls.* Luther: "In confidence on Thee I am terrified at no assault, contend against all kinds of enemies, leap over all walls, and whatever else is opposed to me; that is, I, who in myself am weak, shall be invincible in Thee; and as Paul boasts in Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me," and in 2 Cor. ii. 14, "God be thanked, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ." The **נ** in both cases retains its common signification, *in*. David was not in himself, but in God, from whose fulness he drew power and salvation. The **רָן**, "to run," is, as a verb of motion, construed with the accus.

Ver. 30. *The God, whose way is perfect: the word of the Lord is purified; He is a buckler to all who trust in Him.* The **הָאֵל** is in appos. with **אֱלֹהֵי** in the preceding verse. The Psalmist describes more exactly what sort of God his God is. Taking it as nomin. absol., the article remains inexplicable. In the second clause, the connection with the preceding verse is then given up. But the whole of the verse stands in the closest connection therewith. What is here said of God, explains and grounds the expressions there, *in Thee*, and *in my God*; the God whose way, etc., equivalent to, "for He is a God," etc., very different from the idol-gods, who feed their votaries with wind and ashes; comp. 2 Sam. vii. 22, "For there is none like Thee, neither is there any God besides Thee." By the word of the Lord, is here specially to be understood His promises. On the expression *purified*, comp. Ps. xii. 6.

Ver. 31. *For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, besides our God?* The *for* refers to the subject of the whole preceding verse, "The way of Jehovah, our God, is blameless;" He abides by what He has spoken, supports His own, *for* He is the only true God, the one ground of salvation. Upon this also, that Jehovah is exclusively God, David grounds his confidence in 2 Sam. vii. For **צֹר**, comp. on ver. 2.

Ver. 32. *The God, who girds me with power, and makes my way perfect.* A return is here made to the path which was left in vers. 30 and 31, with a very close allusion, however, to what immediately precedes. **הָאֵל** stands in appos. to **אֱלֹהֵינוּ**, "besides" occasioned the variation in 2 Sam. David gives God the glory which they had ascribed to him. If he is Israel's lamp, it can only be by God being his.

our God, the God, who, etc." That the Lord alone is God and a rock, David confirms by the fact, that He has manifested Himself as such in His dealings. To be girded with power, is simply equivalent to being furnished with power. Verbs of *clothing* are frequently used in the sense of *allotting*. As *המים* is always used in a *moral* sense, we must not understand by the *way* of the Psalmist, that in which he goes, but only that in which he is led, his *leading*. It is favoured also by ver. 30, where the word is likewise used in a moral sense, and refers to God, and by the original passage, Deut. xxxii. 4, "The rock, perfect is His work."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 33. *Who makes my feet like hinds, and places me upon my heights.* *משה*, like *מלמד* in the next verse, connects itself with *האל*, "our God, who girds me, who makes me like;" who teaches. Like the hinds, that is, as to their feet. That hinds, and not stags, are here mentioned, must have a real or a supposed foundation in nature. They must be regarded as the fleetest. For, that the word denotes both sexes, is incorrect. In Egyptian paintings also, the hind is the image of fleetness. Many, as De Wette, conceive that the discourse here is of speed in flight. But this is against the connection—the words, "who maketh like hinds, etc.," occupy a middle position between equipment with strength and instruction in war—against the parallelism, and against the parallel passages: 2 Sam. ii. 18, "And Asahel was light of foot as one of the gazelles that is in the field, and he *pursued*, etc.;" and 1 Chron. xii. 8, where it is said of those who came out of the tribe of Gad to David, that their look was like that of lions, and their swiftness of foot like the gazelles on the mountains. A figurative element lies in what is said here of fleetness, which becomes quite obvious when we take it along with the last clause, and compare it also

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam., the first clause runs *האל קדש ה'י*, "the God who is my strong fortress." Before *ה'י* a comma is to be supplied, precisely as *ה'י* in Ps. lxxi. 7. We are not to imagine, with Lengerke, a stat. constr. interrupted by a suff. The *ה'י* occurs precisely as in Ps. xxvii. 1, "The Lord is the fortress of my life," Ps. xxxi. 4. Hitzig objects to this reading its "meaningless generality;" but it is not more general than the other, and, as a variation, certainly excellent. The second clause is *והאל קדש ה'י*, "and the upright He leads his way," is his leader and guide. *ה'י*=*ה'י*, which in Prov. xii. 26 occurs in the sense of *to lead*, comp. Umbreit in loc. The suff. in *ה'י* is, on account of the following *ה'י*, to be referred to the blameless, perfect. The Kri *ה'י* rests on a misunderstanding.

with the dependent passage, Hab. iii. 19. David points to the quick and unrestrained course of his conquests, just as already in ver. 29, the words, "I spring over walls," do not refer simply to David's personal deeds, but to what he did also by his army. In the second clause, the heights are the hostile positions, which David in the strength of the Lord surmounts. He names these heights *his* in faith; because he has the Lord for his helper, he considers them all beforehand as his possession, none are insurmountable. That we are not, with De Wette and others, to understand by the heights, *places of refuge*, is clear, not only from the context and parallelism, but also from the original passages in Deut. xxxii. 13, "He made him ride upon the high places of the earth," and Deut. xxxiii. 29, "thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places," in which, not secure flight, but resistless victory is spoken of, as it is also in the passage, Hab. iii. 19, which is based on our verse, "The Lord is my strength, and He makes my feet like the hind's, and He leads me on my high places."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 34. *Who teaches my hands in the war, and a brazen bow is drawn by my arms.* That this verse also has in some measure a figurative character, that the particular comes into consideration less as such than as an individualization, and in order to render palpable the ground-idea, namely, the invincible strength, which the Psalmist receives from God, to resist all attacks of the enemies and gain the victory over them, appears from the partial reference to the race. The N. T. parallel passage is 2 Cor. x. 3-5. The "not after the flesh," and "not fleshly," there, are not peculiar to the Apostle, but belong also to David. The external conflict with the enemies of God's kingdom is not in itself fleshly, but becomes so only through the spirit in which it is conducted, just as a *spiritual* conflict is not necessarily *spiritual*, but only is so when it is fought with divine weapons, with the power which the Lord imparts. Luther justly finds in this verse the promise, that an "unwearied and invincible power to overcome all adversaries is given to those preachers who are taught of God Himself." Such a promise is implied, not merely in so far as what is said of one believer holds good regarding all, but also more directly inasmuch as David speaks here not of himself alone, but of his

<sup>1</sup> The *לַחֲמֵי*, "his feet," in 2 Sam., has been occasioned by the discourse concerning the blameless or perfect being in the third person.



whole race, which is perfected in Christ; so that everything he says refers in the highest and fullest sense to Christ and His kingdom and servants. The form נַחַת is Pi. from נָחַת "to descend," "to make to descend" = to constrain, to stretch, bend, because in the stretching the cord is brought down. The fem. of the sing. is to be explained by this, that the arms here are treated as abstr.; comp. Ewald, p. 629. Also the sing. of the masc. in 2 Sam., נִיחַת, presents no difficulty, as the verb precedes. Brass was often used in antiquity for making weapons. The arms of the Egyptians in particular were entirely made of brass. To draw a bow of brass is a proof of the greatest strength.

Ver. 35. *Thou givest me the shield of Thy salvation, and Thy right hand holds me up, and Thy lowliness makes me great.* The shield of salvation is the shield which consists in salvation. עֲנָה does not signify here simply *goodness*, as many expositors suppose. Derived from עָנָה, to be low—in this sense, certainly of outward lowness, the verb occurs in Ps. cxvi. 10; Isa. xxv. 5, —it denotes, first, humility, then the meekness and gentleness which spring from humility. The idea of lowliness predominates in Prov. xv. 33, xxii. 12; the idea of meekness, which, however, is always to be considered as proceeding from humility or lowliness, in Zeph. ii. 3; Ps. xlv. 4. Here the idea of lowliness is the predominant one. This is proved by the contrast with greatness, and the parallel passage 2 Sam. vii. 18, "Who am I, Jehovah, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" What our Lord says of Himself, "Come to Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart," may equally be said of Jehovah. He also condescends to the lowly, to men at large, and to those who are poorest among them; comp. Ps. viii., where, after the description of God's infinite majesty, follows, "What is man, that Thou thinkest of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" and Isa. lxvi. 1, 2, where the Lord, who has heaven for His throne, and earth for His footstool, is spoken of as looking down on the poor and contrite in spirit. But that we may become partakers in the manifestations of this humility and condescension of God, it is necessary that we be, not externally merely, but also internally, lowly,—that we *feel* ourselves to be poor and needy. To any others it would be a profanation of His dignity. But the lowly His lowliness makes great. That this qualification was possessed by David, is evident from this, that he derives all that God had done for

him out of his lowliness. Luther remarks: "Who then are we, that we should either fancy or undertake to defend the truth and overcome the adversaries, or should feel indignant if we do not succeed therein? It proceeds from the Divine meekness (lowliness) and grace, if we are held up and honoured, not from our designing and undertaking; so that the whole glory remains with God."<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 36. *Thou makest space under me to go, and my ankles fail not. Thou makest long my step, etc.* One takes small steps, when many stumbling-blocks and hindrances are in the way.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 37. *I pursue my enemies and overtake them; and turn not again till I have consumed them.* David's kingdom was, is, and shall be for ever a victorious kingdom. Any temporal limitation also of this declaration is inadmissible, as David's celebration of the Divine grace cannot be narrower than this grace itself, partly already bestowed on him, and partly held in promise, which found its culminating point in Christ. That under Christ the form of conflict and victory is predominantly, although by no means exclusively different, makes no essential distinction; enough, that David also in Him conquers and constantly will conquer. Luther: "And this has happened, and still happens, in all the victories of God's people, when at the beginning of the contest the enemies seemed to be superior and invincible; but when once the onset is fairly made, it is strengthened, and the enemies flee and are slain; and then the Church remits not to follow up the victory that has been won, until all the enemies are consumed."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. "and Thy right hand holds me up" is wanting. This is done out of the uniform predilection for impressive brevity. For "Thy lowliness" the infin. is used,  $\text{נִשְׁתַּלְּחַת}$ , "Thy being lowly,"—Hitzig's exposition, "Thy hearing," gives, according to his own remark, "a very unpleasant and improbable sense,"—which is the more select, as in the words, "O my Lord Jesus, Thy being near," is more poetical than, "Thy nearness."

<sup>2</sup> For  $\text{נִשְׁתַּלְּחַת}$  there is in 2 Sam.  $\text{נִשְׁתַּלְּחַת}$ . The difference cannot be accidental, as the latter is repeated in vers. 40 and 48. In this case also the reading in 2 Sam. is the more select, 1. Because of the rare singular suff. with  $\text{נִשְׁתַּלְּחַת}$ , see Ew. p. 504; and, 2. Because of the insertion of  $\text{נִשְׁתַּלְּחַת}$ , ib. p. 506.

<sup>3</sup> The  $\text{נִשְׁתַּלְּחַת}$  in 2 Sam., which can only mean, *I will pursue*, could only be rejected on the erroneous supposition that the whole description referred to the past, and it is valuable as a sort of finger-post for the right understanding. For, "and I overtake them," 2 Sam. has "and I extirpate them." In our Psalm there is a progression in the thought; in 2 Sam., on

Ver. 38. *I dash them in pieces, and they cannot rise up again; they fall under my feet.*<sup>1</sup> Ver. 39. *And Thou girdest me with strength to the battle, Thou bowest mine adversaries under me.* Calvin remarks, that it might seem as if David gave too military an air to the whole representation, as if he gave to his human passions too much space, and forgot the mildness which should shine forth in all believers, in order that they may be like their heavenly Father. But the matter becomes quite different, if David is viewed not as a private individual,—as such he shrunk from shedding a single drop of blood,—but in reference to his Divine calling and his Divine office. As king, he has his sacred obligations to pursue the stiff-necked and obstinate enemies of God and of His people with unrelenting strictness, and with the power given him by God, and to spare only the penitent—just as Christ, his great antitype, while He tenderly calls all to repentance, at the same time shivers with His iron sceptre such as obstinately resist Him to the last. He then shows how every one, even he who is not properly called to fight for the kingdom of God against external enemies, has to apply this representation to his edification and strengthening in the faith: “As the victories of David are common to us, it follows that an insuperable aid is promised to us against all the assaults of the devil, all the snares of sin, and all the temptations of the flesh. While, therefore, Christ obtains His peaceful kingdom only through war, it is matter of certainty to us, that God’s hand will be always ready for his support. But we must at the same time learn here, with what arms we must fight according to the will of God, with those alone which He gives us.”<sup>2</sup>

the contrary, the parallelism is simply a synonym. That in Ex. xv. 9; Ps. vii. 5, the overtaking is also coupled with the pursuing, may be a strong proof in favour of the originality of this form, although it does not in the slightest imply the incorrectness of the other text.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. there is at the beginning, וַיִּשְׁחָטוּם; Mich. rightly: *consumam inquam eos*; and instead of, “they cannot stand up,” “they do not stand up,” וְלֹא יִשְׁתָּקְמוּ. The expression, “I extirpate them,” indicates that this verse is an extension of the thought, “till they are extirpated,” in the preceding, and implying that the extirpation was seriously intended. Of an accidental origin we cannot think, as, whilst something is added, something also is thrown away. The words, “they stand not up,” are to be explained from the predilection for impressive brevity.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam., וְלֹא יִשְׁתָּקְמוּ, with the omission of וְלֹא, the rarer, and hence more poetic form.

Ver. 40. *Thou puttest me mine enemies to flight, and my haters I extirpate.* The first clause we must either render, "Thou hast given them to me so, that they are only necks to me, must turn the back toward me," or, "in respect to the neck," so that עֶרֶף determines more precisely in what respect the enemies of David were delivered up to him. The former exposition is supported by the original passage, Ex. xxiii. 27, "And I will give all thine enemies to thee as necks." The Psalmist recognises in his own case the fulfilment of the promise which the Lord there gave to His people.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 41. *They cry, but there is no helper: to the Lord, but He does not hear them.* עַל is employed, because Jehovah is, as it were, the substratum of the crying, the person upon whom the crying rests; comp. 1 Sam. i. 10, "She prayed על יהוה," Ewald, p. 531. "The words, 'to the Lord,' add to the general, the particular which best promised help, equivalent to, 'they cry in vain even when their cry is addressed, not to false gods, but to Jehovah,' to whom even the heathens in their last extremities knew to turn, Jonah ii. 14, or at least might possibly turn. The reason why even Jehovah would not hear, is, that the particular prayer had not its justification in the general relation toward God, which alone could make it acceptable; that the persons addressing it are without the covenant and the promises, are the enemies of God, who cannot pray to Him in true faith, but only by way of venture. That which was the ground of David's prayer being heard, excluded theirs from the privilege."<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 42. *I crush them as dust before the wind; as the dirt of the streets I pour them out.* As the dust before the wind is not crushed, but carried away, and the enemies are not carried away, but crushed, we gain nothing by arbitrarily inserting such words as, scattering, or carrying away. The sense, therefore, is, "so that they resemble the dust;" to crush them is as easy as for

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam., for נִחַם there is the rare form נִחַם. The ך is wanting before נִחַם, and is placed instead before the last word, "my haters," whom I extirpate,—more poetical and impressive than the simple, "my haters, I extirpate them;" comp. Isa. vi. 13, ix. 4; Dan. viii. 25.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam., instead of יִשְׁעוּ, "they cry," we have יִשְׁעוּ, "they look out." The rarer and more select שָׁח is used precisely thus in Isa. xvii. 7, "In that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the God of Israel." For לֵב the explanatory אֵין is substituted.

the wind to drive before it the dust. The sense is, "to crush is only a sort of pastime to me." Exactly analogous are the comparisons in Job xxxviii. 30, "The waters disappear like a stone;" xxx. 14; Zeph. i. 17. The like holds good also of the second member. As the dirt of the street is not poured out, but trodden down, the expression, "as dirt of the street," can only mean, "they resemble the dirt of the street, in respect, namely, to the contemptuous treatment which they suffer." This is always the point of comparison which is aimed at in such a use of the dirt of the street: Isa. x. 6; Zech. x. 5. In the expression, "I pour them out," there is at bottom a second image, that of unclean water,—equivalent to, "I have as little respect for them, I use as little ceremony with them as with the offscourings which one treads upon, filthy water which one pours out." In these words, also, there is praise given to the grace of God, who strengthens the Psalmist so completely to humble the enemies, that he can treat them in such a manner.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 43. *Thou deliverest me from the enmities of the people: Thou settest me at the head of the heathen; a people, whom I know not, serve me.* By the people in the first clause, is indicated here the great multitude of enemies, in opposition to individuals. That the first member refers to the domestic adversaries of David (Saul and Absalom, with their adherents), is evident, not only from the words, "my people," in 2 Sam., but even from כָּרִי, which relates rather to disputes than to wars; comp.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. the comparison stands otherwise, in both members. There we have a fully expressed one, while here it is merely indicated. For, "dust before the wind," stands, "dust of the earth," because this is the object of crushing. Comp. אֶרֶץ אֶדְמָה in this sense, though denied by Hitzig, in Gen. xiii. 16, xxviii. 14; Ex. viii. 12, 13; Isa. xl. 12; Amos ii. 7. For, "I pour them out," stands אֶרֶץ, "I make them thin or small," because the dirt of the street is the object, not of pouring out, but of treading to pieces. (Against Hitzig: אֶרֶץ signifies in Hiph. not "to crush, to rub to pieces," but everywhere, "to make thin, small;" also the dirt of the street, or street-filth, is not to be thought of as necessarily fluid.) As this אֶרֶץ cannot possibly be accidental, we may certainly infer design in the other deviations which consist only in the substitution of particular letters nearly related to the others in form or in sound. The judgment of that man is not assuredly to be envied, who would attempt to explain the whole of the ingenious alterations in both members by accident. The stronger word, אֶרֶץ, "I stamp upon them," is added to אֶרֶץ, in 2 Sam., and that, too, without connection, as the character of the entire recension would lead us to expect.

Ps. xxxv. 1; 1 Sam. xxv. 39. In the whole of the second part, too, which refers to his heathen adversaries, he does not speak of deliverance from them, but of their being conquered and destroyed. On the contrary, when domestic enemies are spoken of, the idea is principally that of deliverance; comp. 16-19. Deliverance from the enmity of his own people is brought into notice here chiefly as a foundation and preparation for the supremacy over the heathen. This appears clearly in 2 Sam., in the words, "Thou *keepest* me for the head of the heathen." The whole context also shows it. Both before and after, and, indeed, generally in the second part, the discourse is of the heathen. That in the expression, "a people whom I know not, serves me," which is of increased force, the word *knowing* is to be taken emphatically, equivalent to, "such as I have had no nearer relation to,"—as, for example, the king of Hamath, 2 Sam. viii. 10,—appears from the next verse. As David, according to ver. 50, speaks not merely of the kindnesses which were shown to himself personally, but of those also which were to be shown to his posterity, various expositors, such as Calvin, have justly remarked, that the complete fulfilment of this and the next verse is to be sought in Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 44. *Those who heard by the hearing of the ear became mine: the sons of the stranger play the hypocrite to me.* De Wette remarks, that "from this point the Futs. appear to have the force of the Present." But if they have it from this, they must also have it throughout the whole section. For there is nothing to justify us in supposing a change to take place just here. The first member is commonly expounded, "on hearing, on the mere report, they obey me." But this exposition is altogether inadmissible: שָׁמַע in Niph. can only signify "to be heard," not, "to be made to hear,"—and this cannot stand for, "to obey." In the sense of "to be heard," Niph'al is also everywhere used. More objectionable still is another exposition, "on

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. stands אֶת־עַמִּי, my people, instead of אֶת־יְהוָה, a deviation of an explanatory character, the more valuable, as many expositors, such as Lengerke and De Wette, who disdained its help, have made mistakes. For, "Thou settest me," there is the more select phrase, "Thou keepest me," אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי—another example of a change adhering closely in form to the original text, which cannot be explained from accident,—which brings more distinctly into view the connection between the second clause and the first. Hitzig: "Out of these Jehovah delivered him," in order to preserve him for a future leader of peoples.

what their ear heard, on the mere word, they obey me." For it takes not only *שמעו*, but also *לשמע און*, contrary to the common usage. *שמע*, "hearing" = what one hears, the heard, stands both with and without *און* specially of that, which one receives through hearsay, through report; comp. for ex. Job xlii. 5, where *לשמע און*, in the sense of hearing merely through report, is opposed to *seeing*,—uncertain and fluctuating knowledge, to clear and determinate. The variation in 2 Sam. also is against both interpretations. One must either translate as we have done above, or, "they, the people who serve me, are heard of me by the hearing of the ear,—I know of them merely by report." The paral. is by the latter rendering only apparently lost. For, "by the hearing of the ear, etc.," is from the connection as much as, "there serve me those, etc." The first of these expositions, both which are in essential agreement, is more favoured by the text in 2 Sam. The expression, "they feign to me," is equivalent to, "far distant people, of whom I hitherto have known only through hearsay, testify to me their subjection, from fear, in the most humble terms, although they hate me in heart, and would fain shake off my yoke." Such an external and constrained obedience,—just on account of its bearing this character, the power which God manifested in behalf of David is made more conspicuous; for how great must this be, when the fear it awakened overcame the strongest aversion!—is denoted by *חז"ז* in the original passage, Deut. xxxiii. 29, "And Thine enemies shall feign to Thee," to which David here refers, as having met with its fulfilment in him; comp. also Ps. lxvi. 3, lxxxi. 15.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 45. *The sons of the stranger fade away, and tremble out of their castles.* For the *ἀπ. λει.* *חרג*—in Chald. *חרגא*, "terror"

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. : "The sons of the stranger feign to me, who, through the hearing of the ear, were heard of by me." The sense is made clearer by the inversion. By placing "the sons of the stranger" in the front, it is intimated that what follows, "who through the hearing, etc.," is a mere description of them. The *חז"ז*, inf. used instead of the less obvious noun, has also the character of an explanation. How necessary this explanatory style is in the variation, appears from the fact, that those who have not availed themselves of the key offered by it have quite failed to discover the true meaning. But *our* text is shown to be the original and main text, by the circumstance that the words, "who through the hearing," etc., are immediately joined to the others, "a people that I know not," the *חז"ז* being placed nearer to the next verse, in which it is again resumed.

—we have in Mich. vii. 17, רָטַן, “to shake,” in a precisely similar connection.<sup>1</sup>

In the closing verses, which now begin, the subject of the whole is recapitulated.

Ver. 46. *Living is the Lord, and praised be my rock, and exalted is my salvation-God.* That the threefold praise of God here, has respect to the Mosaic blessing, we remarked before. The words, “living Jehovah,” can either be explained, “living is,” or, “living be Jehovah.” Recent expositors mostly follow the latter rendering: they conceive that the usual acclamation to the king is here transferred to God. But as the expression, “may he live,” presupposes the possibility of dying, and is always used in reference to mortals, such a transference is scarcely to be thought of; the formula for kings is a different one, *יְיָ הַחַי*, 1 Sam. x. 24; 2 Sam. xvi. 16; 1 Kings i. 25; 2 Kings xi. 12; and finally, what of itself is enough to decide the matter, *חַי יְיָ*, is familiar as a form of oath, and in that use always means, “living is the Lord.” These passages are regulative for the exposition of the present one, the only one where the expression occurs not as an oath. The ground derived from the analogy of the following doxologies is without significance. The expression, “living is the Lord,” is also doxology, and accords with what follows. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 16, “who alone has immortality.” To praise God, means nothing else than to ascribe to Him the glorious perfections which He possesses; for we can only give to Him what is His own. The *exalted* also is a mere declaration, “He is,” not, “let Him be, exalted.” If it were a wish, then the verb would have been the Fut. apoc. The Lord is named *living* in contrast with the dead idols, who can do nothing, leave their own without support, given up to destruction. That David was living, exalted, and blessed, showed that his God was also living, exalted, and to be blessed. He is Himself the living proof of His vitality, exaltedness, and title to be praised.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. *וַיִּקְדְּמוּ*, “they gird themselves,” namely, for going forth. Hitzig expounds according to the Syriac: “they *limp* out of their castles.” But it is quite unjustifiable to take a word of such common use in the Hebrew in a signification so peculiar. The girding for departure, Ex. xii. 11, and especially 2 Kings iv. 29. As a variation, the reading is quite good, but certainly that in our text is the original one.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam. we have, for my salvation-God, the rock-God of my salvation, i.e. the rock-like God, who procures me salvation. Comp. the ex-



Ver. 47. *The God, who gives me vengeance, and constrains peoples under me.* This and the following verse sum up in brief what had been set forth in detail in vers. 4-19 and vers. 28-45, and direct attention to the ground of the praise of God in the preceding verse, to the facts which prove Him to be living, exalted, and worthy to be praised. It is as if this verse had begun with a *for*. Revenge is justly sweet to David, because he does not take it for himself, but God takes it through him. Where the individual is the representative of right appointed by God, it would be sinful not to seek revenge, not to withstand the violation of right, not to strive, that injustice may recoil on the head of those who commit it, and not to rejoice when this takes place.<sup>1</sup>

Ver. 48. *Who deliverest me from my enemies; Thou also liftest me up from my adversaries, from the man of violence Thou deliverest me.* As in the second clause there is no positive indication either in the verb or in the noun of a climax, *וְאַתָּה* cannot be used to denote increased force, but, as very commonly in the Psalms of David, simply for the purpose of connecting and adding; and the *and* in 2 Sam. approves itself as the right exposition. If we seek for an increase of force in the noun, then *וְאַתָּה* causes us perplexity; if we seek it in the verb, we are again perplexed by the words, "Thou deliverest me," in the third clause. The expression, "Thou liftest me up from my adversaries," is constr. præg.: *exaltas me, hostibus meis ereptum*. The man of violence is primarily an ideal person, as, "the strong enemy," in ver. 17; comp. Ps. cxl. 1, 4. Still the reference to the superscription shows that the Psalmist had Saul specially in view.<sup>2</sup>

Ver. 49. *Therefore will I praise Thee among the heathen, O Lord, and sing praises to Thy name.* The mention of the heathen indicates, that the mercies experienced by David were too great for the praise of them to be confined within the narrow bounds of Palestine. He can only have a proper auditory in the nations of the whole earth. Paul brings forward, in Rom.

pression, my rock-God, in ver. 2. The interpolated *וְאַתָּה* is used, like so many other deviations in 2 Sam., for the purpose of strengthening.

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Sam. for *וְאַתָּה*, with the view of making plain, *וְאַתָּה*, and brings down. The *וְאַתָּה* in the sense of, "to drive," only elsewhere in Ps. xlvii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> In 2 Sam. stands, instead of *וְאַתָּה*, the more select *וְאַתָּה*, pointing to ver. 19. Further, instead of *וְאַתָּה* there is the stronger phrase *וְאַתָּה*, which also occurs in Ps. cxl. 1, 4.

xv. 9, among the Old Testament passages which show that salvation was appointed also for the heathen, this verse, in connection with the similar passage, Deut. xxxii. 43, "Rejoice, ye heathen, (rejoice) His people," i. q. with His people, Ps. cxvii. 1. These passages are quite adapted to prove what they are intended to prove. If the heathen are interested in that which Jehovah does in Israel, if they also belong to the auditory to which His great deeds are to be made known, then God must be the God not merely of the Jews, but also of the heathen, and consequently must make Himself known as such through the offer of His salvation. Our verse and the similar passages decidedly oppose that wretched particularism which Paul combats. The variations in 2 Sam. are unimportant.

Ver. 50. *Who gives great salvation to His king, and does good to His anointed, to David and his seed for evermore.* Who gives great, is equivalent to, "for He gives great." The pl. יְיָשׁוּעַת points to the rich fulness of the salvation. The Epexegesis to מַשִּׁיחוֹ is not merely לְדָוִד, but לְדָוִד וּלְרֵעֵהוּ. There is an evident reference to 2 Sam. vii. 12-16, where it was promised, that God would show favour to the seed of David even to eternity; חֶסֶד, זֶרַע, and עַד עוֹלָם, all occur there again. By this reference, and by the necessity for a guide to the meaning of vers. 28-45, the words, "to David and his seed for evermore," are justified as genuine, though they have been objected to by some who fail to understand the description. Elsewhere too David has interwoven his name in his song and prayer; comp. 2 Sam. vii. 20, 26, xxiii. 1. Similar to our Psalm is Ps. lxxxix., where likewise the favours of the Lord to the seed of David, both past and future, are celebrated; comp. also Ps. xxi. These Psalms are distinguished from those which may more strictly be called Messianic, Ps. ii. xlv. lxxii. cx., only by this, that in the latter the Messiah *exclusively* is brought into view, while here He is presented to our notice only as a member of the seed of David.

## PSALM XIX.

God manifests Himself in creation, and His works in the heavens attest His glory, unceasingly, mightily, over the whole earth, especially the most glorious object in them, the sun, which majestically performs his long course, and fills everything with

his warmth, vers. 1-6. The law, which has been given by this world-God, possesses all the advantages which are inseparable from its originating in such a source ; it gives to man sure and unerring instruction how to order his life, and fills his heart with joy, by bringing his painful uncertainty in this respect to an end, vers. 7-10. With sincere gratitude the Psalmist acknowledges the enlightenment which he has received from this law, which, as surely as it is the pure expression of the will of the Almighty, so surely promises a rich reward to those who keep it. But that he may actually attain to this reward, he stands in need of two things,—the grace of forgiveness for the manifold sins of imperfection, which spring from corruption of nature even in the servant of the Lord, and the grace of preservation from the heinous transgressions, which would cause him to forfeit his place as a servant of God ; and therefore he begs that the Lord, as his true Redeemer, would grant such tokens of kindness to him, vers. 11-14.

According to this representation of the subject, the description of the glory of God in creation is only an introduction to the praise of the glory of the law ; and this again serves the Psalmist only as a ladder to reach his proper aim, the prayer for pardon and for moral preservation.

The relation between vers. 1-6 and 7-10 is, by some of those who recognise the introductory character of the first section, construed thus : God has manifested Himself indeed in creation, but He has done so far more gloriously in the law. But if it were intended to set forth this relation, the pre-eminence of the law above nature, as a manifestation of God, would have been brought out far more emphatically than is done by the employment of Jehovah in the second part, instead of the general name, God, in the first. If the introduction were intended to exalt the higher by comparison with the lower, in the manner of Deut. iv. 19, 20, the latter must have been marked more decidedly as such. The design of the introduction must rather be only to point out the glory of the lawgiver, to give to Jehovah, the God of Israel, who made known His will through the law, the basis of Godhead ; and so, to bring the mind from the very first into a right position toward the law. The thought, that He who gave the law is He whose praise the heavens declare, whose greatness as the Creator is manifested by the sun, must fill the mind with holy reverence before Him, and with

internal love toward Him. The first part, therefore, serves the same design as is elsewhere served by placing together the names Jehovah Elohim, which is always done in opposition to particularistic ideas of Jehovah, for the purpose of uprooting the fancy, that Jehovah was only the God of Israel (comp. my Beitr. Th. II. p. 311 ss.). To serve the very same purpose, David was led to the use of Jehovah Elohim and Sabaoth in his discourse in 2 Sam. vii. 22, 25, 26, 27 : there he constantly recurs to the thought, that Jehovah, who had given him so glorious a promise, was no other than very God, the Lord of heaven and of earth, in order to strengthen his faith in this promise. Especially instructive for the relation of our two sections to each other is ver. 28 there. "And now, O Lord Jehovah, Thou art God, and Thy words are truth." There, as here, the consideration of Jehovah's being God is the groundwork on which rests the conviction of the truth and infinite preciousness of the Divine word ; even as we also, if we would obtain the right blessing from reading the holy word, must keep vividly before our eye, that He who speaks in it is no other than the Creator of heaven and of earth.

The plan of the Psalm is quite mistaken by those who, as lately Hitzig and Maurer, make it fall into two loosely-connected halves, the first containing the praise of God from nature, the second from the law, or generally from revelation. The practical conclusion of the Psalm, which refers only to the law, is decisive against this. If the first part possessed an independent significance, the manifestation of God in creation must necessarily also have been placed in an ethical light toward man, and reference have been made to the feelings it should awaken in him, the obligations it lays upon him. The only aim, the proper kernel of the Psalm, comes out so pointedly in the concluding verses, that it is inconceivable how it could be overlooked.

This misapprehension as to the plan of the Psalm has given rise also to the hypothesis of De Wette, Koester, and others, that it is made up of two originally distinct songs ; against which Hitzig remarks, that ver. 6 forms no proper conclusion ; that the discourse would terminate when at its climax ; that the conclusion is for the second half alone too extended and solemn ; and shortly and ably sets aside the only plausible ground for this hypothesis, as follows : "The more quiet tone, the more equal movement in the second part, is to be explained from the

less arousing nature of the object, which does not fall within the sphere of perception." What is besides advanced by De Wette, that the poet, who began with such an elevated contemplation of nature, could scarcely close with the feelings of a bruised heart, falls at once to the ground, since the conclusion is just as full of joy as the beginning—what can be more joyful than for one to be able to name the Lord his Rock and his Redeemer!—and since even in the middle there is no trace of a bruised heart; the mind rises in face of human weakness, easily and without a struggle, to the blessed hope of Divine forgiveness, and sustaining grace.

It is also matter of surprise that Ewald was not superior to the common mutilation, although he feels himself obliged to recognise that the two halves are not in themselves complete: the first not, because, if viewed as independent, the song would be without all doctrine and application, without any intimation as to how man should praise God, or receive that praise of the heavens; it has thus the appearance of a torso, unsatisfactory and unanimating: the second not; for ver. 7 begins too coldly for a prayer. We might still further add, that the commencement would be an awkward one, the Psalmist would stumble at the gate into the house. So that the strange supposition must be resorted to, that the conclusion of the first half has been lost, and that a later poet has added to the fragment a new, unsuitable conclusion.

For the integrity of the Psalm, there is also to be mentioned the evident system which prevails in the use of the names of God throughout the whole. In the first part, which treats of the general manifestation of God in nature, the general name of God is employed, El; coincident with the transition to Revelation begins the use of the name Jehovah, the occurrence of which just seven times shows how much of design there is in the use made of the names of God. As a further proof of integrity, is to be noticed the peculiar prominence given to the sun in the first part, and indeed particularly toward the close. Corresponding to it in the second part, the law is held up as the spiritual sun; comp. the predicates, clear, pure, heart-quickening, eye-enlightening, also נָהָר in ver. 11. Finally, in Ps. viii., as here, the heaven appears as the proclaimer of the praise of God; and there also this representation has no independent meaning, but serves merely as a stepping-stone to the second part.

Of the Davidic authorship there can be no doubt, after the superscription, and the relation, already noticed, in which it stands to Ps. viii., and 2 Sam. vii. An indication has been sought, though without foundation, of the Psalmist's circumstances in ver. 13. The designation, "Thy servant," is meant to be appropriated by every one who recognises in the Psalm the expression of his own feelings. The Psalmist speaks from the soul of every pious man, and we have before us a truly congregational song.

Ver. 1. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows forth His handiwork.* Calvin: "There is nothing certainly in the smallest corners of the earth so dark and despicable that some traces of Divine power and wisdom are not discernible therein; but because a more expressive image is imprinted in the heavens, David made principal choice of these, in order that their glory might lead us to the contemplation of the whole world. For if any one has recognised God from the contemplation of the heavens, he cannot fail also to recognise and admire His wisdom in the smallest plants." In the East, the consideration of the heavens is peculiarly adapted to give a deep impression of the greatness of God as Creator. When C. Niebuhr, many years after his return from the East, lay in bed under the blindness and exhaustion of old age, "the glittering splendour of the nocturnal Asiatic sky, on which he had so often gazed, imaged itself to his mind in the hours of stillness, or its lofty vault and azure by day, and in this he found his sweetest enjoyment." The heavens and the firmament are personified, and the announcement of the glory of the Creator is attributed to them, which is apprehended in them by the pious mind. This personification is chosen with reference to the actual manifestation of God in the words contained in vers. 7-10. Instead of "the glory of God," Paul, in the passage Rom. i. 20, which is based on this here, has "eternal power and Godhead." That the firmament is identical with the heavens, appears from Gen. i. 8. It is the vault of heaven, in which are sun, moon, and stars, Gen. i. 14 ss., the shining witnesses of God's glory; in reference to which He bears the name of Sabaoth, God of hosts. The word, which occurs only once again in the Psalms, cl. 1, points back to the history of creation. Many, as De Wette, render הַגִּיד by, "to praise, to extol," and the expression, מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו, "what He can make and do by means of His almightiness and wis-

dom." Both, however, are inadmissible. The former can only signify *announce, show forth*, as both the usage and the paral. with כפר, "to relate," show, and מעשה ידיו, only, "the work of His hands." The firmament, whose very existence is a factual announcement of what God has made, testifies, at the same time (since doing proceeds from being), of the Creator, what He is, concerning His glory. It was justly remarked by Venema, that in substance the two members are to be regarded as supplementing one another, *q.d.*, "the heavens make known the work of God's hands, and thereby His glory;" or, "the heavens, as the work of God's hands, make known His glory." So also already Paul, in Rom. i. 20, "For the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."

Ver. 2. *Day unto day pours forth speech, and night unto night shows knowledge.* The naked thought is this, that the heavens, with their starry host, unceasingly testify of God's glory, since by day the sun constantly shines, and by night the moon and stars. The Psalmist expresses the thought in such a manner as to constitute the days and nights heralds of God's glory, communicating to their successors what they had learned from the heavens and from the firmament. The *speech* of the day can only be the echo of the speech of the heavens, and the knowledge of God's glory (דעת signifies only knowing, perception, insight, never news) which the night gives, is only such as has been furnished it by the heavens. This is evident from the relation in which אמר stands to מספרים, from the resumption of אמר in ver. 3, and the suffixes in ver. 4, which unquestionably refer back to the heavens, and which exclude all interruption of the reference to the heavens. The connection is destroyed by the remark of Stier: "We are to understand not merely what we see by day and night in the heavens, but, as the expression naturally imports (that is, if viewed without respect to the connection), all that is done by day and night under the heavens." Here, as also in Ps. viii., the discourse is merely of the testimony of the heavens. רביע, to cause to sputter forth, marks the rich fulness with which the testimony on all hands breaks forth.

Ver. 3. *There is not speech, and there are not words; their voice is not heard.* נשמע is pointed as partic.: "there is not a

heard one," their voice is not among the number of the heard. The suff. in קולם refers to the heavens and the firmament, and these are the very things of which speech and words are denied. The author points to the powerfulness of the testimony which the heavens deliver of God's glory. How strongly must the traces of God's glory be impressed upon them, when they need no speech to make Him known as their Creator, when they need only to be dumb-heralds of the Divine greatness, and notwithstanding declare and show forth! It is commonly supposed by those who follow this exposition, that the sense is first completed by the addition of the following verse: "They are indeed speechless, yet still their preaching is perceived throughout the whole earth," so loudly do they proclaim by their mere existence the glory of God. But this supposition is not necessary; just as well, and even better indeed, we can say, that *here* the powerfulness of the testimony is represented, and *there* the wide compass of its sphere. The more definite דברים is added to אמר, which admits of a more general construction, in order to signify, that we have here a discourse in the strict sense. Luther, Calvin, and others expound, "There is no speech and discourse where their voice is not heard." Calvin: "He extends through a silent contrast the efficacy of this testimony which the heavens give to their Creator; as if he said: Although the nations are very different in language, yet the heavens have a common speech for instructing all in like manner, and nothing but carelessness prevents all from being taught at the mouth of this one teacher." But it is to be objected to this exposition, that it takes אמר and דברים in the sense of *dialect, language*, in which the first certainly never occurs; nor is Gen. xi. 1 sufficient to establish it as properly belonging to the latter; that speech and language would not be very fitly connected with hearing; that it requires אמר to be taken in another sense than it was in ver. 2, and forcibly separates it from מספרים and מניד in ver. 1; and, finally, that it destroys the parallelism which manifestly exists between the expressions, "there is not speech, and there are not words," and, "their voice is not heard."—Others expound, after Vitringa: "There is, what day and night announce, no speech, and no words, whose voice one may not perceive," supplying אשר before בלי. But this gives a very tame sense; it destroys, like the other, the parallelism, and draws the whole into a single protracted period; to which it



may also be added, that, according to it, the suffix in קולם must be referred to "speech" and "words," while the analogy of the suffixes in the following verse decides for the reference to the heavens and the firmament, from which also the discourse and the knowledge proceed, which day and night deliver to each other.

Ver. 4. *Their line goes out over the whole earth, and their words even to the farthest bounds of the earth; He has made for the sun a tent in them.* The first clause has occasioned great trouble to expositors. But the difficulty is less an inherent than a derived one. It immediately vanishes, if we simply and faithfully abide by the established usage, and then only consider how the meaning thus acquired suits the context. The suffix in קום refers, as that in בהם unquestionably shows, to the heavens and the firmament. קו signifies a measuring-line. Such a line is used for determining the limits, the compass of the territory which any one has to receive; comp. for ex. Isa. xxxiv. 17, "His hand has divided it (Idumea) to them (the wild beasts), with the measuring-line; they shall possess it for ever; from generation to generation shall they dwell therein;" Ezek. xlvii. 3; Zech. i. 16. The measuring-line extends as far as the territory is to reach; comp. מצא in Isa. xv. 3 ss., and especially as connected with קו, Jer. xxxi. 39. Accordingly, the only legitimate translation is, "their measuring-line goes out over the whole earth;" and the only legitimate exposition, "the whole earth is their portion and territory." In what respect, is evident from the whole context, according to which the heavens can come into consideration merely as heralds of the Divine glory; and all doubt is removed by the second clause, which serves to explain the first, expressly pointing to this reference: their proclamation of the Divine glory limits itself not to some one region, but extends as far as the earth itself.—How untenable the current expositions are, is obvious from this, that Olshausen and Gesenius, finding no satisfaction in them, would read קולם for קום, their voice. The sense, *sound, speech*, which many ascribe to קו, it never has; nor can they with certainty appeal for it to the authority of the old translators, as it is doubtful whether these did not merely give a free rendering according to the sense. The signification, *string*, by which some would transfer it from the established meaning to what the context is here supposed to require, is inadmissible, as קו

never signifies string, but always specially measuring-line. Consequently the exposition of Ilitzig is also to be rejected, which imagines an uninterrupted *chain of hymns of praise*, with which day and night, or more properly the heavens and firmament, span the earth, "as we speak of the thread of a discourse." Ewald commits himself to still greater arbitrariness in the explanation of קו. Those who, as Stier, abide by the received signification of קו, explain, "as their extent reaches over the whole earth, so also, in like manner, their words." But this exposition destroys the parallelism, and understands the outgoing of the measuring-line of mere extent, whereas it must be regarded as designating the compass of the territory.

In the third clause the Psalmist makes special mention, among the heavenly works of God, of the sun, because it is the most glorious of them, and also from a special reference to the law as the spiritual sun. The suf. in בָּהֶם, which unquestionably refers to the heavens and the earth, shows that we must consider the speech and knowledge, which, according to ver. 2, day and night proclaim, as communicated to them by the heavens; and that the suf. מִן קוֹלֵם in ver. 3 must be referred, not, with many, to day and night, nor, with others, to the discourse and the words, but to the heavens; that not to day and night, but to the heavens is אֶמֶר, in its more restricted sense, as far as it is synonymous with דְּבָרִים, denied, and that also in the two first members of our verse the suffixes can only refer to the heavens. In a perfectly unreliable manner has De Wette sought to remove the invincible difficulty, arising from the reference of the suf. to a distant noun, by remarking, that the sun, as to thought, is comprehended in the preceding words, "to the end of the world." For this is equivalent to, "to the end of the heavens," where the sun had been mentioned. But הָבֵל, according to its derivation (prop. the bearing, fruit-bearing), signifies *earth*, not world, and is synonymous with the parallel אֶרֶץ. Then one does not see how there should have been a plural suf. De Wette's supposition, that it is used indeterminate, is a mere shift; Ps. xxxix. 6 cannot be compared, as there what is to be supplied is clearly given in the context. But to suppose, with Maurer, that here the tent of the sun must be placed in the extremity of the earth, is much less allowable, since the end of the earth, in common speech, and according to the parallel in the preceding context, is still a

part of itself; but no one has ever apportioned the sun to the earth, and here, in particular, it is represented as the most glorious object in the heavenly regions. The tent of the sun is not to be considered as the place of his nightly repose: against this Stier justly remarks, that it is not fitting, on a first mention of the sun in the heavens, to consider it as absent and concealed: it is rather his *dwelling-tent*.<sup>1</sup> The expression, "He has set a tent for it," is substantially the same as, "He has prescribed a place for it." With the words of the two first members of this verse, Paul describes, in Rom. x. 18, the spread of the Gospel over the whole earth. This led many of the older expositors into the quite false supposition, that vers. 1-6 contained a direct prophecy of Christ and the Gospel. But not less objectionable is the supposition, that the Apostle used the words of our verse merely as an accidental reminiscence. The reference has a deep ground. The universality of God's manifestation of Himself in nature, is a prophecy in fact of the universality of the proclamation of the Gospel. If the former is not accidental, if it is grounded in the Divine nature, so must the latter also spring from the same Divine nature. The revelation of God in nature is for all His creatures; to them as such it is given; and it is a pledge that they shall also one day be made to share in the higher and more glorious revelation. It was a surety for the heathen, that the temporal limitation of salvation to Israel was not a hindrance, but a means towards the removal of the limitation.

Ver. 5. *And he is as a bridegroom who comes out of his chamber, rejoices as a hero to run a race.* The point of comparison in the first member, is neither the delight beaming from the countenance of the bridegroom, nor his ornaments (Isa. lxi. 10), but his vigour, power, or feeling of strength. This appears from the words, "he comes forth from his chamber," prop. *e thoro*, or, *thalamo suo* (falsely, therefore, Michaelis: *ad sponsam v. excipiendam, v. domum ducendam*), and likewise from the second clause, which gives equal prominence to the energetic power of the sun. In German the comparison loses in both members, from the sun being a feminine noun.

Ver. 6. *He goes forth from the end of the heavens, and runs*

<sup>1</sup> Quite correctly already Ven.: *singulis sideribus dantur tentoria tensa cum apparent, et detensa cum disparent, quæ tentoria eorum stationem in campis æthereis designant.*

about even to their end, and nothing is concealed from his heat. On מוצא comp. *Christol.* P. III. p. 300. על is to be explained from the fact, that the going round at last *touches*, reaches the ends of the heavens. The אין נסתר, prop. "not is concealed," "there is not anything which can be concealed." Heat is not to be considered as the opposite to light, as Venema and others think, according to whom what precedes refers only to the light; but as its inseparable accompaniment, equivalent to, "before its warming light." These last words also have respect to the mighty power of the sun, so that the Psalmist has this, through the whole representation, before his eyes.

There follows now, in vers. 7-10, the praise of the law which has been given by this God, whose glory the heavens proclaim, and from whom, on this territory also, nothing but what is glorious and perfect can proceed. An artistic arrangement in this praise is not to be overlooked. In the three verses, vers. 7-9, the law is praised in twelve sayings. These fall into six pairs, in which the second always stands to the first in the relation of effect to cause—a relation which is intimated through the regular want of the copula in the second, and the occurrence of Jehovah only in the first clause. So, for example, in ver. 7, "The law of the Lord is perfect, (and hence) it quickens the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, (and hence) makes the simple wise." In vers. 7 and 8, the result is uniformly some effect which the law produces in the mind of man, according to the quality indicated in the preceding clause. In the concluding verse, ver. 10, the glory and preciousness of the law thus constituted, is celebrated as a whole. To the sixfold mention of the name Jehovah here, there is added a seventh at the close in ver. 14.

Ver. 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect, quickens the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, makes wise the simple.* To silence those who, after the example of Cocceius, would understand by הורה the Gospel, many expositors maintain that it stands here in its original meaning of "doctrine," and comprehends the whole sum of religion. But this notion is altogether untenable. הורה, although certainly it originally meant instruction in general, always occurs, in the whole of the existing usage, which was formed under the influence of the Pentateuch, in that of doctrine embodied in *commands*; it *always* means *law*, not excepting Isa. i. 10, viii. 16. But even if its meaning were

doubtful, the following synonyms would be sufficient to remove all doubt. Occasion was given to this false view by the consideration that such high terms of praise could not be employed of the law by itself, after the declarations of the Apostle, and the testimony of experience. This consideration, however, is set aside in a legitimate way by the remark, that David only speaks of what the law is for those who, like himself, are in a state of grace, and in whom, consequently, the inmost disposition of the heart coincides with the law,—of that, therefore, which theologians call “the third use of the law,” or, “its use to the regenerate” (comp. Melancthon at the close of his *Loc. de usu legis*; Calvin, *Inst. L. ii. c. 7, § 12*; Nitzsch, *System. § 155*). Such a man is inwardly rejoiced that he has in the law a pure mirror of Divine holiness, a sure standard for his actions. But Paul, on the other hand, has to do with the relation of the law to the fleshly, to those who are sold under sin. That here the Psalm treats only of what the law is to believers, is manifest from the fact of its composition by David, who speaks, in the first instance, in his own name; also from the expression, “Thy servant,” in ver. 11, which implies that the speaker was already in a gracious relation to God; from his naming the Lord “his Rock and his Redeemer,” in ver. 14; and from vers. 12 and 13, where he indeed claims Divine forgiveness for many sins of imperfection, but confesses himself to be free from presumptuous and daring violations of God’s commands, and prays that, through God’s grace, he may be able to remain free from such. All these are marks of a state of grace. The right view was already taken by Luther, who says: “The prophet represents to his view those, who through the word of faith have received the Spirit, are joyful thereat, and have conceived a desire to do that which is according to the law. Thereupon he proceeds to teach how holy, how righteous and good the law is, which appears grievous and hard to those who have not the Spirit,—the blame, however, being not in the law, but in the inclination. Moses was, in fact, the meekest man upon earth, Num. xii. 3, though they did not know it. And so also is the law of the Lord very full of love; only the wickedness of our heart understands it not, till the voice of the Bridegroom takes away its wickedness, and gives the Spirit, and then the law is understood and loved. The law does nothing of this sort by itself, but it becomes such a law through the heat of the sun,

which breaks forth through faith in the word." The law is named perfect, as being a pure expression of the will of God, and in contrast to the imperfect results of human thought in this sphere, even on the part of the well-disposed. Because it is in itself perfect, it makes those also perfect who follow it; comp. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. The consequence of the law's being perfect is, that it quickens the heart, namely, by its putting an end to painful uncertainty in reference to the will of God and the means of pleasing Him, which but for the law would still in some measure continue even with believers, and such as are brought to partake of the gifts of the Spirit, and by opening up a perfectly secure way, by which one may attain to righteousness before God, and the peace of a good conscience, and consequently to a joyful hope of salvation. That the perfectness of the law is in so far the cause of the quickening, appears from the following words, "makes wise the simple," which more definitely point out the way and manner in which the law produces quickening. Many, and recently Stier, expound, "*converts the soul*." But this is inadmissible, as to matter,—conversion has nothing to do here, for the law cannot work it; the subject of discourse at present is simply what the law is for believers, those who have already been converted,—and so it is also in a philological point of view. The expression, placed so absolutely, as here without a *terminus ad quem*, uniformly denotes quickening, refreshment: the soul is as it were escaped from the pain and misery in which it was imbedded; comp. Lam. i. 11, 16; Ruth iv. 15; Ps. xxiii. 3. *Testimony*, עֵדוּת, the law is named, not as being a kind of solemn declaration of the Divine will, but because it testifies against sin; comp. my Beitr. Part III. p. 640. Sure, reliable the testimony is named, in contrast to the uncertain, vacillating, unreliable knowledge of reason in matters of this nature. By reason of this very sureness the law is fitted to make the simple wise (σοφίσαι, 2 Tim. iii. 15). The expression simple, does not denote a particular class among believers, as if there were others wise enough of themselves, but it is a common predicate of all believers viewed apart from the Divine law. Believers are also simple still; for even at their best estate, they lack a sufficient knowledge of the Divine will; but they are only simple, while others are blinded fools, נבלים. The exposition of Stier and others, "the susceptible, open," is refuted by the contrast with *wise*; comp. also כֵּן פְּתִיחַ

in Ps. cxix. 130. On the other hand, Luther's *silly* is too strong. פתִּי denotes only a deficiency, a want, not a positively perverted character; an ignorance, which has its root in the region of the understanding, not such as springs from an ethical ground. Gesen. in his Thes.: dicitur de ea stoliditate, cujus fons est in inopia consilii, prudentiæ, disciplinæ et rerum usus, qualis puerorum et adolescentulorum est pellectu faciliū, licet non malorum et noxiorum.

Ver. 8. *The commandments of the Lord are right, rejoice the heart; the statute of the Lord is clear, enlightens the eyes.* The law receives the name of פְּקֻדִּים, in so far as it delivers to man charges, which he has to execute; the name of מִצְוָה, in so far as it prescribes to him what he has to do. That the law of the Lord rejoices the heart, appears as the effect of its rectitude, just as its quickening the soul was represented as the effect of its perfectness. The believer acknowledges with heart-felt joy and gratitude that he knows the will of God from the revelation He has given, and that he is thereby delivered from the deceit of his own fancy, and of his own heart, and has obtained a sure guide through life. The *enlightening of the eyes* is referred by many to the communication of the light of Divine knowledge. In that case, "enlightening the eyes," would stand related to, "rejoicing the heart," just as in ver. 7, "making wise the simple," is related to, "quicken the soul." There, "it is perfect and sure," and therefore quickens the soul, in that it makes wise the simple. Here, "it is right and clear," and therefore rejoices the heart, in that it enlightens the eyes. However, as the expression, "enlightens the eyes," so commonly occurs in the sense of making brisk and joyful,—pain and misery make the eyes dim, heavy, and dull, comp. on Ps. xiii. 3,—it will be well for us also to adopt this signification here. Accordingly the words, "enlightening the eyes," correspond precisely to, "rejoicing the heart," and in the preceding verse, not to, "making wise the simple," but rather to, "quicken the soul."

Ver. 9. *The fear of the Lord is pure, continues for ever; the judgments of the Lord are truth, righteous altogether.* The fear of the Lord here marks the instruction afforded by God for fearing Him, Ps. xxxiv. 11; Prov. i. 29, ii. 5, xv. 33; the law, which, according to Deut. xvii. 19, should serve the purpose of leading men "to fear the Lord their God." That the word, "fear of God," is thus transferred directly to its norm or stan-

dard in the law, shows how close is the connection between the two; directs attention to the circumstance, that all seeming fear of God, which fashions its substance according to men's own notions, is rather a dishonouring of God. The consequence of the purity of the law, which renders absurd any attempt to make it purer, or to reform it in any measure, is its perpetual continuance. This is naturally to be referred to the substance of the Old Testament law, and indeed to the whole of it—for the limitation to the so-called moral law is an arbitrary one—in reference to which the Lord also says, that He came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, Matt. v. 17. The destruction as it has taken place under the New Testament, respects only the form. In regard to its substance, the law is so unconditionally eternal, that, according to another saying of our Lord, not one jot or tittle of it shall perish, Matt. v. 18. The truth of the Lord's judgments consists in this, that they do not profess to be judgments of the Lord, but really are judgments of the Lord; and since nothing can proceed from the Lord but what is righteous, they are righteous altogether, without any exception. The truth stands opposed to lies, to deceit. If by truth is understood, not the *formal*, but the *material*, then the expression, "they are righteous altogether," passes from the relation of effect to cause, and is merely co-ordinate with the other, "they are truth."

Ver. 10. *They, more precious than gold, and much fine gold, and sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.* Calvin: "Here again it is clear, that he speaks not of the naked precept and the mere dead letter (more correctly: of the relation of the law to the faithful and spiritual, not of its relation to the fleshly and such as are destitute of faith). For if the law when merely commanding terrified, how then could it be deserving of love? Certainly, if it is separated from the hope of forgiveness, and from the Spirit of Christ, it is so far from the sweetness of honey, that it rather by its bitterness kills the poor soul." Luther: "This is a great wonder of the Holy Spirit and of the judgments of the Most High, that they change everything, rendering that most acceptable, which before was most distasteful. For what do men seek more eagerly than riches and pleasures? and yet the spirit has far greater delight in the law of God, than the flesh can have in its goods and pleasures."

The third strophe, vers. 11-14: the law in relation to the



Psalmist, as to every individual who finds in the Psalm the fitting expression of his feelings.

Ver. 11. *Also thy servant is enlightened by them : whosoever keeps them has great reward.* The participle נִקְרָא indicates that the enlightening, or reminding, through the law is one that is continually proceeding, abiding; comp. Ew. § 349. The expression, "Whosoever keeps them," is, when viewed in regard to the context, equivalent to, "the keeping of them, as to *all*, so also to *me*, brings great reward : " I also receive enlightenment from Thy law, as to how my life should be directed ; and if I keep it, acting agreeably to this knowledge, great reward. How the Psalmist recognised the truth of this principle from his own experience, is shown by Ps. xviii. 20-27. This declaration at the same time paves the way to the following prayers for the removal of the hindrances which threatened to deprive him, in whole or in part, of the reward which attends the keeping of the law. He, also, who stands in the faith needs pardon for the sins which are the offspring of infirmity, if he is to come to the full enjoyment of this reward, ver. 12. He needs, moreover, the constant preservation of God, through His Spirit, from presumptuous transgressions of the law, from prevailing sin, which threatens wholly to deprive him of the reward. We are not to conclude from the Psalmist's expectation of the reward, that he was a hireling. We should otherwise have to reproach also the New Testament on account of 1 Tim. iv. 8, and many other passages, which enjoin a seeking of the reward. The principle which really impelled the Psalmist to keep the law, was the love of God ; the reward he takes with a grateful heart as an agreeable addition, as a declaration of God, that the service rendered was well-pleasing to Him. Luther : "This is said for the consolation of those who take pains, not to have their desire for reward strengthened, as is wont to be the case with hirelings and servants ; I mean those who, by their little bits of work, would make God I know not what sort of merchant, because they take no pains in doing the judgments of the Lord. Therefore does Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 58, console those who labour in the service of God, exhorting them to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. For the servants of the Lord must know that they please God in their work, so that they may not languish, nor sink into despair ; since

God desires to have willing and cheerful labourers. But if they please God, there will infallibly come a great reward, though they do not seek it, because God cannot deny Himself, who said to Abraham, 'I am thy exceeding great reward.'

Ver. 12. *Errors, who can mark them? From those which are secret, acquit me.* The first clause discloses the depth of human depravity, which draws even believers into many failings. Berleb. Bible: "Who can mark them? Who knows them all, and is able to number them? Who can keep so sharp a watch, as to mark how often something of the old proud disposition springs up against the new nature of the spirit of faith?"—The second clause grounds upon this the prayer for forgiveness; the necessity for which rests upon the fact, that sin everywhere cleaves to us, appearing in the subtlest forms, scarcely discernible by the human eye, in many ways disguises itself, and assumes the appearance of good. Did sin possess only a gross character; we might satisfy ourselves with a simple "Lead us not into temptation;" but as it is able also to assume a refined shape, and become invisible, we need besides to pray, "Forgive us our transgressions."—It is not sins generally, but a special kind of sins, for which David begs the Divine forgiveness,—those which cleave even to believers, and consequently persons well-inclined,—sins of infirmity. שגיאָה is = זָנָה of the law,—for ex. Lev. iv. 2, *error, peccatum per imprudentiam commissum*,—and נִסְתָּרוֹת, *concealed sins*, are such as have no gross *corpus delicti* connected with them, belong mainly to the sphere of the spirit, to thought or feeling, and withdraw themselves from the observation of others, and more or less also from one's own. That these are mainly to be thought of, is evident from the relation in which נִסְתָּרוֹת stands to מִי יֵבֵן,—equivalent to, "since the failings are so numerous and delicate that no one can mark them all, do Thou acquit me of those concealed sins, which, by their very subtlety, render their entire extirpation impossible." נָקִי, according to Stier and others, must signify not only forgiveness, but also internal purification. But it was justly remarked even by S. Schmidt, that "it is a judicial term, and means acquittal. For original sin is not extirpated in this world, but forgiven." נָקִי always signifies, "to declare innocent, to acquit," never, "to make innocent;" nor can it possibly do so, for one may well indeed be blameless (ver. 13), but cannot be made so otherwise than in the sense of being acquitted.

Ver. 13. *Also from presumptuous ones keep Thy servant, let them not have dominion over me; so shall I be blameless, and remain innocent of great iniquity.* From sins of infirmity the Psalmist passes on to sins of deliberation. As for the first he entreats the Divine pardon, so in regard to these he asks the Divine preservation. To the preceding verse the petition, "Forgive us our sins," corresponds; and to this verse, the petition, "Lead us not into temptation." Our Psalm shows us, what a close internal connection subsists between the decalogue and the Lord's prayer. That the verb *וַיִּרְא*, with its derived nouns, conveys the idea of *intentional*, *presumptuous*, and *daring* sins, in opposition to such as spring from infirmity, is clear from Ex. xxi. 14; Deut. xviii. 22, xvii. 12; 1 Sam. xvii. 28. *וַיִּרְא* is the standing designation of those who raise themselves proudly and rashly against God, despise His word, and break His law. The contrast between *וַיִּרְא* and *שִׁנְאוֹת* here, is precisely the same as the contrast between *בְּשִׁנְנָה* and *בִּיד רָמָה*, sinning with a high hand, i. e. openly, freely, and boldly, in Num. xv. 27-31, a passage which forms the basis of the New Testament doctrine of the sin against the Holy Ghost; comp. Heb. x. 26-28. Just as here, the sphere of forgiveness is confined to the *שִׁנְאוֹת*, while the Psalmist prays to be kept from the *וַיִּרְא*, which would have the effect of putting him out of the state of grace, so there, sacrifices are to be offered only for those who had sinned *בְּשִׁנְנָה*; he, on the contrary, who had sinned *בִּיד רָמָה*, was cut off from his people, "because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and broken His commandment." An example of a sin *בְּוִדּוֹק*, or *בִּיד רָמָה*, is the transgression of him who gathered wood on the Sabbath-day, Num. xv. 32 ss. He was without mercy punished with death. But the sin which, under the Old Testament dispensation, bore so frightful a character, that whosoever committed it forfeited his earthly life, unless he received mercy from God, attained first under the New Testament to its proper completion, in which it inevitably draws after it eternal death. For the greatness of the punishment is determined by the greatness of the internally and externally offered grace.—Presumptuous sins are here personified as tyrants who strive to bring the servant of God into unworthy bondage to them. That the Lord alone can keep from this servitude, discovers the depth of human corruption. That we are not, with many, to take *וַיִּרְא* at once in the sense of insolence, or of wilful sinning, appears from usage,

according to which, the word constantly denotes persons; as also from the words, "Let them not have dominion over me," which point to real or imaginary persons. But just as little may we, with others, understand by זרים, real persons. Palpably false is this exposition, when such persons are supposed to be national enemies, and the dominion an external supremacy. In that case, too, the following words, "then shall I be perfect," etc., yield no sense, and the idea in this connection is quite foreign. The interpretation is more tolerable, which takes the dominion in a moral point of view, "keep me from the influence and seduction of daring sinners." But though by this exposition the contrast, so pointedly indicated through גַּם and the double בִּן, between sins of infirmity and presumptuous sins, is not entirely destroyed, yet it is made less direct, and is cast into the shade; the *having dominion* would be something strange (comp. what is said of sin in Rom. vi. 14); and חֲשֵׁךְ at least nowhere else is used of preservation from bad company, whereas it is certainly twice used of keeping from sinning, Gen. xx. 6, and 1 Sam. xxv. 39, "and hath kept His servant from evil." To the *then* there is commonly added, "When I obtain these two." But this is opposed by the פִּינֵעַ, which exclusively refers to the sins described in our verse. It denotes the greatest sin, prop. "apostasy, revolt," such as זרים, bold despisers of God, commit; compare Job xxxiv. 37. This exposition is also opposed by תָּמִים, which is properly used only of inherent innocence. The אִיחָם is 1 pers. Fut. of תָּמַם: comp. on the י, Ewald, p. 466, Small Gr. § 270. An innocent, blameless person is the Psalmist, notwithstanding his sins of infirmity. נִקְיִי points back to נִקְיִי, in the preceding verse: to *be made* blameless, and to *remain* blameless, are the two conditions of salvation. But the realization of the latter, also, can only proceed from God. The expression, "from much or great iniquity," must be supplemented in thought by, "into which I shall otherwise inevitably fall." פִּינֵעַ stands in contrast to the unavoidable smaller transgressions spoken of in the preceding context.

Ver. 14. *Let the words of my mouth be acceptable to Thee, and the meditations of my heart before Thee, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.* The Psalmist prays for the favourable reception of his song, not as a production of sacred art, but in its substance and matter, in reference to the two petitions with which it is occupied; or, it is not as a poet, but as a suppliant, that the

Psalmist claims the Divine acceptance. This clearly appears from the two predicates of God, on which the Psalmist grounds his prayer, and which led him confidently to hope for the granting of it. In saying, "let it be acceptable," the Psalmist seems to use a sacrificial term, perhaps the very words which were spoken by the priests at the presentation of the sacrifice. At least the expression is regularly used in respect to offerings: comp. Lev. xix. 5, 7, xxii. 19, 20, 29, xxiii. 11; Isa. lvi. 7, lx. 7; Rom. xii. 1. Such a transference of language was the more natural, as sacrifice itself was an embodied prayer. It is better to connect the words, "before Thee," with the words, "the meditation of my heart," than with the expression, "acceptable," from which they are too far separated. The expression "acceptable" occurs elsewhere without any further addition to it, and is only once found connected with the words, "before the Lord," namely, in Ex. xxviii. 38. The expression, "*my Rock*," denotes here also that faithfulness, certainty, which do not permit the Lord to desert His people; see on Ps. xviii. 2. He would deny His rock-nature, if He should not pardon their infirmities, and keep them from flagrant misdeeds.

## PSALM XX.

The people wish for their king, that the Lord, the God of Israel, would be with him in the impending battle, and grant him the victory, vers. 1-5. The firm confidence is expressed, that the Lord will protect His anointed and his kingdom, vers. 6-8. They conclude with the prayer that the Lord would do as He had inwardly promised, ver. 9.

That the Psalm is not, in the general, "a song of Israel for and to its king, as we have in our song-book songs in which prayers and thanks are presented for kings and rulers, and their office is praised;" that Israel rather presents in it a special entreaty for help to His anointed, in the immediate prospect of battle, and expresses a firm, triumphant confidence therein, is evident from the words, "in the day of distress," in ver. 1, as compared with vers. 7, 8, which determine more exactly the kind of distress as one proceeding from enemies. According to ver. 3, the Psalm was sung along with the solemn offerings which the king presented at his going out to battle.

Many expositors conceive that the Psalm refers to a particular occasion. Several follow the Syriac in connecting it with the Ammonitic-Syrian war. But no ground exists for any such special reference : there appears in it, indeed, no individualizing trait ; nothing carries us beyond the general application to the troubles of war ; and this generality of its aim is specially countenanced by "the day of distress" in ver. 1, and "the day of our calling" in ver. 9. The beginning and conclusion both indicate that the Psalm was to be sung as often as the troubles of war required the people to claim help from its God.

If we hold the Psalm to be thus general in its character, we must also admit that it bears reference to Christ and His kingdom, that the Christian Church justly appropriates it as an expression of her longing for the triumph of His cause, and of her confident hope. For the kingdom of David, to which it refers, culminated in Christ. He is in the full sense "the Anointed of the Lord." On the other hand, the Psalm refers to Christian kings only when they are His servants, and in so far as they are so.

It has been objected to the composition of the Psalm as David's, affirmed in the superscription, that he does not appear as the speaker, but the people address him. This objection, however, is of no force. The person addressed is not David in particular, but the anointed of the Lord in general ; the speaker is, of course, not the Psalmist, but he speaks in the name of the people ; and if so, who might be more readily expected to stand forth as an interpreter of the feelings of the Lord's people in this respect, than David, who always lived in and with the Church, who always served it with his poetical gift, identified himself with its circumstances, and cared for its wants ? Only through paying in general too little heed to this, can we here entertain any doubt of the correctness of the statement made in the superscription. Besides, the Davidic authorship is confirmed by the numerous coincidences with Psalms of David, which we shall notice in the exposition. Then, whatever witnesses for the Davidic authorship of Ps. xxi. also makes for this, for they are connected as a pair. The great simplicity, ease, and transparent clearness of the Psalm, which have been urged against its ascription to David, are to be accounted for from its character ; these are characteristics of a national song.

Luther says briefly and well : "It seems to me as if David had composed this Psalm, that it might serve as a devout and

pious battle-cry, whereby he would stir up himself and the people, and fit them for prayer."

Ver. 1. *The Lord hear thee in the day of distress, the name of the God of Jacob exalt thee.* That we are not, with Hitzig, to expound, "*will* hear thee," but, "*may* He hear thee," and that the following Futures are also to be taken so, appears from ירשנה, "*May* He declare for fat, may He favourably accept," in ver. 3, from נרננה, in ver. 5, and the expression, "*the king hear us*," at the close, which returns to the beginning. שׁנב means to lift up, to exalt, in the sense of delivering, to transfer to a high and secure place; comp. lix. 1, xci. 14, and xviii. 2, where David names God his *height*. God's being called the God of Jacob, is equivalent to, "*the God, who was and is the God of Jacob, in his person, and that of his posterity*," and points to the relation which constituted the ground of the hearing and the elevation, and of the joyfulness and confidence of the prayer. The expression, "*the name of Jacob's God*," is equivalent to, "*God, who manifested Himself as Jacob's God*," or, "*Jacob's God, who manifested Himself as such in a fulness of deeds*." God is not merely the God of Jacob, He is also *named* so, has thus made Himself known, and made for Himself a name. His election is not a dark one, but manifest, confirmed by facts. Without such facts the God of Jacob would be nameless, His name would be a *nomen vanum*.

Ver. 2. *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and out of Zion support thee.* Here also is the help of God sought on the ground of His covenant, of His relation to the Church. This is implied in the words, "*out of the sanctuary, out of Zion*;" comp. on Ps. xiv. 7.

Ver. 3. *Remember all thy meat-offerings, and accept thy burnt-offerings.* That we are here to think, not of the sacrifices of the king in general, but specially of the solemn oblations presented before going forth to battle (comp. 1 Sam. xiii. 9 ss., where Saul offers such a sacrifice, with the view of entreating God's favour, and making Him gracious toward him), appears from the Selah, which can only be explained on the supposition, that between this verse and the following one the work of offering the sacrifices intervened, during which there ensued a solemn pause. The word, "*remember*," seems to allude to the name זָכַר, which in the law was borne by that part of the meat-offering which was burnt on the altar, because it put God, as it were, in remembrance of the offerer; comp. Lev. ii. 2,

vi. 8, etc. To remembering is opposed forgetting, or indifferent reception. The expression is likewise used in the New Testament; comp. Acts x. 31. According to the entire spiritual point of view, from which the Psalmist speaks, it is of course to be understood, that the sacrifices are here considered, not in regard to their body, but in regard to the soul, which dwelt in them; and that their gracious acceptance by God was hoped for only on the ground of the presence of the internal aim and disposition, which were embodied in them. In the symbolism of the law, the presentation of the burnt-offering expressed the consecration and yielding up of self. Whoever presented the meat-offering, which was closely connected with the burnt-offering, vowed that he would present to God the spiritual nutriment due to Him, good works. Where such profession is made in truth, there, the subjective conditions on which the dispensation of salvation proceeds, are such as they are required to be; then, God cannot do otherwise than give to the suppliant according to his heart, and fulfil all his counsel. Luther remarks: "Just as in the new law there are other persons, other matters, other times, other places, so are there also other sacrifices; though still there remains one faith and one spirit: the external only has changed, the internal remains the same.—Wherefore, our sacrifice, which we must present to God in the time of trouble, is a broken heart, and the confession of sin; and this we do when we sigh after God in the time of trouble, recognise our distress as righteous, bear patiently the mortification of self, and yield ourselves up to God, as ready to do all His will."—*לַעֲשׂוֹת* signifies, "to make fat," Ps. xxiii. 5, and then "to declare fat, good," to accept with satisfaction. The *ו* is the *ו* of striving; comp. Ew. § 293.

Ver. 4. *Give thee what thy heart desires, and fulfil all thy counsels.* The discourse is not of the desires and counsels of the king generally, but only of those which relate to the present necessity.

Ver. 5. *May we rejoice over thy salvation, and through the name of our God be lifted up; the Lord fulfil all thy petitions.* Various expositors render, "then shall we rejoice," etc.; but this construction is inadmissible, partly on account of the form, which discovers itself to be the optative through the appended *ו*, partly on account of the last member, which, like the prececu-



ing context, still contains the expression of a wish. We must, therefore, expound: "may we rejoice," etc., equivalent to, "may occasion be furnished us, through thy salvation, for rejoicing." The name of God stands here emphatically, as in ver. 1. The explanation of דגל is uncertain: the supposition that it is denomin. of דגל, "banner," is opposed by Cant. v. 11, where the part. per. occurs in the sense of exalted, or distinguished. Probably the verb is related to דגל. The LXX. already rendered, as we have done, μεγαλυνθησόμεθα, and the Vulgate, *magnificabimur*.

Ver. 6. *Now know I that the Lord helps His anointed, He hears him from His holy heaven, through the salutary exploits of His right hand.* Till now the people had spoken in the plural; here they speak as an ideal person in the singular. That there is here a great turning-point, is also indicated by the circumstance that the king is no more addressed, but is spoken of. The *now* is to be explained from the fact, that the suppliants suddenly obtain confidence of being heard. This *now* also, in that it shows that the transition from prayer to confidence is effected here quickly and directly—precisely as, for example, in Ps. vi. 8—is an objection against reckoning ver. 5 to the second strophe. The *now I know* is quite misunderstood by those who, with Maurer, would refer it to a just won victory; it refers to an internal fact, and Luther has quite correctly explained it: "Henceforth the prophet is full of sure hope, and converts into a promise what he had hitherto been praying for. For in such a manner does the heart which rests its full confidence in God, imagine quite certainly that what it has prayed for will infallibly be done. Faith, if it is truly in the heart, takes such a firm hold of that which it believes, that it can speak of nothing as more certain, and it knows it, indeed, to be as certain as if it had actually happened. Therefore he does not say here, I conceive, I think, but, I *know*." The deliverance is here expected from heaven, as in ver. 2, from Zion. The two together, that God dwells in Zion, and also in heaven, constitute the sure ground of hope. The first proves that God *will* help, the second that He *can* help; the first is a pledge of God's love, the second of His almightiness. Heaven is characterized as *holy*, on account of the strong contrast between it and earth, with its impotence and helplessness. On the expression, from His holy heaven, see on Ps. xi. 4; "the right hand of God," is

mentioned in the same connection in Ps. xviii. 36 : עָזָה occurs also in Ps. xii. 5.

Ver. 7. *Some make mention of chariots, and some of horses; but we, of the name of the Lord our God.* Ver. 8. *They stoop and fall; but we rise and stand upright.* As the object of confidence in the world and in the Church is different, so is also the fate: there, from height to depth; here, from depth to height. הִזְכִּיר elsewhere always signifies "to make mention," never, "to praise" (where the latter signification is adopted, it rests on a false explanation); and this signification must here be the more firmly held, as it exists also in the radical passage, Ex. xxiii. 13, "The name of other gods ye shall not make mention of," as appears from the parallel, "neither let it be heard in thy mouth." That the mention is in the way of praise, does not lie in the word itself, but in the constr. with בְּ, pointing to the feeling of confidence with which the person mentioning rests in the object. Parallel to ver. 7 is 1 Sam. xvii. 45, where David says to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord God of Hosts." Ps. xxxiii. 17; Isa. xxxi. 3. By the chariots, chariots of war are to be understood. The contrast lies between human means of help, and the assistance of God. The Preterites of ver. 8 are to be explained by the fact, that the people in faith see the enemies as already conquered. Luther: "Faith alone, which commits itself to God, can sing the song of triumph before the victory, and raise the shout of joy before help has been obtained; for to faith all is permitted. It trusts in God, and so really has what it believes, because faith deceives not; as it believes, so is it done." Before the catastrophe here described the enemies had the upper hand, and the people of God were put to the worse. This especially appears from קָם, which means, not, "to stand," but, "to stand up." Luther: "At the commencement of the attack, the ungodly, indeed, appear to stand firm, confiding in their chariots and horsemen; on the other hand, the pious, who trust in the name of the Lord, appear to be far from equal to them. But faith boasts thus: Although those stand, and we seem to be weak and to fall, yet we are sure, that presently matters shall be entirely reversed, and they shall fall; but we shall be raised on high and stand, nay, we are already lifted up and stand erect. O what a noble pattern of faith is this!"

Ver. 9. *Lord, help; the King hear us when we call.* The last strophe, that of the renewed prayer, stands in close relation to the preceding context. The *help* is based on the, *He helps*, in ver. 6; the *hear us* points back to, *He will hear him*, in the same verse. The prayer springs from the promise: "the Lord is entreated to do what He has promised." By this reference to the promise, the prayer at the end is distinguished from that at the beginning. The expression, "may He hear us," here, is much more emphatic than the expression, "may He hear thee," there, which is now resumed again. Special emphasis rests on *הַמֶּלֶךְ*; Luther: "Hear Thou us, Thou who truly art our King. For David, who serves Thee, is not king, and governs not his, but Thy kingdom. With what vehement emotion does he move God, that is, does he teach us to move God, as one who is moved when we ourselves are moved! For how should He not hear when His kingdom, His interest, His honour is in danger? In other words, we then pray most earnestly when we have confidence that we are God's kingdom and His heritage. For then we seek not our own, and are certain that He will not abandon a cause which belongs to Him, and a kingdom which is His, especially when we call upon Him for this." As King of Israel, God appears already in Deut. xxxiii. 5, comp. Ps. xlviii. 3. Without ground, several expositors, following the LXX. and Vulgate, *domine saluum fac regem*, leave the accents, and connect *הַמֶּלֶךְ* with the first clause. By this exposition the sense of the first member is weakened; the simple, "Lord, help," is more emphatic; then, in the second member, the designation of God is wanting, which grounds the prayer for help; and what is the chief point, the transition from the address to the third person is then deprived of all occasion, on which account also the Vulgate, on its own authority, supplies the address, "*et exaudi nos.*" The expression, "in the day of our calling," rests on Deut. xv. 2.

## PSALM XXI.

The people testify their joy at the rich benefits which the Lord has bestowed upon His king, vers. 1-6; express the hope, that through God he will destroy all his enemies, vers. 8-12; and conclude by praising the Lord, ver. 13.

The speakers rise first to the Lord: O Lord, what hast Thou done to the king? ver. 1 ss.; then come down to the king, first speaking of him, ver. 7, then to him, "O king, what wilt thou do in the Lord?" vers. 8-12; finally, again ascend to the Lord, ver. 13, "Praise to Thee, O Lord, for what Thou hast done to the king, and what the king has done in Thee."

In the address to God, the benefits are more comprehensively and generally described: perpetual continuance of dominion, salvation, strength, honour; on the other hand, in the address to the king, a particular point is specially brought out, namely, how through God's help he will be superior to all his enemies.

Various expositors—most recently, Kaiser, Hitzig, Koester—suppose that our Psalm stands in a closer relation to Ps. xx. than the mere circumstance that the people in both present themselves before God on the business of their king; that Ps. xx. was composed when the king went forth to war, the present one on his return home. What is there wished, is here thankfully acknowledged; the salvation desired in the one, is spoken of as having been found in the other, Ps. xxi. 1; and the wish here mentioned in ver. 2 as obtained, is that which was uttered there. But this supposition is quite inadmissible. Our Psalm does not give thanks for any particular victory granted to the king, but for strength and salvation in general, for dominion received; compare the words, "Thou settest a crown of gold upon his head," and, what is perfectly decisive, for "length of days for ever and ever," ver. 4.

According to De Wette, the Psalm is a wish for the success of the king in an impending campaign, with an introduction in vers. 1-7; in it the deliverance just about to be afforded to the king, is celebrated. But then we cannot explain the conclusion in ver. 13, where the Lord is thanked for what has already been obtained, as appears alone from the circumstance, that De Wette feels himself obliged, in favour of his hypothesis, to change thanks and praise into "a prayer for Jehovah's help."

The only correct view is this: The Psalm expresses the thanksgivings of the people for the promises given to David in 2 Sam. vii., and for the joyful hope in regard to their fulfilment. Only on this view can we explain ver. 4, according to which an eternal duration of life is guaranteed to the king,

and ver. 6, according to which he has been set for an *eternal blessing*—passages which exclude all reference to any single royal individual as such. The supposition of a hyperbolic mode of speech, which is necessarily to be rejected, appears the more objectionable when we compare the promise in 2 Sam. vii., and the other Psalms which have their foundation in it, Psalms lxxxix. cxxxii. cx.

This Psalm forms a side-piece to Ps. xviii., from which it is separated only by Ps. xix. and Ps. xx., which with this is united into a pair. In Ps. xviii. David presents to the Lord, in presence of the Church, thanks for the glorious promise which had been vouchsafed to him; here he utters, in the name of the people, grateful joy for the same promise. His aim is to call forth and quicken in the mind of the Church a feeling of gratitude toward the Lord, of love toward His anointed, of immovable confidence in the prospect of danger.

Precisely as here, David, in his last words, as recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii., finds in the promise of the Lord, 1. The pledge of salvation for his house, ver. 5; and 2. The pledge of destruction in regard to his enemies, the sons of Belial, vers. 6, 7.

The exclusively Messianic exposition, which has been defended by many of the older commentators, and latterly by Rosenmüller, in his 2d ed., is deprived by our view of the foundation which it was conceived to have in vers. 4 and 7. It is opposed even by the undeniable reference which the Psalm has to 2 Sam. vii. This admits of the application to Christ only in so far as the promise found its last and highest fulfilment in Him, in whom the royal stem of David culminated, but at the same time imperiously demands the reference to Christ in this sense. Apart from Christ, the words, "Thou givest him length of days for ever and ever," and, "Thou settest him for blessing for ever," are nothing but an empty dream.

The testimony of the superscription in behalf of the Davidic authorship is confirmed by characteristic coincidences with the Davidic Psalms, many of which have been noticed by Hitzig. Then the exultant, confident tone of the Psalm points to the times of David, showing that the idea had as yet come into no conflict with the reality, as it did latterly in so important a manner through the degeneracy of the line of David. How entirely otherwise does Ps. lxxxix. sound, which was composed after the beginning of this conflict!

First, in vers. 1-6 we have the blesser in relation to the blessed; the general principle in ver. 1, the expansion of it in vers. 2-6.

Ver. 1. *O Lord, the king rejoices at Thy strength, and how greatly does he rejoice at Thy salvation!* Properly, in Thy strength, *in* Thy salvation. The *in* stands for our *at*, *concerning*, in accordance with another mode of contemplation. There the joy rests *in*, here *upon* its object. The strength, the salvation of the Lord, are the things promised by the Lord, and, in consequence of the promise, to be granted by Him. For לַיְיָ, the Masorites would without ground read לַיְיָ, the Fut. apoc. with abbr. vowels on account of the transference of the tone to the first syllable. Ew., p. 415.

Ver. 2. *Thou gavest him the wish of his heart, and the desire of his lips Thou didst not withhold from him.* The wish does not simply denote here the wished-for thing—this is opposed by the parallel words, “the desire of his lips”—it is rather, “to give the wish,” equivalent to, “to grant or fulfil it.” The silent wish, and the spoken prayer, stand in contrast. Luther: “The arrangement is certainly fine here, namely, that the prayer of the heart must go before, without which the prayer of the lips is an unprofitable bawling.” By the connection with the preceding context, whose further expansion here begins, the nature of the desire is more exactly defined to be one after deliverance and strength; but it is still more exactly determined, by connecting it with what follows, as one after the continuance of dominion in his line, of honour and glory in his posterity. De Wette's affirmation, that it is “general, and not to be understood of any determinate wish,” is clearly refuted by ver. 4, which is linked to our verse by the words, “he desired life of Thee.”—That the promise in 2 Sam. vii. was a hearing of prayer for David, is not expressly stated there, but it may be regarded as self-evident, inasmuch as certainly no king is without thought for the future lot of his offspring; and especially under the Old Testament was the interest taken in the offspring peculiarly lively. The fate of David's race must, moreover, have lain all the nearer to his heart, having constantly before his eyes the mournful fate of the family of Saul. If the promise had not met the ardent wishes and prayers of David, it could scarcely have made so deep an impression upon him, or filled him with such triumphant joy and inward gratitude.—The Preterites of this verse

are falsely taken by many expositors aoristically, with reference to the following Futures. David's desire for the perpetuity of his kingdom, and the salvation of his seed, was already satisfied by the promise. The discourse is here of a fact already past and concluded.—The *Selah* stands suitably between the indication and the further expansion, admonishing us before the latter to consider the grace of God, which brought satisfaction to the wish of His servant.

Ver. 3. *For Thou surpriseest him with the blessings of prosperity, Thou settest upon his head a crown of gold.* In reference to the connection with what precedes, Luther says excellently: "But what has the heart desired? What have the lips wished? This comes next." קָדַם, "to surprise," comp. on Ps. xvii. 12, xviii. 5. The character of joyful surprise appears throughout the whole of that prayer of David, which he made after receiving the promise, in 2 Sam. vii. The "blessings of the good," equivalent to, "consisting in good, or prosperity," denote the entire sum of the benefits which the Lord promised to give to David's stem. A closer description of these benefits is given in what follows. The setting on of the crown marks the bestowment of dominion. David was crowned, as it were, anew,—or even for the first time, for the earlier crowning did not come, in this respect, into consideration,—when he received that great promise of the everlasting supremacy of his offspring. He then, for the first time, became king in the true and proper sense. The kings of the Philistines, to distinguish themselves from the poor *elective* kings, took the name of Abimelech, king's-father, and here was unspeakably more than there! That we are not to suppose David's first crowning, or the conferring on him of the kingly office in general, to be referred to, is evident from the following context, which is to be regarded as a further enlargement of the words before us.

Ver. 4. *He asked of Thee life, Thou gavest him long life for ever and ever.* God has so far placed a golden crown on David's head, as He gives him to reign perpetually in his posterity. Calvin and many other expositors think that a comparison is here made between David's earlier time, when, surrounded as he was by pressing dangers, he must have regarded it as a special favour to be delivered from the moment's danger of death, and the later time, when, so far beyond his boldest wishes, he obtained from God the promise that he should live and reign for

ever in his posterity. But it is better to refer the words, "for life he asked of Thee," to the wish of David to have his life continued in his posterity,—a wish which, as is said in the second clause, was more than fulfilled by God. Then the words, "he asked life of Thee," perfectly correspond to the wish of the heart and the desire of the lips in ver. 2; and the life which David asks for himself, stands on the same footing as the length of days which is granted to him. With the "length of days for ever and ever," is to be compared 2 Sam. vii. 13, "I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever," and ver. 16, "and thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, thy throne shall be established for ever;" Ps. lxxxix. 4, "Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations."

Ver. 5. *Great is his honour through Thy salvation; glory and majesty Thou layest upon him.* In his seed, David will possess the full enjoyment of the kingly honour and glory. Ver. 6. *For Thou settest him for blessing for ever, Thou makest him bright with joy before Thy countenance.* "Thou settest him for blessing"—the plural points to the rich fatness of the blessing—for "Thou blessest him, so that he seems to be blessing itself;" comp. Gen. xii. 2. The joy with the Lord's countenance (the very peculiar expression, *with Thy countenance*, is used in the very same connection also in Ps. xvi. 11), is the joy which arises from David's being in fellowship with the Lord's countenance, from this countenance being graciously directed toward him; therefore, in substance, the same as "through Thy favour." He does not mean the joy which arises from "consciousness of the Divine favour," but which the enjoyment thereof gives.

Ver. 7. *For the king trusts in the Lord; and through the favour of the Highest, he shall not be moved.* This verse, which speaks of the king and of the Lord, forms the transition from the first part, the address to God, to the second, the address to the king. The connection with the preceding is falsely given by De Wette thus: "The king deserves it through his confidence in God." Confidence is here considered not as an affection, but in respect to its object. This is shown by the parallel, "he shall not be moved." The expression, "he trusts in the Lord," is as much as, "the Lord is his ground of hope, his Saviour." Calvin: "Though the world turns round like a wheel, whence it happens that those who were elevated to the highest point are



suddenly brought down again, yet the kingdom of Judah, and its antitype, the kingdom of Christ, form an exception."

The people now tell the king what he has to hope for himself and his posterity, in consequence of the Divine promise.

Ver. 8. *Thy hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out thy haters.* Ver. 9. *Thou wilt make them like a fiery oven, when thou lookest on them; the Lord in His anger will destroy them, and the fire will devour them.* In the words, "*like a fiery oven*," the comparison, as often happens, is merely indicated, *q. d.* "Thou wilt put them in such a condition that they shall be as if they were in a fiery oven." We reject the supposition of a reference to Sodom and Gomorrah; we must rather compare such passages as Mal. iv. 1, "Behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them." Hupfeld's exposition, "Thou wilt treat them as a fiery oven," is inadmissible. For טָרַף does not signify, to treat. The expression, "at the time of thy countenance," equivalent to, "as soon as thou turnest to them thy countenance, lookest on them," has reference to, "with thy countenance," in ver. 6. Because the Lord's countenance is turned toward the king, the king's countenance is terrible to the enemies. That what has hitherto been spoken of is ascribed to the king only as an instrument of God, and is to be referred to God in the king, and to the king in God, is put beyond a doubt by the two last clauses.

Ver. 10. *Their fruit thou wilt extirpate from the earth, and their seed from the children of men.* The sense is: Thou wilt entirely uproot them. "Fruit and seed," denote posterity, ver. 11. *For they intended evil against thee, they conceived designs, yet they are not able for it.* According to many expositors, the wickedness of the godless is here announced as the cause of their destruction. But then it would be unsuitable to say, "they are not able for it." We must rather view the connection thus, "For though they threaten thee with destruction, yet they cannot execute their designs; these shall rather turn out to their own destruction, as certainly as God has promised perpetuity to the kingdom of David." The relation of the Pret. and Fut. here refers to the distinction of earlier and later in the future. The attempt is expressed by the Pret., the result by the Fut. Several expound, "they *span* against thee evil," supposing the

image to be taken from the spreading out of the net. But נָטָה is never thus used. We must rather expound, "they incline, bend evil upon thee, in order to throw it down on thee." נָטָה, in this sense in Ps. lxii. 3, and in the same kind of connection in 1 Chron. xxi. 10, "three things I bend over thee," where in the parallel passage, 2 Sam. xxiv. 12, the corresponding, נָטַל, "I lift up," is used.—In the expression, "they cannot, are not able,"—what they are unable to work or accomplish, must be supplied from the context.

Ver. 12. *For thou wilt make them for shoulder, fill thy strings against their countenance.* The first member, "Thou wilt put them into a condition, that they shall be altogether shoulder, thou wilt put them to flight," comp. on Ps. xviii. 40, where, instead of shoulder, there is neck. The "for" refers to the last words of the preceding verse, "they are not able," which contain the leading idea thereof. כָּנָן signifies, not "to aim," but, "to load;" comp. on Ps. vii. 12, xi. 2. Luther: "The troubles stimulate them to flight; and the bow, meeting them in the face, compels them to retreat; so that they find themselves in a strait, and in seeking to escape the rain, go under the spout."

Ver. 13. *Praise to Thee, O Lord, for Thy strength: we will sing and extol Thy might.* The Psalm is not, according to the common supposition, closed with a prayer, but with the praise of the Lord, for the great grace which He manifests to His king and people, through the promise and its fulfilment. רִמָּה, not, "raise Thyself," or "show Thyself exalted,"—this were against usage, comp. Ps. lvii. 5-11, against the parallelism, and against the analogy of the conclusion of Ps. xviii. 46 ss.;—but, "be exalted in our consciousness," equivalent to, "praise be to Thee." God's power and strength are what He unfolds when He gives power and strength to His anointed; comp. on ver. 1.

## PSALM XXII.

The Psalm contains the prayer of a sufferer. It begins with the cry, "My God, *why* hast Thou forsaken me?" vers. 1, 2; and then develops, as it proceeds, how completely anomalous it would be, if God, as all appearances seemed to show, intended to forsake him: "Thou art the Holy and the Glorious One, in all time past the faithful deliverer of Thy people,"

vers. 3-5. In singular contrast to this, stands my misery, my condition, to all appearance completely desperate, which loudly proclaims, that Thou hast forsaken me, vers. 6-8 :—a contrast all the more singular, that Thou hast manifested Thyself as my God from my early youth ; so that the explanation of the difficulty cannot be found in this, that Thou art not *my* God as well as *theirs*, vers. 9, 10.

Having demonstrated how completely anomalous desertion would be, and having shown that to the inquiry, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" there is but one answer, "I have *not* forsaken thee," the foundation is laid for the petition of ver. 11, "Be not far from me;" and the assignment of the reason thereof, viz., "for distress is nigh, because there is no helper," prepares the way for a detailed description of the trouble, after which the prayer returns developed and strengthened. The whole description of the trouble, vers. 12-18, is directed to show, that it had come to the very last extremity with the sufferer; that now *to be far away*, that now *not to help*, would be thoroughly and completely to forsake; which, according to vers. 1-10, is impossible, inasmuch as it would involve God in opposition to Himself: for the sufferer, it was now a question of existence and non-existence; he is *in articulo mortis*; another moment, and he will no longer be an object of the Divine assistance at all; surrounded by powerful and furious enemies, in a state of complete exhaustion and dissolution, wasted away and emaciated, a living corpse, the sufferer is awaiting the stroke of death, while those around, breaking the bridge between him and life, are employed in stripping him of, and dividing, his clothes. The *prayer*, which, after the last basis had thus been given to it (God *cannot* forsake, vers. 1-10; He *would* forsake, if He did not help now, vers. 12-18) breaks out in an expanded form in vers. 19-21, passes on, at its conclusion, to the *confident assurance* of an answer,—a confidence which can never fail when built on such a solid foundation.

In the last part (from vers. 22-31), the sufferer depicts the happy *consequences* of his deliverance, which he anticipates in faith, and, lifted up in spirit above the present, beholds as if it were present. These truly great consequences will extend to all without distinction. First, the greatest of all distinctions, that between Israel and the heathen, will, in reference to these, be abolished. Among Israel (vers. 22-26), the manifestation

of the glory of God, in the deliverance of His servant, will greatly strengthen faith, and will fill all believers with adoring wonder at such a God, and with courage and joy: their heart shall live for ever through this great proof of the life of their God. The heathen, vers. 27, 28, from one end of the earth to the other, as they seriously ponder this glorious manifestation of Jehovah, will turn to Him with adoring hearts, as the only true God, so that He, who is the king of the earth, will be recognised as such over it all. In the next place, the distinction of individual circumstances will be removed: rich and poor, high and low, happy and miserable, will take part in blessing this publication, and with devout feelings will thank Him for it. Finally, in vers. 30 and 31, the distinction of time will be removed: not only at present, but also throughout the distant future, will the praise and the worship of God be extended through this manifestation of His righteousness and faithfulness.

The Psalm naturally divides itself into three strophes, each containing a distinct subject of its own, of the same length, and consisting of ten verses, vers. 1-10, vers. 12-21, vers. 22-31. Between the first and second strophe a verse is thrown in, which, connecting the two together, leads on from the one to the other. De Wette and Koester's division into strophes of five members cannot be continued throughout, without breaking the connection. The three and the ten play a conspicuous part in several of the Psalms of David. Compare, for example, the 18th Psalm.

David is named in the title as the author of the Psalm, and even De Wette is obliged to concede that nothing decisive can be urged against this view.

Hitzig would have Jeremiah acknowledged as the author of the Psalm, but the grounds of his opinion are not such as to call for a formal refutation. "The somewhat diffuse and loose style of Jeremiah" is more or less common to him with all who are in deep distress, and with those who speak from the souls of such. The entire originality of our Psalm does not at all correspond to Jeremiah's style. There are no characteristic passages in which Jeremiah agrees with our Psalm; and though there were, it would not be sufficient to prove the point. We should only have to assume that Jeremiah, according to his usual practice, borrowed from the older scriptures.

The determination of the *subject* is a much more difficult

point than the determination of the *author* of the Psalm. Many, going on the supposition that he who appears as speaker can be no other than the author, have assumed that *David* is the sufferer of the Psalm. Against this idea there are insuperable objections, drawn even from the first part (vers. 1-21). David never was in such great trouble as is here described; his enemies never parted his clothes, or cast lots upon his vesture; even in the greatest heat of the conflict with Saul, to which alone we can look, he never was in that state of exhaustion, weakness, and emaciation, which meets us in the subject of this Psalm. In addition to this, we must observe, that while in the picture of the sufferings there is much which does not suit David's case, we do not meet, on the other hand, with one expression, by which we could single out any circumstance in David's history to which this prayer could be referred. This hypothesis, moreover, appears completely untenable, when we look at the *second* part. Such consequences as are there spoken of—among others, the conversion of all the nations of the whole earth to the true God, the fulfilment of the great promise made to the Patriarchs—David could not possibly expect to flow from his deliverance.

The objections urged against David apply with equal force against any other Israelitish individual—against Hezekiah (according to Jahn), and Jeremiah (according to Hitzig)—suppositions which are, moreover, rendered untenable by the words of the title.

That the reference of this Psalm to David, or to any other member of the Jewish nation, is untenable, appears from the efforts made by all who maintain it to get rid of the facts contained in the Psalm by arbitrary interpretations. What sacrifices, for example, is Hoffmann compelled to make (Prophecy and its Fulfilment, Part I. p. 156) to uphold his hypothesis, according to which the Psalm refers to David, in the circumstances narrated at 1 Sam. xxiii. 25, 26. The first part contains, according to him, a strange medley of fact and imagination, distinguished from each other by no rule, except as they best suit the convenience of the maintainer of this hypothesis. In the first strophe, the first and second verses contain matters of fact, the seventh and eighth matters of fancy: "how they will insult the prisoner, and mock at his trust in God." In the second part, from ver. 12 to ver. 15, the subject-matter is his-

torical; from ver. 16 to ver. 18, the circumstances (which cannot be made to correspond to the supposed condition) are hypothetical: "He sees Himself in their midst, and witnesses their joy at His wasted form, and how after His death they part and cast lots for His clothes." A very singular way, assuredly, of determining the situation. One, according to it, would need to have a very free hand, and to have a peculiar taste for following every sudden idea. In the *second* part, the conversion of the heathen is violently separated from its cause and occasion: "The time will come when the people will again think upon Jehovah, and turn to Him." The whole passage, from ver. 26 to ver. 31, will merely show, "what a God He must be who has listened to such a prayer, and to whom such praise will be rendered." Against this the last verse is quite sufficient:—*They shall make known His righteousness, and that He hath done this.* At the expression, "they eat," ver. 29, there will have to be supplied, "the good things of life,"—arbitrarily (for the object to be eaten must be determined from the preceding context), and in opposition to ver. 26.

Other attempts to set aside the actual state of the case by exposition, I have already adverted to in my Christology. Among these we reckon the assertion, which, after the example of Venema, has been frequently brought forward, that the sufferer in the Psalm is not yet in the power of his enemies, but only threatened by them. The passages which are brought forward for the purpose, viz., 11, 12, 20, 21, do not prove it: for the nearness of the trouble in ver 11, is not contrasted with its presence, but with its distance; trouble is near to him who is in the midst of it; the expression, "*many bulls have compassed me, etc.,*" suits a victim which has been *seized*, and, to cut off every hope of escape, has been surrounded by ferocious enemies, for the purpose of inflicting the death-stroke; and the 20th and 21st verses only show, what of itself is obvious, that *this* stroke has not yet fallen. The 17th and 18th verses prove the *contrary*:—according to them, his enemies have already stripped the sufferer quite naked, so that his emaciation lies exposed to his own eyes and to theirs, while they enjoy the miserable spectacle, and divide his clothes among themselves. To refer, with Rosenmüller and others, the 18th verse merely to the *proposal* to divide the clothes, will not do, irrespective of every other consideration, on account of the connection with

the 17th verse, where the sufferer is represented as already stripped naked. Those who propose to understand the 18th verse *figuratively*, appear to be at a loss what to say in their embarrassment.

The hypothesis of Jarchi, Kimchi, and others, is much more tolerable, viz., that by the sufferer we are to understand the people, or the pious part of the same. It will afterwards come out that this hypothesis, and in a certain measure, also, the one which refers the Psalm to David, has truth for its foundation. But if we apply the Psalm to the people *directly* and *exclusively*, we shall meet with insuperable difficulties. On the supposition that the sufferer is the whole people, it will clearly be necessary to understand, that by the troop of evil-doers, the dogs, the lions, and the bulls, the *heathen* are especially and exclusively meant; for which idea the Psalm does not furnish one single particle of evidence. The opposition everywhere, is between *wickedness* and *uprightness*: and it is quite arbitrary here, as in all the similar cases which are so frequent in the Psalms, to turn a purely moral into a national opposition. Further, if we suppose the whole people, or the pious part of the same, to be the sufferer, how could he say he would make known the name of the Lord among his *brethren*, that he would praise Him in the midst of the congregation, that from him would go forth His praise in the great assembly, that he would pay his vows before them that fear Him? How could he exhort the fearers of God, the whole seed of Jacob, the whole seed of Israel, placing himself over against them, to praise the Lord for what had happened to him? How could he promise to the meek, to those *who seek the Lord*, nothing more than the co-enjoyment of a salvation which was primarily conferred on himself, and nothing more than the strengthening of their faith from the same? The whole passage, from 22d to 26th verse, is, on that hypothesis, altogether unintelligible: it is fatal to every view which removes the contents of the Psalm entirely from the domain of individual application. Such views also are contradicted by the strong prominence given throughout the Psalm to what specially belongs to an individual person: the sufferer speaks of his mother, his heart, his tongue, his skin, his hands, his feet, etc.—a form of speech which can lose its proper application only when well-defined marks show that the term employed is a collective one.

The view which has really prevailed in the Christian Church, is that which refers the Psalm directly and exclusively to *Christ*. The author by no means regrets that he adopted this view in the Christology. It was the easiest and the most natural of those which were then before the world, to which his attention was more immediately directed; and he would not even now hesitate for one moment to adopt it, were he limited to making a choice among these, as he supposed he was,—having as yet advanced but a little way on an independent footing into the depths of the Old Testament. In addition to the views already mentioned, there was still another, held by Calvin, Melancthon, Amyrald, and others, and advocated in modern times by Stier and Umbreit,—the typical-Messianic. David, it is maintained, according to this hypothesis, in crying to the Lord on the ground of a particular case of distress, transfers, elevated by the spirit of Messianic prophecy, his own 'being into the extreme sufferings of the hoped-for Messiah, and speaks as the present type of the coming Deliverer. Although the author acknowledges that in this attempt justice is done to those considerations which may be pleaded in favour of opposing expositions, yet he cannot but regard it as an unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation. Such a view of the way in which the Psalm was produced, appears to him as psychologically altogether inconceivable. How David could extend his own consciousness to that of his offspring, is conceivable enough; but without a destruction of the life of the soul, we cannot conceive of an hesitation and vacillation between one's own and another's personality.

Meantime, the direct and exclusive reference of the Psalm to Christ, presents such difficulties, that one cannot feel perfectly satisfied with it, but is inwardly forced to look round for some other interpretation, which may content the exegetical conscience. We cannot, without violence, suppose the Messiah to be introduced *speaking*, without any characterization whatever of His person,—compare, for example, our remarks on the 16th Psalm. The Psalm, moreover, is so nearly related to a number of others, which have the sufferings of the *righteous one* generally for their subject, that it appears very difficult to break its connection with them, and to isolate it too much. Finally, what is said, in the second part, of the consequences of the deliverance of the sufferer, is undoubtedly far too grand to allow of its application



to any one Israelitish individual, and far too personal to allow of its application directly and exclusively to the people; and, on the other hand, the exegetical sense cannot reconcile itself to set aside all other realizations of the idea, *that nothing more promotes the glory of God, that nothing more powerfully tends to awaken and move the spirits of men to serve Him, than the deliverance of suffering righteousness*, whether these realizations be in the experience of individuals, or in that of the Church at large, and to confine all to the one realization of the idea in Christ. The mighty influence, for example, which the almost miraculous deliverance of David from the hand of Saul must have had in quickening the fear of God,—the events also which are recorded in Ex. xviii. 19, “And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians: now know I that the Lord is greater than all gods,”—in 2 Chron. xxxii. 23, “And many (after the Lord had glorified Himself in the deliverance of righteous Hezekiah from his enemies) brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations henceforth,”—and those in Dan. iii. 28,—come so obviously within the domain of the second part, that one can scarcely rest satisfied with any interpretation which places them altogether out of connection with it.

While all existing interpretations are thus encumbered with serious difficulties, we make our escape at once, and completely, from the region of embarrassment and constraint, if we consider the Psalm as referring to the *ideal person of the Righteous One*,—a character which is introduced more frequently throughout the Psalms than any other, so that nothing but ignorance can raise against this interpretation the reproach of arbitrariness. In this interpretation, justice is done to that truth which lies at the foundation of every one of the existing views, while, at the same time, the difficulties which stand in the way of every one of these are avoided. On this view, the case stands as follows: “David composed this poem for the use of the Church, like most of his other productions, on the ground-work of his own experience, which, in this respect, had from the beginning been so peculiarly rich. How the righteous man in this world of sin must suffer much; and how the Lord, when it comes to the last extremity,

gloriously delivers him; and how his sufferings, through the manifestation of the Divine glory in his deliverance and in his victory over an ungodly world, subserve the honour of God and the sanctifying of His name, and accelerate the approach of His kingdom—this is the theme. *Every particular righteous man* might appropriate to himself the consolation of this Psalm—might expect, in his own experience, the realization of the hopes expressed in it, in so far as the reality in him corresponded to the idea,—in so far as he embodied in his own person the ideal righteous man. In like manner also might the community of the righteous, the people of the covenant, in all public troubles, draw from it comfort,—the confident assurance, that the extremity of trouble must at the same time be the turning-point, and that the seed of tears must produce a rich harvest in the way of advancing the kingdom of God. With all this the Psalm retained, on the whole, till the coming of Christ, the character of an unfulfilled prophecy. According to the proportion of righteousness was the proportion of deliverance, and of blessed results for the kingdom of God. Every temporary fulfilment pointed forward to a perfect one yet to come. By those in whom hope in the Messiah was in general a living one, this could be expected only in Him. The most perfect righteousness belongs so necessarily to the idea of the Messiah, that it could not be present to the mind without the most distinct recognition thereof. Now, in this Psalm we find righteousness represented as necessarily connected with the severest and deepest suffering, springing out of the natural enmity of the ungodly world. Consequently, the inference is clear, that the Messiah, if a righteous, must also be a suffering one. And, further, as here we find connected suffering righteousness and such exalted deliverance, we infer that this salvation in the highest and fullest sense must be the lot of him who should be the first to realize in perfection the idea of suffering righteousness. Lastly, as the glory of God will be in proportion to the salvation vouchsafed, it must be in the time of the Messiah that this will for the first time appear in all its extent and depth, as here described.

That, according to this view, justice is done to all the references which occur in the New Testament to our Psalm (compare Matt. xxvii. 39, 43, 46; Mark xv. 34; John xix. 24; Heb. ii. 11, 12; and on the passage, the Christology, page 176, etc., and besides, also Matt. xxviii. 10, and John xx. 17, where our

Saviour, after His resurrection, with a significant reference to ver. 22, calls His disciples His brethren), is clear as day, and becomes particularly obvious, when we direct our attention to the other quotations from the Psalms in the history of our Saviour's sufferings. Not one of them refers to a Psalm which is of direct and exclusive Messianic import. The 69th Psalm, which, next to the one now under consideration, is the most remarkable, contains features which will not apply to Christ (the strong prominence, for example, given to the *sinfulness* of the sufferer), and which exclude the idea that our Lord and His Apostles have given it a direct and exclusive Messianic interpretation. Still, it is necessary to observe, that the providence of God so ordered the circumstances, that the inward conformity of the sufferer of our Psalm to Christ should become outwardly manifest. The Psalm would have been fulfilled in Christ, even although the passers-by had not shaken the head, or the mockers quoted its very words; even although there had been no dividing of His garments or casting lots upon His vestures. But the striking resemblance in these particular circumstances must be considered as an *index*, pointing to the hidden, *inward* resemblance. The same object subserved by this secret guidance of Divine providence, Christ also had in view, when He borrowed His first exclamation on the cross from the commencement of the Psalm, and referred in His last words to its closing sentence; thereby impressively intimating, that the whole Psalm was now being fulfilled.

The question may very naturally be asked, What is it that has brought such honour to our Psalm (which even Strauss, though without a good intention, has entitled the *programme of the crucifixion of Christ*) what is it that has led to its being exalted above so many similar Psalms by which it is surrounded, —Psalms which celebrate the contest of the righteous in this world of sin, and the deliverance which the Lord vouchsafes to them, and are consequently, also, indirect prophecies of Christ; inasmuch as every suffering that fell to the lot of a righteous man because of his righteousness, and every deliverance which a righteous man obtained because of his righteousness, was pre-significant of Him? To this question a threefold answer may be given. First, as has been suggested by Umbreit: "Among the many Psalms which speak of the persecutions of the righteous by their enemies, there is not one other Psalm which so

expressively and powerfully collects together, and concentrates in one individual figure, the accumulated pains and tortures of the sufferers in the contest with an ungodly world." Second, those Psalms which originally refer to one particular individual sufferer, stand one degree more remote from direct application to the Messiah than this one, which does not first require a separation of the idea from the individual. In like manner, the reference to the Messiah is less prominent in those Psalms in which the righteous man is introduced speaking, but with a reference to his own failings and weaknesses. Of these no mention whatever is made in this Psalm. Lastly, in no Psalm are the consequences which flow from the deliverance of the righteous man painted in such prominent and comprehensive colours as they are here.

*Title.* *To the chief musician—on the hind of the dawn of the morning—a choice Psalm of David.* The expression, על אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר, has been very variously interpreted. The simple remark, however, that אֵילַת, wherever it occurs, always signifies a *hind*, and that it would be perfectly arbitrary to give it any other interpretation here, so decidedly sets aside a whole host of expositions, that it is unnecessary even to quote them. The interpretation of שָׁחַר is in like manner ascertained: all expositions which do not translate it by *the dawn of the morning*, must at once be thrown aside. Those who keep by the ascertained sense of the words, are generally of opinion that these words are either the beginning of a song, or a passage from one, the tune of which is to be sung to this Psalm: like, "The hind of the morning." These again are divided, as to whether the expression must be understood as denoting literally a hind, or (according to Gesenius in the *Thes.*) as a poetical phrase for the rising sun. This last interpretation is without any analogy in the Hebrew language; and has a very insufficient ground to rest on in the fact that Arabic poets designate the rising sun "roe;" and a still weaker support in the fact that the Talmud uses the term, "the hind of the dawn of the morning," which, however, is not original, but has obviously flown from the passage before us. This whole exposition, however, has this against it, that there is not one single ascertained case, in which a poem, the tune of which is to be sung to the Psalm, is quoted in the title. Only in a case of utmost necessity, therefore, could we come to the resolution of adopting such an interpretation. Especially, be-

fore adopting it, would it be necessary for us to investigate whether it be not possible to interpret the words as designative of the subject of the Psalm. On a close examination of similar dark and enigmatical superscriptions, especially of such as are introduced with *לְי*, it almost always appears that they demand such an interpretation. More especially in those Psalms of which David is the author, such a reference is one which might *a priori* be expected, as David was particularly fond of indicating, by such enigmatical superscriptions, the contents and object of his Psalms. It cannot be denied that the *hind* is a very appropriate emblem of the suffering and persecuted righteous man who meets us in the Psalm. On the one hand, the stag, or the hind and the roe, are frequently employed as emblematical of one persecuted or put to death. For example, 2 Sam. i. 19, David himself says of Jonathan, "The roe, O Israel, is slain on thy high places;"—on which clause Michaelis makes the following remark, "*comparatur Jonathan cum caprea a venatoribus confossa:*" Prov. vi. 5, "Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler," Isa. xiii. 14. And, on the other hand, the hind and the roe are used as emblems of loveliness, Gen. xlix. 21; Prov. v. 19; Song of Sol. ii. 7, 9, viii. 14; and by the Arabians as emblems of innocence, especially on the persecuted. In Meidani (Freytag, Th. 1, N. 148), there occurs the proverb, "*cum invadat malum, non dorcadem,*" *him—not an innocent or a righteous person*: and Ferazadak (in Freytag on the passage) says, on receiving intelligence of the death of one of his enemies: "*dico ei, cum ejus mors mihi nunciata esset: ei non dorcadi albæ in arenarum tumulo (accidat).*" There is the less reason for hesitating as to this interpretation, if we remember that David, in other places, draws from the animal creation emblems of the sufferers and the persecuted: 1 Sam. xxvii. 20, "The king of Israel is come out to hunt a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge on the mountains;" xxiv. 15, "After whom is the king of Israel come out? After whom doest thou pursue? After a dead dog, after a flea?" and, in the title to the 56th Psalm, "on the dumb dove among the strangers," which bears a remarkable analogy to the passage before us. The reasons already adduced show, that it is at least exceedingly probable that the hind may be a figurative expression significant of suffering innocence. And it is put beyond doubt by the fact, that

the wicked and the persecutors in this Psalm, to the peculiar physiognomy of which belong emblems drawn from the brute creation, are designated by the terms dogs, lions, bulls, and buffaloes. In the title of such a Psalm, we might, *a priori*, expect to find such a description of the sufferer as should correspond to that of the persecutors, especially as no such appellation occurs in the body of the Psalm. A special argument in favour of this interpretation is furnished by the term אִלֵּה, my strength, ver. 19,—a word which occurs nowhere else in Scripture, and which seems to have been formed by the Psalmist for the sake of the allusion to the title. The אִלֵּה (hind) has its name from strength, but it lacks the substance:—a creature without strength, it is the natural prey of dogs, lions, buffaloes. But the strength which it has not in itself it has in the Lord, who must hasten to the help of the weak. On every other interpretation, the reference of אִלֵּה to אִלֵּה, which is so manifest, remains unexplained. Finally, this reference shows at the same time that the title came from the pen of the author of the Psalm, and goes far to establish the originality generally of the titles. We are led to the same result by the manifest connection between אִלֵּה, and the expression אֵל, אֵל, properly, my Strong One, at the very opening of the Psalm, and also by the circumstance that the symbolical designation of the sufferer in the title exactly corresponds to those of his enemies in the Psalm itself. All these references are so fine and significant, that they can have proceeded only from the author himself. Hitherto we have been discussing only the term “hind,” and have left its adjunct, “the dawn of the morning,” out of sight. The generality of those who consider the title as indicating the contents of the Psalm, trace the connection which the hind has with the morning dawn to its being early hunted. But this reference is too remote to admit of its being intended by such a short expression. The only legitimate exposition is that which is grounded on the general figurative use of the morning dawn. That the morning dawn is used in a figurative sense, we are entitled to expect from the analogy of the hind. Now, the common idea conveyed by the figurative use of the morning dawn, is that of “prosperity coming after misfortunes.” Hence in Isa. lviii. 8, “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning;” 10, “Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:” Isa. xlvii. 11, “There shall evil come

upon thee, the morning whereof thou shalt not know ;" viii. 20. Hos. vi. 3, x. 15. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. The expression will thus indicate the prosperous termination of the sufferer's condition : *the suffering righteous man to whom salvation is imparted*,—a title as suitable, as exactly corresponding to the contents, as can well be conceived. The fact so carefully brought forward by the Evangelists, that Christ rose at the day-dawn,—a circumstance by no means unimportant,—points to the expression, "of the morning."

The first division of the first part begins, in the 1st and 2d verses, with the complaining question, and the interrogative complaint, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" In grounding this complaint, it is shown first, vers. 3-8, that God is acting towards the sufferer, whom He is giving over to destruction, in a very different manner from the way in which He had manifested Himself, in all time past, in the experience of His people; and then, vers. 9 and 10, that God is as really the God of the sufferer as He had been theirs. To this detail the prayer is next appended, ver. 11, that God would remove the anomaly thus demonstrated to exist, that He would not be far from the sufferer, that He would not forsake him.

Ver. 1. *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me, far from my deliverance, far from the words of my groaning?* In the first clause everything depends upon defining the idea of *forsaking*. This term can here signify nothing less than an entire and complete *giving up*. For the trial is completely at an end, as soon as God reveals to the sufferer that now his sufferings shall have an end. As soon as he can say, "Thou hast heard me," he sees that everything is right. The trial also does not consist in *temporary* suffering, considered as such—this the sufferer knows that he must lay his account with—but in the supposition that he has been given up by God altogether, and for ever. Hence therefore the cry, "Thou hast forsaken me," does not refer to an *actual fact*, but rests on a *conclusion* which the sufferer draws from his apparently thoroughly desperate condition, and upon *the feeling of his flesh*, which cries, that now, when there is but a "hair between him and death," everything is utterly lost. To get free from this conclusion and this feeling, is the work that devolves on the sufferer. After he has honestly done his part, and taken living hold of those truths which render the forsaking altogether impossible,

he receives from God the only answer which can be given to his complaint, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" "I have not forsaken thee, notwithstanding appearances and feeling." From this exposition, it is evident that these words, so far from being expressive of despair, are rather destined to counteract despair, to tear it up by the roots, when it is like to steal over us. From it, also, it is evident that the idea of the Berleb. Bible, that these words are strictly suitable only in the lips of Christ, is altogether erroneous. "Among us," it is there said, "no man may, in his suffering, ask God why hast Thou sent this or that affliction? for we shall at all times find sufficient reason why we have deserved this, and much more. All that a suffering man can say is, *O my, God forsake me not.*" The sufferer before us does not ask why God, in general, allows him to suffer, but why He has *forsaken* him. To this *why*, every one has a right, who can in truth call God his God, notwithstanding his manifold failings. For "God has forsaken no one who trusts in Him at all times," and God *can forsake no such one*. In short, the expression, *forsake me not*, which alone, it would appear, is admissible, is not essentially different from the exclamation, *Why hast Thou forsaken me*, and must rest on precisely the same ground. He only who can ask God, "*Wherefore* hast Thou forsaken me?" can pray with confident assurance, "*Forsake me not.*"—The previous appellation, *My God, my God*, contains the ground of the *wherefore*, the right to put such a question. He who cannot call God his God, he who is without the covenant and without the promises, he who has obtained no pledges of the grace of God, may be justly forsaken: he has no ground to implore of God, that He would show by the result that the desertion is altogether a matter of appearance and feeling. Nay more, the greater the right any one has to call God his God, the greater is the confidence and decision with which he can utter the *why*. Thus it is evident that the most *complete* right to the *why* is reserved for *one*, viz. Christ, who, in the full sense, can call God His God; at the same time, a *sufficient* right belongs also to all believers. The emphatic *repetition* of the expression, *My God*, shows how firmly the sufferer clings to this his only ground of hope, how thoroughly conscious he is that it is here that he is to find an antidote to despair, that it is from this point that there must go forth a reaction against present appearances. The expression, *My God*, occurring three times, here and in ver. 2,



is assuredly not accidental.—The following remarks are Luther's: "Wherefore, let us shut up these words in our hearts, and let us keep them carefully there, till the proper time comes when we shall need them. Whoever cannot comprehend them, let him remain with the people on the plain, in the field below, and allow the disciples to go to Christ to the mountain. Luke vi. 12, 17. For, not all the sayings of this Psalm are uttered to each and every man, since all have not the same gifts, and all have not the same sufferings. The Scriptures, according to the circumstances of individuals, have milk for sucklings, and wine and food for the strong; so that there is consolation not only for the weak, but also for the strong and for those who are enduring great sufferings."—The second clause most interpreters, after the example of the Septuagint and Luther (*I cry, but my help is far*), translate: "far from my deliverance are the words of my lamentation:" there is a great gulf between the cry for help, and the help itself, which, now *that matters are at the very last extremity with the sufferer*—now that he stands with one foot in the grave,—ought to stand in close contact with each other. Others translate: "far from my help, from the words of my lamentation." This translation is undoubtedly to be preferred. Were we to refer רחוק to רבוי, the plural would be required; and, what is still more decisive, the reference of רחוק to God is rendered necessary by the expression אל תרחק in the 11th and 19th verses. The cry in these verses, "be not far," grows out of the address *here*, "Thou art far," after that the impossibility of his continuing longer in existence had been shown. God is far from the deliverance which He does not work out, and from the complaint which He does not hear. This is all the more painful, that the time for deliverance is just expiring, and that the man from whom the complaint proceeds, is at the very gates of death; so that not to help now—not to hear now—appears to be to give up altogether. We may not, however, adopt the view of most of those who follow this exposition, and translate, "Thou art far." This would require the pronoun: רחוק is in apposition to the pronoun in עובדתי. The term שאנה signifies primarily, "roaring," or "bellowing," and secondarily, "loud complaining."

Ver. 2. *My God, I cry in the day time, and Thou answerest not; and in the night time, and I am not silent.* Substantially, the "why" is to be supplied here also. To be able to call God his God, and, in extreme distress, to cry continually without

being heard, is a striking contradiction, which imperiously calls for removal by God's at length hearing. The last words are translated by many, *and I have no rest*. But the term דומיה always signifies "silence;" and this translation is particularly necessary here, in consequence of the opposition between the term and the "cry" of the first clause. The sufferer can be silent when his cry finds an answer, when he gets assurance of being heard and helped: so that thus *I am not silent* is exactly parallel to *Thou answerest not*.

Ver. 3. *And Thou art holy, sitting enthroned on Israel's praise*. There is no reason for substituting *and yet* in room of the simple and ascertained *and*. The contrast between the supposed reality and the idea—between the apparent personal and the general experience—is not here indicated in relation to the first and second verses, but is drawn for the first time in vers. 6–8 in relation to the contents of vers. 3–5. The import is: that I may lay down a further basis on which I rest my right to utter the complaint, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?"—*Thou art holy, and hast always taken an interest in Thine own people, hast never forsaken any one of them; but I appear to be altogether forsaken by Thee. For Thou takest no interest in me, although I am now sunk to the very depth of misery*.—The idea of holiness in Scripture, embraces in it the idea meant to be conveyed by theologians when they define the term to be, "the highest purity in God demanding the same purity on the part of the creature." This is evident from the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" and Isa. vi. 5, where the thrice repeated "holy" of the seraphims awakens in the prophet a consciousness of his own impurity. But the two ideas are by no means identical: the scriptural one is much more comprehensive than the other. Holiness in the Scriptures comprehends majesty, as well as holiness in the limited sense. God is holy, inasmuch as He is separated from every created and finite being, and lifted above them, particularly above sin, which can establish its seat only within the domain of finite beings. The opinion of Gesenius (Thes.) and of Nitzsch (Sys. 77), who would identify the scriptural with the theological sense, is negatived by the very passage, the sixth chapter of Isaiah, which shows above all others, that the Divine holiness forms also a contrast to human sinfulness. There, the thrice repeated cry of "holy" is immediately followed up by the expression, intended to form its foundation, "the whole earth is full of His glory;"

and is accompanied by the description of the prophet, "seated on a throne, high, and lifted up," and "mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord, the Lord of hosts." In like manner, also, we have in Isa. lvii. 15, the holiness of God placed in juxtaposition with "high," and "lifted up," and in contrast to, "of a contrite and humble spirit:" "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." In Isa. xl. 25 and 26, we find the "holiness" of God brought into connection with His power, as displayed in the creation of the world, in a way which is inapplicable on the theological view: "To whom will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One: lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things:" to whom will ye compare Me, who am lifted up above all created and finite beings, as their Creator, from whom I am separated? In Hab. iii. 3, the holiness of God stands in connection with His glory and His praise. "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran: His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise." In the 99th Psalm, the holiness of God, into which His whole praise is resolved, separates Him not only from sin, but from everything earthly and human. In the third verse, it is parallel to, "great and terrible" (גָּדוֹל וְיָרֵא). With the latter of these terms it stands also in intimate connection in Ps. cxi. 9, "holy and reverend (נֹרָא) is His name." The signification of purity, then, so far from being the only one of קָדָשׁ, cannot be considered even as the fundamental one. Nothing can be said in favour of this; for the remarks made by Gesenius, for the purpose of proving that the fundamental idea of קָדָשׁ is that of physical purity, rest on a mistaken view of the symbolical character of the precepts, in reference to the outward purity required by the law:—and that the idea implied in קָדָשׁ in such passages is that of holiness, and not that of outward purity, is evident simply from the motive appended to the exhortation, "Be ye holy, for God is holy." On the other hand, the position for which we are arguing is confirmed by the circumstance, that קָדָשׁ is much more frequently used with a general reference to the distance between God and all created beings, than to the distance specially between Him and sin—a circumstance which does not admit of explanation, on the supposition that the theological sense is the fundamental one.—In so far as the term is used in reference to God, those

explanations are altogether to be rejected which imply the idea of God separating Himself from all other nations, and consecrating Himself as the God of Israel, or (Menken and Stier) as one who condescends in self-denying love.—Even in the passage before us, קרר stands in opposition, not only to what is sinful, but also generally to whatever is created, earthly, human. It indicates that, in reference to God, every thought of inability or unwillingness, where He has promised, as proceeding from unfaithfulness, must be excluded. God has always manifested Himself as holy, inasmuch as He has delivered His people through the mighty deeds of His right hand, has maintained His covenant, and has gloriously fulfilled His promises. He shines like a clear bright sun, unsullied by the spots of weakness or falsehood of the human race, which is wholly covered over with these spots, and presents points of light only where it is illuminated by this sun. That the holiness of God *here* undoubtedly *comprehends* His faithfulness, is obvious from the expression, “His righteousness,” in the 31st verse.—In the *second* clause, the praise-songs of Israel come into notice, in so far as God, in proving Himself to be the Holy One, has given ample *occasion* to praise Him. There is, in all probability, an allusion to the frequent expression, יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרוֹנִים; at least, on comparing this it becomes evident that the praises of Israel are here to be regarded as the throne, the seat of honour, of God: *enthroned on the praise-songs*. The exposition of De Wette is unsuitable: “Inhabitant of the praises.” יָשָׁב does not signify to inhabit, but only to sit, to dwell, to be enthroned. Gesenius regards יֹשֵׁב as used in a transitive sense—and dwelling among the praise-songs of Israel, viz. in the temple, in which the praises of Israel are heard. But יֹשֵׁב is never construed with an accusative. Of the three passages which Gesenius adduces for this construction, in the first, Gen. iv. 20, it is not admissible, and in the other two, Is. xlii. 11 and xlv. 13, it is not necessary.

Ver. 4. *Our fathers trusted in Thee; they trusted, and Thou deliveredst them.* Ver. 5. *They cried to Thee, and were delivered; they trusted in Thee, and were not put to shame.* Luther remarks: “These words look very like as if they were spoken out of envy and vehement indignation against God. For although He is the same God, yet He has heard and delivered the fathers who have hoped in Him and cried to Him, but from this sufferer here, who also hopes and cries, He turns away, and forsakes him. For it is really a hard matter, and

one which tempts a person sorely to despair and to blaspheme, that the same God should act differently towards one from what He does to another, without any fault on his part. Whoever has been engaged in such a contest has felt such unutterable distress in his mind." Assuredly, the pain of the sufferer must be greatly augmented by the isolation of his condition, so soon as he decidedly concludes himself to be entirely forsaken. But this is not the case with our sufferer. Although appearances and his own feelings say that he is forsaken, yet, even from the beginning, faith is in the background, and by and by it gains a complete victory over sight and sense. What at the first glance *strengthens the complaint*, becomes, when more deeply pondered, *the transition to hope*: for whoever is fully persuaded that God has at all times, and without any exception, manifested Himself as the Holy One, the deliverer of His people, cannot but come gradually to know that there must be a mistake as to the assumed single exception. The expression, "Thou art the Holy One," is a corroding element, which must by and by entirely consume the other, "Thou hast forsaken me."—The deeds of the Lord, to which the speaker refers, are peculiarly those which took place when the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, and were put in possession of the promised land. The expression, *our fathers*, of which the natural counterpart is, "we, their posterity, Thy present people," would seem to lead to the conclusion, that the speaker is not an individual, but a personified community. At least, in all similar passages, it is not an individual, but the Church of God, that is introduced complaining of the difference between the present and the past, praying for its removal, and grounding hope for the future on the early deliverances vouchsafed by the Lord to His people: comp., for example, Ps. xlv. 2, "O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us what Thou hast done in their days, in the days of old;" and also Ps. lxxviii. 12, etc.; Isa. lxiii. 7, etc.; Hab. iii. 1. Still the reference to the community of the righteous is designedly of the most indistinct character, in order that the individual suffering righteous man also may appropriate to himself the contents of these verses.—The repetition of בָּחַוּ in the second clause of the 4th verse, is intended to bind together, as inseparably as possible, the *trust* and the *deliverance*, and to show that there is the most intimate connection between them; that trust is *always*

succeeded by deliverance. The occurrence of the expression *three times* is assuredly not accidental.—Stier refers בָּרַח to the being confounded before the world, to the disgrace before the ungodly, which is more painful than any disappointment of one's own. But there is no reason for making this special reference; for בָּרַח is constantly used in the sense of, to be ashamed, to be disappointed of one's hope.

Ver. 6. *But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and one despised of the people.* All that is brought forward in this and the two following verses, appears evidently designed to produce the impression, that the sufferer is entirely forsaken by God; and it is only in this view that it is here brought forward. It is not suffering in itself, but the deepest and apparently irremediable depth of suffering that is placed in opposition to the deliverance of the fathers. The term וְאִנִּי is expressive of emphatic contrast—"it is altogether otherwise with me: I am a worm, etc." Man is compared to a worm in Job xxv. 6, on account of the nothingness of his existence. The worm, in the passage before us, as in Isa. xli. 13, serves to designate nothingness within nothingness, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." The passage, 1 Sam. xxv. 15, is analogous, where David describes himself as a dead dog, or as a flea. To the clause, *and no man*, corresponds וְאִנִּי in Isa. liii. 3, literally, "ceasing from among men, no longer belonging to them." The term, *a reproach of men*, properly, *of the human race*, indicates that the domain of the reproach is so extensive, that the whole human race may be said to reproach. One despised *of* the people, is one despised *by* the people. The people stands in opposition to one individual. The reproach is not that of an individual, it is of a popular character. The reproach and the contempt are brought under our notice, not so much in themselves, as in reference to the ground on which they rest,—the deep misery of the sufferer, whose condition is such that it is reckoned by all men as altogether *desperate*.

Ver. 7. *All who see me laugh me to scorn: they open wide the lips, they shake the head.* The ב in בִּישָׁה indicates that the lip is the instrument of the opening. A parallel passage, Ps. xxxv. 21, "They open their mouth wide against me," and Job xvi. 10. Instead of "they shake the head," the later commentators, after the example of Lackemacher, whose renderings are always somewhat suspicious, have, "they nod the head;"

adducing as the reason, that it is not the shaking of the head, which is a gesture of denial, that is here suitable, but the nodding of the head, which is a gesture of assent, and in the face of the sufferer a gesture of satisfaction. But this exposition is etymologically inadmissible: the word *הניע* is altogether identical with our shake; and to shake the head is exactly the import of *הניע ראש*, the phrase which occurs in quite a similar connection, and also of *κινεῖν τὴν κεφαλὴν* of the Septuagint and of Matthew. And the reason above adduced for departing from the only correct rendering in an etymological point of view, is at once set aside by the remark, that the denial does not here refer to the suffering, but to the existence of the sufferer. This they deny him, on the ground of his irremediable misery. The idea is this: They shake the head, in connection especially with what follows, where they declare his condition to be completely desperate, and him to be wholly forsaken of God. This connection is all the more significant, that what follows, from the omission of the *אמר*, is clearly seen to be a mere commentary on the gesture: after saying by pantomime, *it is all over with him*, they say it by words.

Ver. 8. “*Devolve upon the Lord’ (he has said), Now let Him rescue him, let Him deliver him, since He has delight in him.*” The reproach and contempt grounded on the great depth of the sufferer’s misery, and illustrative of it,—the whole world has given him over for lost,—we have intimated to us in *general* in ver. 6th; in ver. 7th, we have its expression by *gestures*, and in the verse before us, in *words*. How sure the mockers are of the destruction of the sufferer,—how completely impossible it appears to them, that God should deliver him,—is evident in the clearest manner from this, that they express, in the form of a wish, what, if it should really happen, would be in the highest degree fatal to them. Had they entertained a single thought of deliverance, they never would have uttered the expression, “*Let Him deliver him.*” *ל* is, according to many, an infinitive. Some understand it as used in the sense of an imperative,—*Let him trust in the Lord.* But this is inadmissible; for, in such a case, the absolute form *לל* must have been used: comp. Ewald, *Sm. Gr.* 355, 56. The infinitive, moreover, is not simply and everywhere used for the imperative; and there is no reason here for the substitution. Finally, *let him commit*, is altogether unsuitable to the connection; for *ל אל יהוה* must correspond to

בַּחַיִּי, and can therefore refer only to the relation in which the sufferer has hitherto stood to God, not to that which he is now to do. According to others, the infinitive is used instead of the Preterite tense. But in this case, also, the absolute form would be necessary: moreover, the infinitive cannot be used generally for the Preterite, but only in certain cases (see Ew. 355), of which the passage before us is not one. Those who, in consequence of these difficulties, give up the form of the infinitive altogether, either like Ewald, change בַּחַיִּי into בָּחַי, or take it as a Preterite with an intransitive sense, indicated by the tone of the voice, *he depended*. But this alteration is altogether an arbitrary one; there is no trace anywhere of the form בָּחַי in the Preterite, and there is not one single example of the verb being used in an intransitive sense. Besides, the Preterite is unsuitable to the parallel: בַּחַיִּי would, in that case, refer to the sufferer, not to God: *he has trusted in God; let Him deliver him, let Him rescue him, since He loves him*. But that this will not answer, will be shown immediately.—The form בַּחַיִּי is, in other passages, always used as an imperative. Comp. Prov. xvi. 9, and Ps. xxxvii. 5. And this last passage makes it evident that it must be understood as such in the passage before us. But we must not on this account suppose, with Gesenius, that the imperative is used here in the third person: *devolvat*, which does not exist. “Devolve upon the Lord,” had been the motto of the sufferer. This the mockers call out to the sufferer in an ironical manner, so that we must read the words with double marks of quotation. As the ungodly are introduced speaking, without any note of preparation, it can make no difficulty that they introduce the sufferer speaking in the same way. “*Trust in God* is his motto; now let this God deliver him.” The “*he has trusted*,”—the “*πέποιθεν*” of the Septuagint, and of Matthew (ch. xxvii. 43) after the Septuagint,—is contained, according to this exposition, in the words. To the “*devolve*” is, according to Prov. xvi. 3, Ps. xxxvii. 5, and 1 Pet. v. 7, to be supplied, “*thy way*,” “*thy circumstances*,” “*thy cares*,” or something similar. The idea is taken from those who lay a burden on the shoulders of others, which is too heavy for them to bear themselves.—The subject in בַּחַיִּי is the Lord, not the sufferer, as was seen by the Septuagint, *ὅτι θέλει αὐτόν*, and by Matt., *εἰ θέλει αὐτόν*. בַּחַיִּי is frequently used of the complacency with which the Lord regards His people: בַּחַיִּי בְיָהוָה nowhere



occurs. This exposition is also demanded by the ninth verse. Trust on the part of man, and delight on the part of God, correspond : the conviction of being the object of delight to God, is the ground of the confidence ;—it is because the righteous man knows that God delights in him, that he commits to Him all his cares. The mockers see in the condition of the sufferer (considering it as they do as utterly hopeless) an unqualified reproach of his confidence—a practical denial of his conviction of being delighted in by God.—Finally, the mockers here, without intending it, bear testimony, and a testimony of all others the most beautiful, to the righteous man, that he has comforted himself in the grace of God, that he has cast himself, with his whole existence, upon God ; and thus the insulting words, “Let Him rescue him, let Him deliver him,” although, in their view, deliverance, in the circumstances of the case, is altogether impossible, contain an undesigned prophecy. God ordained it so, that the mockers at the cross of Christ, from an unconscious recollection, should utter these very words, and thus characterize themselves as the ungodly in relation to the righteous one.

Ver. 9. *But Thou didst take me out of my mother's womb, Thou didst permit me to trust when on my mother's breasts.* The sufferer had hitherto, while complaining of its being altogether anomalous that God should forsake him, *silently taken it for granted*, that he stood in quite the same relation toward God as those who had been gladdened by deliverances vouchsafed by God. What had hitherto been taken for granted, is here, and in the 10th verse, expressly asserted and defended : God is the God of the sufferer, as He has been the God of the fathers,—He has already shown Himself as such in his helpless infancy,—He has given him good ground for exercising that confidence which is always followed by deliverance. Thus every other answer to the complaint, *Why hast Thou forsaken me?* is cut off except this, *I have not forsaken thee :* and full preparation is made for the prayer, ver. 11, *Be not far from me.* The verse before us is in point of form an appendage to the last clause of the preceding one, “He has delight in him :” this is true ; for Thou, O God, hast given me the richest *proofs* of Thy delight. This connection is all the more suitable, when we observe that the mockers took, “He has pleasure in him,” out of the lips of the sufferer, and spoke it out of his soul : *What they in contempt upbraid me*

*with, I have with perfect truth asserted; for Thou, etc.* It appears at first sight remarkable, that the righteous man, in advancing proof for the position that God is his God, should give such prominence to what is common to all. Still this difficulty loses much of its weight through the remark of Calvin: "This wonder has, through its frequency, become common; but if it were not that ingratitude had blinded our eyes, every birth would fill us with amazement, and every preservation of a child in its tender infancy, exposed as it is, even at its very entrance into the world, to death in a hundred forms." The following passage from Luther is of a similar import: "Augustine, in the first book of his Confessions, finds great enjoyment and consolation in similar reflections, where he praises God with devout admiration for his creation and birth, and extols the Divine goodness in taking him up, and committing him to the care and attention of his mother. Although thoughts such as these may appear childish, effeminate, and unseasonable, for those who are in such pain and conflicts, yet experience here teaches us to remember these tender, cheerful, lovely works of God, to seek a place of refuge when suffering the hard bites of the wrath and of the rod of God, and to enjoy the sweet and pleasant milk of our mother's heart, and all these other acts of mercy which were shown during the years of infancy. Thus shall we, when brought into trouble, be led to think (as we are commanded to do) on the days of happiness gone by: when distress and suffering are upon us, we shall remember the great grace and goodness of God manifested to us in early youth; and when we suffer as men, we shall reflect on what we enjoyed when children. . . . Try, and you will then understand what it is to see the Divine majesty employed and taken up with childish, that is, with small, insignificant, yea contemptible works." If any difficulty is felt after this, it may be removed by the assumption, that while the words were designed to suit the individual who peculiarly appropriated this Psalm, the Psalmist had primarily before his mind *the community of the righteous*, and on this account gave peculiar prominence to the grace of God manifested at the beginning of its existence, because then (that is, at the deliverance from Egypt, etc.) this grace was most gloriously manifested. Still we cannot go further; we cannot apply the verses directly and exclusively to the Church, because their tone is so individual, that the individual reference cannot be given up. This also is evident, as was seen

in the introduction, from the passage, 22-26.—The term נחִי is difficult. The still obscurer expression נִחִי, in the borrowed passage, Ps. lxxi. 6, gives us no assistance. It cannot be the participle, “*my drawer forth*,” for נחִי signifies always, and even in Micah iv. 10, *to break forth*: this form of the participle, moreover, is always intransitive; Ewald, § 140. We must, therefore, just consider נחִי as the infinitive,—“*my breaking forth*.” God may be called “*the breaking forth*,” because it was by His power alone this took place, just as He is in other places called the covenant, the salvation, the blessing, the joy, etc., because all these depend on Him. מַבְטִיחִי refers back to בָּטַח in vers. 4 and 5:—to make or permit to trust, is to give ground to trust, to warrant to do so; and this God had done to the sufferer, by protecting him in his early youth. Now, whoever is entitled *to trust*, and it does not depend on whether a man is yet *capable* of trusting, is also entitled *to help*. For trust and help have always, in times past, been inseparably connected.

Ver. 10. *Upon Thee was I cast from my mother's womb, from my mother's lap Thou wast my God.* In the first of these clauses, there lies at the bottom a reference to those who receive the child at the birth. Compare Gen. xvi. 2, Job iii. 12, “*Why did the knees receive me?*” and Ruth iv. 16. The clause may be thus paraphrased: “*Thou hast received me when I was helpless under Thy mild protection; I fell as it were into Thy lap, which was stretched out to receive me at my birth; and from having been fostered and cared for by Thee, I have retained my life, whereas, otherwise, I should most assuredly have been the prey of death:*” compare, in reference to the whole Church, Ezek. xvi. 5. The word הִשְׁלַכְתִּי is wholly passive; and the exposition of De Wette is altogether inaccurate, “*I have trusted in thee;*” and Stier remarks, “*Some such thing is indicated as the old theologians ascribed to children in baptism.*” Here, as in the remaining portion of these two verses, the Psalmist does not speak of the state of feeling of the sufferer, but of the mercy of God actually manifested in deeds towards him. The clause, *Thou art my God*, is equivalent to, “*Thou has manifested Thyself as such.*” The first part of this Psalm thus returns at its close to the point at which it opened,—*My God, my God.* The sufferer's right to use this address, and consequently to put the question following upon it, *Why hast Thou forsaken me?* has its foundation assigned to it in the two closing verses. Thus it is

that every other answer to this question is cut off except this one, *I have not forsaken thee.*

Ver. 11. *Be not far from me, for trouble is near, because there is no helper.* From the demonstration given in the first part, that the forsaking would be completely anomalous, flows here the prayer, "Be not far;" in laying down the basis of which it is shown, that to be far away at such a time would be the same thing as entirely to forsake. The prayer has its basis assigned it *here* in the very short expression, *for trouble is near.* This is much more accurately explained by Luther than by most modern expositors: "We are not to understand, that when the Psalmist says, Trouble is near, he has any reference to *time*, as if it were now in his neighbourhood, and would fall suddenly upon him; but we are to understand him as speaking of the strength, the might, and the power of the trouble which, even *now*, is upon him, and concerning which he complains that it is not taken away." That thus the expression, "trouble is near" (the sufferer says *Trouble is near*, instead of, *It is there*, on account of the contrast of the distance of the Lord), is only to be understood of a trouble which had already been really inflicted, is evident from the expression which contains its reason, "for there is no helper;" *i. e.*, for I have been delivered over in a state of helplessness into the power of my enemies (the man with whom this is the case must assuredly find himself in the midst of the very deepest trouble): vers. 12-18 are to be considered as a further development of the same thought.

Ver. 12. *Many bulls surround me, the strong ones of Bashan encompass me.* In applying the term bulls to his enemies, the Psalmist has an eye to their *strength* and *fury*. In "the bulls of Bashan,"—"the strong ones," that is, "the strong bulls,"—both characteristics are brought vividly before us: the first, because of their excellent pasture; the second, because they fed on mountains and in forests, and were consequently further removed from men, and more untamed in their habits.

Ver. 13. *They open their mouth wide against me,—a tearing and roaring lion.* The enemies are not only like lions, they are a lion, or lions themselves, in a spiritual sense. The lion roars chiefly when he looks at his prey, and is about to fall upon it. Compare Amos iii. 4; Ps. civ. 21.

Ver. 14. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are separated; my heart has become like wax, melted in the midst of*

*me.* The sufferer turns now from describing his outward trouble (in the 12th and 13th verses), to lay open in this and the 15th verse his consequent inward state, which in like manner loudly proclaims, that now to be far away would mean utterly to forsake. "The picture of inward dissolution sketched here in a few strokes," remarks Ewald, "is a very terrible one." The poured-out water is here, according to the parallel clause, "my bones are separated," not descriptive of fear or dejection, but of the most complete dissolution of all strength and of powerlessness. The parallel passages, therefore, are such as Ps. lviii. 8; 2 Sam. xiv. 14, "For we die, and are like water poured out on the earth;" and especially 1 Sam. vii. 6, where the idea is embodied in a symbolical action,—the Israelites, when oppressed by the Philistines, assembled at Mizpah, drew water and poured it out before the Lord, and cried out to Him by symbolical signs, "We are poured out like water." Passages such as the following are not parallel: Jos. vii. 5, "And the heart of the people melted, and became like water;" or Lam. ii. 19. The reference in them is chiefly to the heart, and they are rather to be considered as parallel to the last clause of the verse before us. As emblematical of moral helplessness or mental imbecility, the figure occurs in Gen. xlix. 4, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."—"All my bones are separated," implies, in like manner, complete powerlessness and exhaustion. Muis: non secus vacillat totum corpus quam si omnia ossa luxata sint et a suis quæque avulsa locis. Compare Dan. v. 6. — *The heart melts*, when a person sinks into despair when in extreme, irremediable distress. Luther: "Those who have good hope, and are cheerful, are said to have a fresh, strong, confident, hard, good heart, which stands immovable like a hard rock. And thus also, on the other hand, those who are cast down and terrified, are said to have a soft and feeble heart, which dissolves and melts like wax." Such melting sometimes befalls even those who, like David, have the heart of a lion. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 10.

Ver. 15. *My strength is dried up like a potsherd: and my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth: and Thou layest me in the dust of death.* As כח always signifies strength, and cannot be translated moisture, the יבש must be understood as used in an improper sense: my power is entirely wasted away like the moisture out of a dried potsherd. There are other instances of similar abrupt comparisons: Ps. cii. 4, "My heart is smitten

and withered like grass;" *i. e.*, is as much destroyed as withered grass is.—The cleaving of the tongue to the roof of the mouth is the consequence of pain and anguish;—compare Job xxix. 10. Luther: "It is incredible how this inward anguish, and terror, and dismay, withers and dries up completely and suddenly the whole moisture of all the parts of the body, and makes them weak and good for nothing, especially the moisture of the tongue, in which we chiefly feel this thirst and drought." On the accusative מִלְקָחִי compare Ewald, p. 588.—In reference to the last clause, Luther remarks, "This he adjoins as the sum and final conclusion." לְעָפָר, taken strictly, signifies not, "into the dust," but, "so that I belong to the dust." The *dust of death* is the dust which stands in relation to death, that is, the dust of the grave. The Future is used in the sense of the Present—the sufferer is already more dead than alive. Everything that belongs peculiarly to life has already disappeared—all vital spirits, all vital strength,—so that when what is commonly called death comes, which the sufferer sees immediately before his eyes, it finds scarcely anything left for it to take. The expression, "*Thou bringest me*," is deserving of observation. The sufferer considers everything only as an instrument in the hands of God. Hence, on the one hand, his pain was augmented; but hence, also, there was laid the necessary foundation for his hope. He who cannot trace his sufferings to God alone, cannot with a full heart look to Him for deliverance. He only who sends it can remove it; and He must remove it in cases similar to the present one, even when all prospect of deliverance appears to be gone. Calvin: "As often as this darkness befalls the spirits of believers, there are always some remains of unbelief, which prevent them from rising into the light of the new life. But in the case of Christ, there were united in a wonderful manner both terror from the curse of God, and patience from faith, so quieting all inward movements, that they were kept at rest under the rule of God."

Ver. 16. *For dogs compass me, the band of the wicked besets me, like lions on my hands and feet.* The sufferer calls his enemies here dogs, on account of their fury and bitterness. Compare on the savage ferocity of Eastern dogs, Oedmann's Collections, 5, p. 31, 2, and Laborde's Geographical Commentary on Exodus and Numbers, p. 59.—The first word of the last clause is read differently: כְּאַרְיֵי (in the received text), כְּאַרְיֵי, and

כָּרִי. If we pay regard to external evidence, there can be no doubt that כָּרִי is the true reading; and it would be to abandon everything like certainty in criticism, and along with this, criticism itself, were we to reject this reading, and to substitute instead of it, with Ewald, the reading כָּאֲרִי. The external evidence for the other readings is as good as nothing. כָּאֲרִי is found only in two unsuspected Jewish manuscripts: כָּרִי not even in one at first hand, and only in a few cases written on the margin. The received text, besides having on its side the whole weight of the MSS., is also supported by the Masora. None of the old translators are against it, for, without following any other reading, they might, like many of the later expositors, explain כָּאֲרִי in the sense expressed by them; and even although, in some few instances, כָּאֲרִי may not have lain at the foundation of the translation, this would not imply that there was a different reading, but only a conjectural emendation, caused by the difficulty felt in interpreting the word in the text. Assuredly, if the old translators had found any variety in the text, some traces of it would have remained in their translations. Further, though the reasons of an external kind were equally balanced on both sides, considerations of an internal nature would lead us to decide in favour of the received text. For it is from the more difficult reading that the others may be conceived to have arisen, and not the contrary.—In regard to the *explanation* of כָּאֲרִי, thus determined to be the true reading, most interpreters proceed on the supposition that it is the plural of a participle, the rare plural-form instead of באֲרִים, from the root כָּר. The participle is properly כָּרִי, but there are other examples of the insertion of an א (see Gesenius' *Lehrgr.* p. 401). If we adopt this view as to the form, which for a time was the almost universally prevailing one, we must still attach weight to all the points adverted to in the *Christol.* I. i. p. 180: we can neither translate it "they fetter," as was usually done at the time of the publication of the *Christology*, nor "they disfigure," but only "they pierce," after the example of the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Syriac. It is also obvious, that if we adopt this view, the words must have a special reference to Christ, for the piercing of hands and feet here is nowhere else alluded to; and the idea of Gesenius, that the hands and feet may poetically denote the whole body, is altogether untenable. What was brought forward in the *Christology* to prove, that not only Christ's hands, but also His feet, were literally

pierced, has been presented more in detail by Bähr, in a paper specially devoted to this purpose, and in a defence of the same against the objections of Paulus, which appeared in Tholuck's Literary Anzeiger for 1833. *But we must not forget that the supposition that כָּאֲרִי is a plural participle, which was commonly entertained at the date of the publication of the Christology, is encompassed by so many difficulties, that it can be adopted only at the very last extremity.* When three irregularities occur in the same word, as in the present instance,—1st, The use of the plural form in כָּ, which at the best is extremely rare, and indeed occurs only in one other at all certain instance; 2d, The participial form with אֲ; and 3d, The use of כָּו in the sense of כָּוה,—they acquire a force, when united, very different from what they would have if they occurred apart. Besides, let it be remarked, these words, according to this interpretation, have a special reference to Christ; whereas, on the grounds adduced in the introduction, it is evident that the Psalm has reference to Him only as embodying the perfect idea of the *righteous* man,—a supposition which would render unsuitable anything having reference *exclusively* to Christ. Last of all, had the New Testament writers approved of the correctness of this interpretation, which was put into their hands by the current translation of the Septuagint, ὤρυξαν χεῖράς μου καὶ πόδας μου,—so eagerly laid hold of by all the Christian fathers,—how comes it that they should not have pointed to the fulfilment of this very characteristic feature in Christ, and that, when they obviously had this Psalm before their eyes throughout their whole narrative of Christ's sufferings, they should have quoted what assuredly was not so characteristically and individually fulfilled in Him? So far are they, however, from applying this clause to Christ, that they do not expressly mention the piercing of His feet at all. Thus this view can be adopted only in the very last extremity; and this is not the case here. *There is another view which can be suggested, in which every anomaly of form disappears, without introducing any impropriety in regard to the sense.* The כ is the particle of comparison: the אֲרִי is the same as אֲרִיָּה, a lion. The כָּאֲרִי, written exactly as it is here, occurs in the sense of lion-like in Is. xxxviii. 13. The Masoretic remark is not of so much importance as that we need to give the כָּאֲרִי *here* a different sense from the כָּאֲרִי *there*, any more than the Keris of the Masora, which, throughout, are obviously false. The יִרִי וְרַגְלִי is the accusative, so often



used in defining more accurately any part or member of the body to which more special reference is made (comp. Ewald, 512)—thus : “ They beset me, lion-like, as to hands and feet.” The mention of *lions* cannot but be regarded here as extremely natural, as emblems drawn from the brute creation are used throughout the whole Psalm ; as the enemies have already been represented in the 13th verse, under the emblem of a tearing and roaring lion ; as the sufferer, the poor defenceless hind, prays in the 21st verse, “ Deliver from the mouth of the *lion* ;” and finally, as the connection between the *lions* here and the dogs, introduced in the first clause of the verse before us, is exceedingly appropriate. The objections urged against this interpretation,—an interpretation which Luther recognised as decidedly required by the grammar, but which, as he most unaccountably thought, must give way to the theology of the case,—are only of importance in so far as they show in what way the old translations, the Masora, and a few Hebrew manuscripts, were induced to give up the true interpretation or reading, and thus prove that they cannot be regarded as having any authority whatever. It is said that *to surround* will not apply to lions, who spring upon their prey. But the surrounding is not here attributed to lions, but to the band of evil-doers ; and the point of comparison between them and the lion is not the surrounding, but their *wild fury*. It is further objected, that the singular, “ like a lion,” is not at all appropriate. But this objection can be urged as of force, only on the supposition that the point of comparison is, “ *the surrounding*.” Except on this supposition, the singular is as suitable here as it is in ver. 13 and ver. 21 ; and the fact that the singular is used in both these passages, tends very much to give our interpretation more of an appearance of certainty :—compare also the singular כלב in ver. 20. Besides, the expression is not, “ as a lion,” but, “ as *the* lion.” The Kametz shows that the word has the article :—otherwise it would have had Patach ;—compare Ewald, 464. The term, “ the lion,” indicates the species, and must be viewed as referring not to the number, but to the disposition and nature. Further, that the יד ורגל, as there is already an accusative in הקיפו, requires another verb, or renders an extraordinary ellipsis necessary, could be maintained only before the relative form of the accusative had been sufficiently examined. Last of all, “ *hands and feet*,” are by no means superfluous. The hands are

the instruments of defence, the feet the means of escape.—*my furious foes have so beset me, that I can stir neither hand nor foot.* These are the objections of Stier. Ewald remarks that the figure of lions is not at all appropriate in this connection, for it is only the shamelessness that is intended to be depicted. But this objection is wholly futile. It is not the *shamelessness*, but the *wild fury*, that is the point of resemblance in the comparison of dogs. The designation of the enemies as “evil-doers,” and the connection of this verse with the two preceding ones—assigning as it does, the cause of the effect described in them—show that we have to do in this case with coarse ill-treatment.

Ver. 17. *I count all my bones; these men look; they stare at me.* The furious enemies have already *stripped* the sufferer doomed to death, and feed their eyes on the sad spectacle of his complete emaciation,—a sight which fills him with pain. אֲכַפֵּר is generally rendered, “I could count.” Against this tame rendering we have the analogy of יִרְאוּ and יִבִּינוּ—I count, they look,—and of the other Futures both preceding and following. The sufferer, sunk in pain at his complete emaciation, counts the bones of his naked body, every one of which attracts involuntary painful attention: here one and there one, and all wanting flesh from the first to the last, every one of them. Job xxxiii. 21 is parallel. Of the *enemies* it is said: first, that they are *spectators* of a miserable sight, from which every feeling man would turn away and shut his eyes, feeling his soul pierced by the sight of such suffering in a brother; and next, that they look upon this sight, not only with rude unconcern, but even with *inward joy*. The רָאָה with ב, signifies to look at anything to which one has a strong inclination, in which one has delight.

Ver. 18. *They part my garments among them, and on my vesture they cast the lot.* Clothing is the necessary condition of life; without clothes no man can be seen in public. When one's clothes are taken away, and, what is worse, disposed of, that person, if he is not dead, must be considered as destined to a certain and speedy death. The sufferer, in this view, in concluding the description of his distress, and when on the very threshold of his *prayer*, declares that he is now at the very last stage,—that his enemies are even ready to give him the last stroke, now that he is, apart from this, more dead than alive.—It is impossible here to think of the custom of *spoiling* enemies, for the distress throughout the Psalm is not of a *warlike* charac-

ter:—the sufferer is completely helpless, his situation corresponding entirely to that of Christ. Moreover, it is a slain enemy, not a living one, that is spoiled. Neither may we render the clause: “they will divide my clothes among them,” or, “they already think of doing it.” For, יחלקו and יפילו, like the preceding verbs, must refer to what is going on in the present. The idea of nakedness is indeed implied in the preceding verse also. We have not only, “I count all my bones,” but, “they look, they stare at me,” i.e. “they enjoy themselves in looking at one disfigured to a skeleton.” The connection would be broken were we to refer the looking only to distress in general. Lastly, we cannot suppose that a *figurative* expression is here used; so much, however, is true, that this trait, like the rest of the description, has an *individual* character, as is indeed involved in the fact, that the Psalm refers to the ideal person of the *Righteous One*. The situation of such a one, with death immediately before him, might have been described also by other expressions.—How exactly the whole contents of this verse were fulfilled in Christ, is rendered very clear if we keep in view an observation which Luther, manifestly with good reason, makes on the dividing of the clothes: “I hold that the soldiers did not divide the clothes from need, or for gain, but in the way of jest, and for the purpose of enjoying a laugh, and as a sign that it was now all over with this Christ, that he was utterly ruined, destroyed, extirpated, and never more to be heard of.”—בגדים is, “clothes,” in general; לבית is specially the principal article of dress, the long robe, without which the person is altogether naked. There is thus a gradation in the clauses: compare Job xxiv. 7–10; Ps. xxxv. 13; Es. iv. 2; John xix. 23, 24.

The sufferer had shown, first, that it would be completely anomalous if God intended to forsake him; second, that for God not to help him at present would be to *forsake* him; and now the prayer breaks forth with full power, vers. 19–21, that God would help him now, which, towards its conclusion, passes into the confident expectation of being heard.

Ver. 19. *And Thou, O Lord, be not far from me; O my strength, make haste to my help.* Stier well remarks that אֵלֹהֵי looks very like as if it were an etymological explanation of the אֵלִי in the commencement of the Psalm. The reference to the אֵלֹהֵי of the title has been already pointed out. The expression, *make haste to help me*, refers us back to the eleventh verse, *there is none to help*.

Ver. 20. *Deliver my soul from the sword, my lonely person from the power of the dog.* Calvin: "Should any one ask, How can this apply to Christ, seeing the Father did not deliver Him from death? I answer, in one word, He was more mightily delivered than if the danger had been averted, just as much more so, as to raise from the dead is a mightier act than to heal from sickness. Wherefore the death of Christ did not prevent his resurrection from testifying that He was delivered." His death might well be called no death, but a simple passage to life.—The sword is an individualizing designation of whatever is an instrument of death. Compare 2 Sam. xi. 25, and ver. 24. The *סִיף* cannot, from what follows,—*from the mouth, from the horns*,—be with propriety considered as equivalent to the simple *כֶּסֶף*; the Psalmist is here speaking of dogs who have hands. On *יִחִידִי* Luther remarks: "He wishes to say, 'My soul is alone and forsaken by everybody; there is no one who inquires after it, cares for it, or comforts it.'" In like manner, at Ps. cxlii. ver. 5, he says, "Look on the right hand, see, there no one will know me: I cannot escape; no one cares for my soul." Most interpreters, like Gesenius, consider the sufferer as saying that he has only *one* life to lose. But the view given above by Luther is to be preferred, because, according to it, the word is a succinct description of the condition given in the preceding verses, and because of the parallel passages, Ps. xxv. 16, xxxv. 17, lxviii. 7. The other idea does not occur in any similar passage.

Ver. 21. *Deliver me from the lion's mouth, and from the horns of the buffalo,—Thou hearest me.* Luther: "The rage of the furious devil is so great, that the prophet does not consider it enough to have represented it by a sharp sword, but introduces further, for the same purpose, the tearings of raging furious dogs, the mouth of the greedy and hungry lion, which stands already open, and is ready to devour, and the dreadfully fierce wrath of the raging terrible unicorn (buffalo)." *עֲנֵה* is here used pregnantly, and involves the idea of deliverance. There can be no grammatical objection made to the common rendering, "*hear me*." When the preceding verbs are imperative or optative, the succeeding ones are very frequently simply descriptive. But, on the other side, and in favour of the word being considered as an expression of the *confidence of being heard*, is the circumstance of its standing at the end of the prayer; that which follows, also, implying necessarily that something must have been pre-

viously said expressive of confidence, and, lastly, the reference to *לֹא תִשְׁמָע* of verse second, are of considerable weight. To the word, *Thou hearest me not*, there, correspond here, at the close of the conflict, the words, *Thou dost hear me*. In a prayer of this kind, which rests on a foundation such as that on which the sufferer builds, the transition to confidence is a very easy one. "In such a *Lord*, *come*, there is always a tacit, *Here, Son!*" We may consider *מִקְרֵי רַמִּים* and *עֲנִיתִי* as separated by a small pause. The sufferer had, *O do Thou save me*, upon his tongue; but then he receives the assurance of being heard, and hence the desire for deliverance is suddenly transformed into assured confidence: *and from the horns of the buffalo--Thou hast heard me*.

Having thus become assured of his deliverance, the sufferer next paints the happy consequences which were to flow from it. First, from ver. 22-ver. 26, in regard to *Israel*.

Ver. 22. *I will make known Thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee.* The name is the focus in which all the rays of the acts converge, so that, to make known the name of the Lord, especially in a situation defined by the preceding description, is to make known what He has done. The address in the 23d verse shows whom we are to understand by the brethren: they are the whole posterity of Israel. The deliverance vouchsafed, is important not only to the sufferer, and perhaps to a few of his friends;—all his brethren, the whole people of the covenant (compare *our fathers*, ver. 4), shall participate in it, and shall be led by means of it to see the glory of God. We find the *heathen*, in ver. 27, opposed to the brethren. The *false seed* exclude themselves from sharing in this blessing. The *assembly* is not a small circle of friends, but consists of all the brethren of the sufferer—the whole seed of Israel: compare "the whole assembly of Israel," in Lev. xvi. 17, and Deut. xxxi. 30. But this assembly, which also is meant in all parallel passages, Ps. xxxv. 18, xl. 10, xlix. 1, is here in a twofold sense an *ideal one*. First, every public assembly in the temple was considered as an ideal assembly of the whole people, inasmuch as, though from accidental causes all the members could not really be present in person, those present represented the whole people. Compare 2 Chron. xx. 3-15: "And Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast over all Judah: and all Israel assembled to pray to the Lord: and Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of

Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the Lord :—and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel in the midst of the assembly, and he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Second, we are not to consider that here, or in the parallel passages, the Psalmist considered a literal assembly of the people to be necessary to realize the idea meant to be conveyed. It is unlikely that every one who should obtain deliverance could have an opportunity, in the public assemblies for the worship of God, of praising aloud the delivering grace of God. The kernel is only this, that the grace imparted to an individual member of the Church might tend to the good of *the whole*. The form in which the salvation was brought by the individual before the whole Church, is an accidental circumstance of minor importance. The Psalmist here makes choice of that form which is most vivid, and has in it most of a poetical character, without, *in reality*, intending it more than the others,—that form, for example, in which the Lord fulfilled the contents of the passage before us. He selected, namely, a solemn assembly of the whole people in the sanctuary, and the delivered sufferer glorifying God, and singing praise in the midst thereof.—The observation of De Wette is altogether incorrect: “We are to consider the brethren, the assembly, as sharing the same lot with the poet” (the righteous one). There is no trace of this in what follows. The salvation vouchsafed to the single individual extends in so far to all, whether they be in the same situation or not, as the glory of God is reflected in it, advancement in the knowledge of which is salutary and quickening to all.

There follow, in the 23d and 24th verses, the *words* in which the sufferer, now delivered, intends to make known the name of God, and to praise Him in the midst of the assembly.

Ver. 23. *Ye who fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye of the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and be afraid before Him, all ye of the seed of Israel.* Not without good reason does the Psalmist begin with, *ye who fear God*. He thereby intimates that he has to do, not with the seed of Jacob as such, with those who are united together only by a carnal bond, but with those whose souls are animated by one common spiritual principle. In point of form, the address is directed to the whole assembly. Those who are not of the Church, though they are in the Church, are overlooked. As intruders, they are ignored; as such, they are, however, sufficiently indicated even in the words, *ye who fear God*.

The "praise," the "glorify," and the "be afraid," especially the *last*, show evidently that the delivered sufferer had to do not merely with those who are in a situation similar to his own. To those he would have cried out before everything else, *Put your trust in Him*. The "be ye afraid," shows that He who is great in grace must also be as great in wrath, against those who despise. God is as omnipotent in all aspects as He is in one.

Ver. 24. *For He did not despise nor abhor the affliction of the afflicted, neither did He hide His face from him; and when he cried to Him, He heard.* Luther: "This makes God exceedingly lovely, so that all the godly love Him, and must praise Him, that His eyes alone see and are turned upon the afflicted and the poor; and the more despised and rejected a man is, so much the more is God near and gracious to him. As if he said, 'See and learn from my example: I, who have been the most despised and rejected of all men, have been regarded, cared for, and heard in the most friendly manner.'" *נוֹעַ* is explained erroneously, by the old translators, by *prayer*.

Ver. 25. *Of Thee shall my praise be heard in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before them that fear Him.* Of Thee is my praise:—not, Thou hast given me occasion to praise; but, Thou art the subject of my praise. Calvin: "David canendi argumentum ex deo petit." According to the connection and the parallel, the speaker does not describe what God has done to him, but how he will *thank* God, what blessed consequences, as regards the cause of God, will flow from his deliverance. The *my praise* refers back to the praises of Israel in ver. 3. The grating discord, caused by the groanings of the sufferer being heard mingling with the praises of Israel, is now *at an end*.—In the second clause, and in the following verse, which is intimately connected with it, the representation is of a figurative kind. It was customary, in circumstances of great distress, to make *vows*, which were wont to consist of a promise to offer a certain number of *sacrifices*. After deliverance had been obtained, it was customary to invite to the feast connected therewith, the widow, the orphan, and the poor (comp. Deut. xii. 18, xvi. 11). They thus became partakers of the salvation, which, in point of fact, was never imparted to the individual merely for himself; and thus also they were sharers of his joy. In such cases, the enjoyment throughout was not merely

of a sensual kind; the guests tasted at the same time how good is the Lord. The soul of the feast was admission into the community of thanks and blessing. And hence, in the passage before us, when the gratitude of the delivered sufferer expresses itself under the emblem of paying a vow—the usual expression of gratitude,—it is exceedingly natural that others should be invited to share in the blessing and the thanksgiving, under the image of a great *sacrificial-feast* given by him, in which all that fear God take part.—Hoffmann *denies* that the idea of a feast is at all implied in the passage. He interprets the paying of the vows as expressing nothing more than the giving of thanks. But the vow always refers to something outward—never to mere feelings or words. Throughout, the usual kind of vows are offerings: compare Lev. vii. 16; and especially Ps. lxvi. 12–15: Michaelis on the Law of Moses, Part iii. p. 145. In Ps. l. 14, lxi. 9, to which Hoffmann appeals, there is such a figurative representation. That by the vow here we are to understand literally promised thank-offerings, which are substantially identical with thanksgiving and praise—for the sacrifice is altogether a symbol, as in Hos. xiv. 3; Heb. xiii. 15, and other passages,—is evident from, *they shall eat*, in the following verse; compare also אכל, in ver. 29.

Ver. 26. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied; praise the Lord shall they that seek Him: may your heart live for ever.* The *may live* includes within it, *shall live*, and expresses, that this is agreeable to the wishes of the speaker. The heart *dies* in trouble, care, pain (Ps. cix. 22; 1 Sam. xxv. 37), and especially when it has become perplexed in regard to God. The *for ever* forms the opposition to the transitory life, or brief quickening, which any inferior manifestation of God would give. He has *here* made Himself known in such a glorious manner, that whoever has incorporated into his soul *this* His manifestation, will henceforward stand in need of no other spiritual food, but is strengthened by it for ever.

From Israel the righteous man now turns to the heathen.

Ver. 27. *All the ends of the earth shall ponder and turn to the Lord; all the tribes of the heathen shall worship before Thee.* זכר very frequently signifies, not, “to remember,” but, “to ponder,” “to lay to heart.” The *object* of this pondering is in reality identical with the object of the eating in vers. 26 and 29—the thanks and the praise of the righteous man for the



glorious deliverance wrought out for him ; and hence, indirectly, with the deliverance itself : compare צִרְקָתוֹ in ver. 31. The salvation of the Lord is so great, that it awakens the whole heathen world out of its stupid insensibility. Hoffmann refers יִכְבְּרוּ to Jehovah : *they will think upon Jehovah*. But this exposition proceeds only from the attempt to make the conversion of the heathen independent of the deliverance of the speaker. And the circumstance, that this connection is obscured by this interpretation, is against it. Besides, if we compare with יִאֲבִלּוּ of ver. 26, and אָבִלוּ of ver. 29 (to which *they worship* stands in the same relation as יִשְׁכְּבוּ here does to יִכְבְּרוּ), יִכְבְּרוּ of the 30th verse, which also refers to the salvation imparted to the speaker, and עֵינָהּ of the 31st verse, we shall feel compelled to reject this exposition, and that whole view of the Psalm, which requires such forced assistance.—In יִשְׁכְּבוּ it is not at all implied, as Umbreit thinks, that the heathen originally possessed the truth. שׁוּב means properly, “to turn oneself away” (here, from idols), and the meaning, “to turn back,” is a secondary one.—The second clause alludes to the promises made to the patriarchs, and especially to Gen. xii. 3, xxviii. 14.

Ver. 28. *For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules among the heathen.* The verse grounds the announcement given in the preceding one, that, at a future time, the heathen shall do homage to the Lord, on this, that He alone is the lawful King of the earth. To be in reality, and not to be acknowledged, can be separated only for a little. The Lord is the King of the whole earth, and He must at some future time be acknowledged as such—a result which will be brought about through the manifestation of the Divine glory seen in the deliverance of the righteous man. Zech. xiv. 9, or Obad. 21, are *not* parallel passages, but Ps. xvi. 10, xcvii. 1, and xcix. 1.

The removal of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is succeeded by the removal of the distinctions of *rank*, and of *circumstances* (ver. 29), and of *time* (vers. 30, 31).

Ver. 29. *All the fat ones of the earth eat and worship, all who are gone down to the dust, and those who respited not their lives shall bow down before Him.* The image of the feast is here resumed. There is, however, a contrast to the ordinary sacrificial feasts, to which the *poor* more especially are invited. This great spiritual feast (and it is proved even by this verse also to be a *spiritual* feast) is not unworthy of the presence

even of those who live in the greatest abundance: it contains a costly viand, which all their plenty cannot give—a viand for which even the satisfied still hunger; and, on the other hand, the most needy and the most miserable are not excluded. It is a feast at which all earthly distinctions are abolished, because here, all guests are poor, and here, God is rich for all. The idea, that “to eat,” may be interpreted by “to worship,” does not merit a refutation. The words, “they eat,” belong substantially also to the second clause: the “bow down,” corresponding to the “worship,” is the thanks for the entertainment. The *רָעֵי*, from the adjective *רָעֵה*, *fat*, denotes the satisfied fulness of existence. *יורדי עפר* is not a general designation of misery, but specially of death, in opposition to *חיים* in the emphatic sense, and denotes one who may be said to be *dead*, though he has still the appearance and the lowest conditions of life. This is clear, first, from the reference to the clause of the 15th verse, “Thou layest me in the dust of death;” according to which the dust here can mean only the dust of the grave, for which *עפר* is very often used: compare the Lexicons. The same person who had to complain that he had fallen into the possession of death, becomes now the fountain of life to all who may be in similar circumstances. Second, from the parallel, *who respited not their lives*. Third, from comparing the frequently occurring phrases, *יורדי שאול*, *יורדי בור*, *יורדי מות*, which at the same time show that the language does not refer to those who are going down, but to those who are already gone down.—The last clause, literally, *who made not alive his own soul*, is equivalent to, “who could not deliver themselves from that death, into whose hands they had fallen.”

The last barrier that is removed, is that of time.

Ver. 30. *Posterity shall serve Him: it shall be told of the Lord to the generation.* Several interpret: *the seed which shall serve Him shall be reckoned to the Lord for a generation.* But, according to this view, the whole is thrown into one sentence, and thus the parallelism is destroyed. This interpretation also is opposed by the following verse, in which the idea expressed here is more fully brought out, viz. that the deliverance shall not, like other benefits of inferior moment, be ever forgotten; by the correspondence between the abolition of the limits of time here announced, of those of nation and rank adverted to in the preceding verses; and, lastly, by the reference of *יספר* to

אֶפְרָיִם in ver. 22. זֶרַע, *seed*, is defined by its connection with what precedes to be, "the posterity," of those there spoken of. לְאֶדְנִי is properly, *in reference to the Lord*. The thing to be made known, that, viz., which the Lord has done to the righteous man, is not more nearly described, because it is sufficiently clear from the preceding context. In like manner there is understood, immediately after "shall serve Him," "because of this glorious manifestation." The generation here, is equivalent to, דּוֹר אַחֲרֵן in Ps. xlviii. 13, lxxviii. 4. The generation which tells, is the present one; and the generation to which it is told, is the future one. In like manner, in Ps. lxxi. 18, "the generation," is defined from the connection. דּוֹר is never used in a *collective* sense. That it indicates here the succeeding generation, is evident from ver. 31. The revelation of the Divine glory goes forth from the present to the next, and from that again to the one which follows it.

Ver. 31. *They shall come and make known His righteousness to the people which then have been born, that He has done it.* The subject is *the seed and the generation* of the former verse. The succeeding generation will not allow the knowledge committed to them to die out. It will, from its excellence, get life among them, and from them be handed down again to the next generation. *They shall come*, is, *they shall appear on the theatre of the world*: comp. Ps. lxxi. 18. The *righteousness* of God embraces His faithfulness to His covenant and to His promises, which He has so gloriously manifested in the deliverance of the righteous man. There is no reason why we should translate עַם נֹלָד, *the people which shall yet be born*: compare on the use of the participle for the Future, Ewald, p. 534. The most obvious interpretation, *the people which has been born at the time when the future generation is on the scene*, gives a very suitable sense. In like manner, עַם נִבְרָא, in Ps. cii. 18, is, "the people which is then created." We must supply the object from the preceding context to the עֵשָׂה, viz. *what has been previously described*: as was the case with יִצְחָק in ver. 26, יִכְרֹ in ver. 27, and אֲבֵל in ver. 29. It will not do to suppose that עֵשָׂה is used in an absolute and emphatic sense, *He has acted*, i.e. manifested Himself gloriously. Whenever it is used in the way in which it is in the verse before us, the object always lies concealed in what had previously been said. The last word of our Saviour on the cross, τετέλεσται, evidently refers to this עֵשָׂה, as

His first exclamation is taken from the beginning of the Psalm :—of all proofs of the profound significance of this whole thus boundèd, this is the surest, giving, at the same time, the key to the variously misinterpreted word of our Saviour. According to this view, we are to regard *the work of God* as that which *was finished*. The last moment of suffering is the first of deliverance; and the expiring Saviour here indicates that this is now at hand; that He has now received an answer, not in words but in deed, to the question, *Why hast Thou forsaken Me?* and that the morning dawn now succeeds the dark night. *The Resurrection* certifies the exclamation : *It is finished*.

### PSALM XXIII.

The first verse—*The Lord is my shepherd, I want for nothing*—contains the fundamental thought of the Psalm. This thought is merely expanded from ver. 2 to ver. 5 : for He affords delightful rest to the weary, ver. 2 ; refreshment to the languid, and deliverance to the miserable, ver. 3 ; protection and defence in the midst of danger, ver. 4 ; food and drink to the hungry and thirsty, ver. 5 ; thus everything which human necessity requires. The conclusion returns to the generality of the commencement, with this difference, that the figure employed there is presented in its reality here.

According to the common view, the goodness of God towards His people is represented in this Psalm by a *double figure*: first, that of a shepherd (vers. 1–4) ; and, second, that of the master of a household (ver. 5). But this view, which destroys altogether the unity of the Psalm, depends only on the gratuitous supposition, that the Psalmist must always speak of the spiritual shepherd in terms which have been taken from the relations of the temporal shepherd. That the Psalmist paid very little attention to any such rule of criticism, but made a free use of his figure, is evident from the third verse, which, on this view, it would be impossible to explain. But substantially, if not in form, even the fifth verse praises the shepherd-faithfulness of God. It is because He is faithful to His charge as a shepherd, that He prepares a table before the Psalmist. In this He does in reality nothing more than what a good shepherd would do for his irrational sheep. But what is altogether de-

cisive against this view, is, that on the idea that the praise of the good shepherd terminates at ver. 4, the principal and indispensable feature (John x. 9), that he provides nourishment, is altogether wanting. And that there is no trace of this in the 2d verse, according to the common view, will be evident from our exposition.

That David is the author of this Psalm, admits of no doubt; and the attempt of Hitzig to attribute it to Jeremiah, will be always welcome to those who would characterize his critical ways. The Psalm requires, and will bear, no historical exposition. The opinions which have been advanced on this subject, such as those of J. D. Michaelis, Maurer, and others, that David composed it on some occasion when his provisions having become exhausted, there was sent to him, in the fields, a plentiful supply of food, only show how far this predilection for historical interpretation may lead. This tendency is rooted in the ignorance of its representatives of the things of religion and the Church, and in their consequent inability to recognise like by like. From the spirit and tone of the Psalm, we should of course judge that it was composed at a time when David was not disturbed by any sufferings or dangers in his enjoyment of the grace of God,—at a time of quiet and quickening, which he knew so beautifully to describe. It shows us that David not only took God for his refuge in distress, but that in prosperity he did not forget the Giver amidst the gifts, but made these (as Calvin expresses it) a ladder by which he might ascend continually nearer to God. Some have thought it necessary to reject even this definition of the position. “Why,” says Stier, “should he not for once, even in trouble, be thus confident and quiet?” But the unanimity with which other expositors of spiritual experience express their conviction, that this Psalm was sung by David at a time of revival, renders us exceedingly distrustful of this idea. The expression in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that no affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, holds *unexceptionably* true. The sufferer may, even in the midst of severest trials, maintain a certain degree of joyful confidence; but for all this, the sun will be only, as it were, shining through clouds: the pain and the distress will never be looked upon as at so great a distance, will never be so completely triumphed over, as they are in the case before us.—Finally, the confidence to which expression is here given,

is not that of a *child*, is not that of one who goes forth to meet the pains and troubles of life, of which he has had no experience, with a clear joy, flowing from consciousness of communion with God: it is that of an *experienced combatant*, one who has come through many troubles, who knows what they mean, and who has richly experienced how the Lord comforts in them, and delivers out of them. The praise of the *rest*, which the Lord imparts, lets us see in the Psalmist a weary pilgrim; the thanksgiving for *refreshment* shows us one worn out; the expression, "When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," etc., brings before us one who had already had experience of the dark ways of suffering, and who had yet to walk in them. The expressions, *in sight of my enemies*, ver. 5, and *shall follow me*, ver. 6, show that we have here to do with one who, like David, had fought hard with *enemies*. Everywhere, it is not the sunburnt shepherd-boy, in the midst of his peaceful lambs, that meets us here, but the man David, who had experienced the hardships of the days of Saul. And yet it is from the recollections of this peaceful season of youth that the figure of the Good Shepherd is drawn, which meets us for the first time in this Psalm in a *full* form.

The absence of everything like exact personal reference renders it exceedingly probable that David sung this Psalm, as it were, from the soul of every believer; and that he expressed in it his own *personal* joy, with the design of strengthening his brethren, and embodying their feelings in language. The reference, made by the Jewish commentators, of the Psalm to the *whole people*, is only to be decidedly rejected if placed in *opposition* to an individual interpretation. As David undoubtedly designed the Psalm for the public worship of God, the thought could not be far distant from his mind, that its contents must be applicable no less to the whole body of the people than to each individual. The whole body of the people is the less to be lost sight of, as in all the other passages of the Old Testament, the figure of a good shepherd is used in reference to the faithfulness which God manifests towards the *Church*.

It has been frequently maintained (latterly by Umbreit), that the contents of the Psalm, strictly speaking, surpass the Old Testament; that they stand especially opposed to the Mosaic law, with its jealous God, who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. This idea,

however, is decidedly incorrect. It proceeds altogether from directing exclusive attention to God's relationship to *sinner*s as expressed in the law, and from not observing the aspect of *grace* which even there He presents. It is in the books of the law that God is first represented as the Shepherd of Israel, Gen. xlviii. 15, xlix. 24; and nowhere do we find such touching proofs of the shepherd-care of God as in the lives of the *patriarchs*. The description of the tender care of God for His people, in Deut. xxxii. 6-14, forms a remarkable parallel to the *Lord is my Shepherd*: and the care of God for His people during their journey through the *wilderness*, as detailed in the law, is described in Ps. lxxviii. 52 as that of a faithful shepherd.

Ver. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I want for nothing.* Of all the figures that are applied to God in the Old Testament, that of a shepherd is the most beautiful. "The other names," says Luther, "sound somewhat too gloriously and majestically, and bring, as it were, an awe and fear with them, when we hear them uttered. This is the case when the Scriptures call God our Lord, King, Creator. This, however, is not the case with the sweet word *shepherd*. It brings to the godly, when they read it or hear it, as it were, a confidence, a consolation or security, like the word *father*. We cannot better understand this consoling and lovely word, than by going to nature, and learning carefully from her what are the dispositions and the properties of the sheep, and what the duty, the labour, the care of a good shepherd. A sheep can only live through the help, protection, and care of its shepherd. As soon as it loses him, it is exposed to dangers of every kind, and must perish, for it cannot help itself. The reason is, it is a poor, weak, silly creature. But, weak creature though it be, it has the habit of keeping diligently near its shepherd, of depending upon his help and protection; it follows wherever he leads, and, if it can only be near him, it cares for nothing, is afraid of no one, but feels secure and happy, for it wants for nothing." It is to be observed, that in both the cases in which the figure of the shepherd is first used in Scripture, the speakers, Jacob and David, were led to employ it from their own personal experience. Having been introduced by them, the figure was made use of by other writers, who were not led to make use of it from their own history. This is the case particularly with Isaiah (xl. 11), and Ezekiel (xxxiv. 13), who comforts the poor, dispersed, neglected sheep of Israel,

during the time of their captivity, by referring to the shepherd-faithfulness of God. See also Micah vii. 14, and Ps. lxxx. 2, and xcv. 7. / It is in obvious reference to these Old Testament passages that our Saviour calls Himself the Good Shepherd (John x.), and is also so called by the Apostles, 1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 4; Heb. xiii. 20. All that Jehovah, under the Old Testament, does to His own, He does through His Angel and Mediator; this is His common aspect to His Church. He—the λόγος—appeared in the flesh in Christ. Hence, whatever in the Old Testament was said of Jehovah and His Angel, is immediately transferred in the New to Christ. See the Christology, I. i. p. 247. The connection between the Old and New Testament, as regards this subject, is especially laid open in Zech. xi. and xiii. 7, where *the Angel of the Lord* is spoken of as the Shepherd of Israel, and His future incarnation in the midst of His sheep is mentioned. / Compare the Christology on the passage, P. 2.—Still the question remains, On what foundation does the idea expressed in the words, *the Lord is my Shepherd*, depend, in so far as the Psalm is, in the first instance, the expression of the feelings of the author, and of individual believers? The answer is this:—The *general* foundation for this conviction lies in the covenant of God with Israel, the promises of which every true and living member of the Church is entitled to apply to himself. The *special* foundation lies in *personal experience*, such as that which was enjoyed by David in such abundant measure. How often did he experience this shepherd-faithfulness of God! How often did he enjoy from Him quiet, quickening, protection, and blessings!—It will not do to translate, *I shall not want*. The correct translation is, *I want nothing*. This, among other reasons, is obvious from the use of the Preterite רצנת in ver. 5. The development of an idea can give nothing except what is contained in the general statement. *I want nothing* excludes want generally, and not merely that of food: compare the expansion of the idea, vers. 2–5; לא חסרת דבר, Deut. ii. 7, *thou hast lacked nothing*; Deut. viii. 9, *thou wantest nothing at all in it*, to which the Psalmist appears especially to allude; and Ps. xxxiv. 10, *they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing*. This is evident also from the concluding verse, where the affirmative, *goodness and grace follow me*, corresponds to the negative here, *I want nothing*. We must not, on the other hand, extend arbitrarily the sphere of, *I want nothing*,



but must limit it as directed by the development of the expression, in which we read only of the blessings of life, and not of deliverance from spiritual needs. We must not forget that the Psalmist (ver. 5) sings in presence of his enemies, and, consequently, that he is congratulating himself only on such good things as *these* designed to deprive him of. The following is Luther's paraphrase: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall assuredly want nothing. I shall eat and drink, and have abundance of clothes, food, protection, peace, and necessities of every kind which contribute to the support of life; for I have a rich Shepherd, who will not allow me to suffer want. But he speaks particularly of spiritual blessings and gifts, which the word of God brings," etc. This, on the principles of strict grammatico-historical interpretation, is correct only till he comes to say, "But he speaks particularly," etc. The theological interpretation, however, will in this case undoubtedly break down the boundaries which the grammatico-historical has set up. For the view to which the Psalmist for a moment confines himself undoubtedly implies, that He who has made such abundant provision in lower matters, will not suffer any blessings of a higher kind to be withheld. Still we must not, like Umbreit, who finds at once that the words, *I want nothing*, express deliverance from all spiritual troubles, mingle up the results of the grammatical interpretation with the theological exposition. By so doing, we lose altogether an insight into the train of thought and structure of the Psalm, and rob it even of that practical power, from a false regard to which it is that such attempts are made.—The paraphrase of P. Gerhard forms the best commentary on the verse before us. "The Lord, who rules all the ends of the earth with His power, the fountain of eternal good, is my Shepherd and Guardian. So long as I have Him, I am in want of no blessing; the riches of His fulness most completely replenish me."—Those who, on reading the words, *the Lord is my Shepherd, I am in want of nothing*, are inclined to say, "How shall I know that the Lord is my Shepherd? I do not find that He acts so friendly a part to me as corresponds to what the Psalmist says; nay, I have ample experience *to the very contrary*;" are directed by Luther in the following words into the right way: "The prophet has not at all times been so happy; he has not been able at all times to sing as he does here. He has at times been in want of much,

yea, almost of everything. He has felt that he possessed neither the righteousness, nor the consolation, nor the help of God; but only sin, the wrath of God, terror and dismay, as he complains in many of his Psalms. Still, as often as he turns him from his own feelings, and lays hold of God by His promises, and thinks, 'It may be with me as it may, yet this is the comfort of my heart, that I have a gracious, a compassionate Lord for my Shepherd, whose word and whose promises strengthen and comfort me; therefore I shall be in want of nothing.' And he has written this and other Psalms for the very purpose of assuring us, that in real temptation there is no council, help, or comfort to be found, unless we have learned the golden art of holding firm by the word and promises of God, and deciding by them, in opposition to the feelings of our own hearts. Thus assuredly shall help and comfort follow, and we shall be in want of nothing."

Ver. 2. *He causeth me to lie down in green meadows; He tendeth me by the waters of rest.* Luther: "The prophet has shortly expressed, in the first verse, the import of the whole Psalm, viz. *that whoever has the Lord for his Shepherd, shall be in want of nothing.* He attempts nothing more in the whole Psalm than to expand, in fine glowing words and comparisons, how well it is with those who are the Lord's sheep." According to most interpreters, the green meadows, which are properly grass-pasture, are introduced here in connection with the good pasture which they afford. But this view is opposed, first, by, *He causeth me to lie down*; second, by the parallel in the second clause, which speaks of rest for the weary; and, lastly, by the circumstance, that another verse, viz. the 5th one, is devoted to the care of the shepherd, as regards the providing of food. The green meadows serve another useful purpose beside that of pasturage: they form a pleasant place of repose, where the Eastern shepherd at noon, when the heat is at its height, permits his weary flock to lie down. Compare Song of Sol. i. 7. Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 17) made booths for his sheep, when they were wearied with the long and severe travelling; in like manner, the heavenly Shepherd gives delightful rest and repose to his spiritual sheep, when they are worn out with wandering under the burning heat of this world's sufferings and temptations. He sends to them times of health, that they may recruit their strength for wandering in the rough paths of life, till at last they are brought to that eternal

rest, of which every season of temporary repose is, both to individuals and to the Church as a body, a foretaste, a pledge, and a prophecy.—In the second clause, *the waters of rest* are generally interpreted as meaning *quiet or still water*,—"water which is not agitated, and therefore not dreaded by the sheep." Claus, however, has very improperly impugned this interpretation. The plural, certainly, is remarkable. Then the question occurs, Can rest be attributed to water? There is at least no parallel passage. The parallelism with *He maketh me to lie down*, favours another interpretation: waters of rest = waters at which rest (properly rests) are enjoyed,—the plural indicating that the rest imparted is of a manifold kind, and respects not one gift, but a whole train of gifts. The Psalmist, as was perceived by the Septuagint translators, who have rendered מנוחה by ἀναπαύσεως, and by the Vulgate, who give "ad aquam refectionis," is speaking of the refreshing rest which shepherds, at the noon of a hot summer day, give to their wearied flocks at the side of a shady brook, to which they have led them to drink. Compare Bochart, Hieroz. i. p. 529. Luther: "David here speaks of this matter after the manner of the country. The country on which so many praises have been lavished, is a hot, dry, sandy, rocky country, which has many deserts and little water. In our part of the world, we know nothing of this; for we find everywhere plenty of water. Hence David has seen, and he extols it as a great blessing, that he is under the protection of the Lord, who not only pastures him on green meadows, but also leads him during the heat to refreshing water." Hence, according to this view, the rest conveys the same idea as it does in all other passages: for example, 2 Sam. vii. 1, "When the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him *rest* round about from all his enemies:" 1 Chron. xxii. 9, "Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of *rest*; and I will give him *rest* from all his enemies round about:" Jer. xlv. 3, "I fainted in my sighing, and I find no *rest*," where the prophet complains that he could not find that which David here promises to all believers. Israel was led to waters of rest in the wilderness, when, at the command of the Lord, repose and refreshment were granted them in some one of its more favoured spots: "The ark went before them, (Num. x. 33), to search out a *resting-place* for them." The expression before us was fulfilled much more completely in Israel, when they were privileged to *rest* in Canaan from the hardships

of their long wandering. Compare Deut. xii. 9; Ps. xxii. 11. *David* was led to waters of rest after the ruin of Saul, after his victory over his Gentile enemies, and after the suppression of Absalom's conspiracy. And it was fulfilled in the most complete manner in the case of Solomon, whose reign was a type of the rest of heaven to be enjoyed by the Church triumphant. Innumerable times might David say, as he did in Ps. cxvi. 7, "Return unto thy *rest*, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." — *נָחַל* in Pihel should, according to the common acceptance, mean "to lead." Doubts on this point are raised by the use of the *לָךְ* here, and in the parallel passage, Is. xlix. 10. In Is. xl. 11, the idea of *leading* is scarcely suitable; and in 2 Chron. xxxii. 22, and in Gen. xlvii. 17, it is wholly incongruous. The sense of *tending*, in this passage absolutely necessary, is to be retained in all passages. In Ex. xv. 13, which alone appears to contradict this, *Thou ledest through Thy grace the people whom Thou hast redeemed, and tendest them through Thy power by Thy holy habitation*, is to be explained, *Thou ledest them to Thy holy habitation, and watchest over them there*. This interpretation is demanded by *לָךְ*. In Gen. xxxiii. 14, the Hitlpael form is used in the sense of *to take care of one's self*.—The import of the verse is therefore this:—The Good Shepherd, with tender care, imparts sweet repose to His weary sheep. After *the rest* which, according to our verse, is given to *the weary*, there follows suitably, in the next verse, *the quickening* which the Good Shepherd imparts to *the exhausted—to the fainting*. The extreme importance here attached to rest—its having assigned to it the first place in the enumeration of the good deeds of the Good Shepherd—indicates how severe the journey through this world is, how hot is the sun which shines even on the righteous; so that the need for rest outweighs every other, and the righteous man is not more truly thankful for any blessing than for this one. The outward rest, however, of which our verse more immediately speaks, is, in reality, a blessing to him only who has previously attained to that *inward* peace which, like an unperishable possession, accompanies the believer amid all outward distresses. This inward rest—this peace of the soul in God—gives a title, which never fails to be acknowledged by God, to the outward peace.

Ver. 3. *He revives my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake*. On the first clause compare Ps. xix. 7. The import is: When my soul is exhausted and wearied,

He revives me, as is the custom of the good shepherd, who not only cares for the *sound* sheep, but also and especially attends to the weak and the sick. The import of the *second* clause is, *He sends me salvation, when, wearied with the rough paths of life, I am pressed down with suffering.* Several interpreters read it: "He leads me in an even path." But צֶדֶק never stands, in a physical sense, for straightness; it means always righteousness. And this signification could only be considered as unsuitable from assuming the false position, that the Psalmist everywhere must use expressions that are borrowed from the natural relations connected with the figure which he is, for the time, employing in illustration of spiritual matters. This, however, is by no means a principle observed by the sacred poets in their use of figurative language. They are often satisfied with a very slight allusion to the natural relations. In the present instance, the corresponding idea is undoubtedly that of leading in even and quiet paths, in opposition to, among thorns, and over stones and cliffs. The *righteousness* is not to be understood, as Michaelis would have it, in a moral sense—that *I may lead a holy and a pious life in this world*; but it is to be considered as a *gift of God*, which He imparts to His own—that practical justification or clearing up of the character which forms a part of the salvation. Salvation itself is never designated צֶדֶק; so that the exposition, *He leads me in the path of salvation*, must be rejected as not sufficiently exact. The clause, *for His name's sake*, is equivalent to, for the sake of His glorious nature, because He is the Holy One, in the scriptural sense (Ps. xxii. 3), only so that attention is at the same time directed to the fact, that His glorious nature has not remained *concealed*, but has been made fully known by deeds. The product and echo of these is the name:—so that the expression is the same as, *for the sake of the glory historically manifested*, which forms the foundation on which rests the confidence of the Psalmist, that the Lord leads *him* in the paths of righteousness. *The name of God* is thus always used as the product of the development of the Divine nature, as the sum of the *deeds* of God. Thus, for example, Josh. ix. 9, "And they said unto him, From a very far country are thy servants come because of the *name* of the Lord thy God; for we have heard the *fame* of Him, and all that He *did* in Egypt, and all that He *did* to the two kings of the Amorites:" 1 Kings viii. 41, 42, "That cometh out of a far country for Thy name's sake:

for they shall hear of Thy great name, and of Thy strong hand, and Thy stretched-out arm :” Is. lxiii. 12, “Who led them by the right hand of Moses, with His glorious arm dividing the waters before them, to make to Himself a glorious name.” The exposition of Aben-Ezra and others, “that His name might be praised throughout the whole world,” is to be rejected ; as also that of Stier, “not for any merit of mine, but out of free grace.” What the Lord *is* and *has done*, is a pledge to the Psalmist for that which He is to do for him. If He has at all times endowed His people with righteousness ; if He has, for example, in Egypt, caused the sun of His salvation to shine upon the darkness of the misery of His people ; if he justified Joshua, by giving him the victory over his enemies, He will not deny Himself towards this His servant. *For His name’s sake*, has a much more extended import for us than it had for David. For the name of God, during the lapse of time, has become infinitely more glorious. Between us and David there lies a long succession of glorious unfoldings of the nature of God, in imparting salvation to His own, both as individuals and in their collective capacity, every one of which is a new pledge to us.

Ver. 4. *Even when I walk in the valley of death-darkness, I fear no calamity : for Thou art with me ; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.* Calvin : “As a sheep, when it wanders through rugged deserts and dark valleys, is secured by the mere presence of its shepherd against the assaults of wild beasts and other dangers, so does David here testify, that as often as he is in a situation of danger, he has a sufficient protection in the shepherd-care of God. But now that God, in the person of the only-begotten Son, has manifested Himself as a shepherd, in a far clearer and more glorious manner than He did formerly to the fathers under the law, we do not sufficiently honour His protection, unless, with eye directed towards it, we trample all fear and danger under foot.” Venema supposes that David over-values here his confidence : his despondency at the time of Absalom, shows that his firmness was by no means so unwavering. Ps. xxx. 6, 7, might be adduced here, where David accuses himself of high-minded confidence. But this idea proceeds altogether upon a misunderstanding. David is not here praising himself : he is praising the Lord. In reality, *I fear no evil*, is identical with *I DARE fear no evil* : and the Psalmist expresses himself in these words, only because for the moment his feeling

corresponds to the reality. It is not on the *feeling* that he lays stress, but on the cause which called it forth. עַל is, "even,"—because, under these circumstances, the shepherd-care of God seemed as if it had come to an end. We cannot, with most expositors, translate it, *even though I wandered*, but only, *even when I wander*. The analogy of the other Futures, and a glance at the history of the author, who had been obliged so often to wander through the valley of the shadow of death, show that the author is speaking, not of something imaginary, but of something real. Hitzig's version, *though I even wandered, I would fear no evil*, brings us at once in an unpleasant manner out of the domain of experience in which the whole Psalm moves. *The death-darkness* is darkness of the thickest kind, such as prevails in the grave or in sheol. The expression is too strong to allow us to think of a valley surrounded by thick *forests*, and overhung by high hills: the darkness is that of midnight:—compare Jer. xiii. 16, "Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death:"—all the more suitable, that it is at night when the beasts go forth to their prey. The *valley* is particularly mentioned on account of the wood-clad surrounding hills, in which these beasts live. To such a valley of death-darkness there correspond to the spiritual sheep, seasons of great trouble, danger and severe suffering. Compare Jer. ix. 1; Ps. xlv. 19. Luther: "As now our friends wander in the valley at Augsburg." רָעָה, properly *evil*, indicates, according to the connection, some *fatal* misfortune. This befalls the wicked only. The sheep of the Good Shepherd stumble, but they do not fall. On the words, *for Thou art with me*, Luther remarks: "This presence of the Lord cannot be discerned by the five senses, *but it is seen by faith*, which is confident of this, that the Lord is nearer to us than we are to ourselves." The *rod* and the *staff*, according to many interpreters, are to be regarded as the weapons with which the shepherd drives off the wild beasts. But they do not suit this purpose, they are too peaceable. They are rather here, as usually, to be considered as the instrument for guiding the sheep. In the dark night of suffering, the trembling soul derives comfort from the thought, that it is under *the guidance of the Lord*, that He has *led it into* its salvation, that *He protects it there*, and that He will *bring it out* at His own time. A look at the shep-

herd-staff of the Lord fills the soul with joy in the midst of pain. The following remark of De Wette is important: "The somewhat diffuse language (two synonyms and the pronoun) is intended to depict the repose of confidence." Luther: "David prescribes here to all Christians a common rule, that there is no other way or plan upon earth by which a man can be delivered from trouble of every kind, than to cast all his care upon the Lord, to lay hold of Him by His word of grace, to hold this fast, and by no means to let it go. Whoever does this, shall be happy, be he in prosperity or adversity, be he in life or in death: he shall hold on to the end, and gain the victory over all—the devil, the world, and misfortune."

Ver. 5. *Thou spreadest before me a table in sight of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil,—my cup overflows.* The Psalmist had hitherto spoken only of the provident care of the Good Shepherd, in removing the manifold miseries, pains, and sufferings, which this life brings with it—of rest, refreshing, and consolation. All this is predominantly of a *negative* character. His language now rises higher. God not only helps His people *in* suffering, and *out of* suffering: He also bestows upon them a rich fulness of joy, He satisfies His children with the good things of His house. To these *positive* blessings, there corresponds, in the temporal shepherd, the provision of fodder and water made for the sheep. This, however, would have been too prosaic. The Psalmist hence depicts the shepherd-care of God in this respect by another figure, yet so as to keep as near as possible to the idea of the figure already employed. The blessings with which God satisfies the desires of His needy people, appear under the figure of a rich *feast* prepared for them. שֹׁמֵר is not a table of any kind, but only one on which viands are spread. *In sight of my enemies*, is a very picturesque trait. They must look on quietly, how the table is spread, and how the Psalmist sits down at it. The grace of God towards His own appears all the more glorious, that it breaks through all hindrances, makes its way through all the hostile efforts that are directed with a *ruinous* design against the righteous one, and leaves nothing for the enemies but a tormenting sight. The *anointing* with the oil of joy, Ps. xlv. 7,—that is, the oil which is the symbolical expression of joy,—is one of the necessary accompaniments of a festive and joyful entertainment.

Ver. 6. *Only goodness and love follow me all the days of my*



life; and I dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. The conclusion assumes the general form of the introductory clause, and explains the figurative language employed throughout. אֵל has its customary import, *only* goodness—nothing else. There is an implied antithesis in *they follow me*. Stier: "As the enemies, out of malignity, so the goodness of God follows all my steps with blessings." Compare Ps. xxxiv. 14. The שָׁבתי is, according to several interpreters, *I turn back*. But שָׁב with ב, never signifies to turn back, neither in 1 Kings ii. 33, nor in Hosea xii. 7: compare on the passage Ch. B. Michaelis. The character, which is *general* throughout, and continues to be so in the first clause of this verse, and the joyful tone of the same, are also unfavourable to this view, which assumes that David composed this Psalm when excluded from the services of the sanctuary. And, finally, this view is opposed also by the parallel passages, particularly Deut. xxx. 20, and Ps. xxvii. 4. These parallel passages show also that שָׁבתי, notwithstanding its Patach, instead of Chirek, must be taken as an infinitive, *my dwelling*, and not (as is the view adopted by others) as a Preterite instead of שָׁבתי—an anomaly, besides, of much greater consequence than the one implied in the other interpretation. *Dwelling in the house of the Lord* is commonly understood as being equivalent to *undisturbed abiding in the temple*. But it is impossible that the expression can be applied to literally abiding in the external temple; and it is altogether arbitrary to substitute, as Gesenius does, *frequenting* (frequentem adesse) instead of *abiding*. Moreover, the possibility opened up by God of frequenting the temple, if occurring at all in a Psalm which extols so well what is great and glorious in God, is least of all to be expected at the conclusion, where there ought to have come in some comprehensive significant expression, and where it serves no other purpose except to weaken the impression of the whole. As parallel to *goodness and love follow me all the days of my life*, the words, *I dwell in the house of the Lord for ever*, sound exceedingly feeble and cold, if they relate to a frequenting of the sanctuary. Finally, by adopting this exposition, we disjoin the expression from the fundamental passage, Deut. xxx. 20, "That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for this is thy life and the length of thy days,—that thou dwell, לִישָׁב, in the land, which the Lord sware unto thy fathers;" according

to which, we should expect such a designation of the enjoyment of the grace of God as should be as expressive and general as the dwelling in the land of the fathers. The foundation for the right exposition has been already laid at Ps. xv. We there saw that, according to the usage in the Psalms, to dwell in the house of the Lord is a figurative expression for the closest intimacy with God, and for the enjoyment of His favour, and that the righteous *always* dwell in the house of the Lord,—even when they are far absent from it in the body,—a figurative expression, which has its foundation in the law, in which the holy tabernacle is designated as the tabernacle of meeting, of intercourse between God and His people. Thus interpreted, the words before us form really the focus in which the rays of the whole passage are concentrated. In reference to the whole Church, they admit of being applied with truth, notwithstanding those words, “Your house is left unto you desolate,” Matt. xxiii. 38. For those, who at that time were thrust out of the house of God, or rather were left alone in a house which had lost the indwelling of God, were those souls only who had been cut off from their people. The *true* members of the Church remain always in the house not made with hands, the Church, members of the household of God, Eph. ii. 19, and in the enjoyment of all the blessings of God’s house.

### PSALM XXIV.

Most interpreters suppose that the Psalm was composed by David at the time when he brought the ark of the covenant to Mount Zion. Compare 2 Sam. vi. 1; 1 Chron. xv. Several Jewish interpreters, on the other hand, to whom Stier may be added, have supposed that David composed this Psalm for future use, at the dedication of the temple, after he had received the revelation as to its site. De Wette has proposed an extension of this idea, viz. that the Psalm was composed at the dedication of the new temple under Solomon. But against this view, and in favour of the one first mentioned, the following weighty reasons may be urged:—1. The superscription assigns the Psalm to David. 2. If the Psalm be supposed to have reference to the dedication of the temple under Solomon, by the *everlasting gates* we can understand nothing else than the gates of the

temple, for into none other did the ark of the covenant at that time enter. But the gates of the newly built temple could not possibly be called everlasting gates. It is only an evasion to suppose that the everlasting refers to the future continuance of the gates. But no one would apply, simpliciter, the term everlasting to new gates which it was hoped would last for ever; the hope of everlasting endurance which Solomon (1 Kings viii. 13) expresses in reference to the whole temple, cannot be thus simpliciter referred to any particular part of it; the connection requires that the predicate denote an already existing, a generally acknowledged excellence. As soon, however, as we refer the Psalm to the entrance of the ark of the covenant under David, every difficulty vanishes. The gates are then those of Mount Zion. These might correctly be called ancient; for Jerusalem, with its strong Mount Zion, was already in the time of Abraham a city of the Canaanites. With the Psalmist, however, whose object it was to extol the worth of the gates, for the purpose of enhancing the glory of the entrant, of whom, after all, the gates were unworthy, the idea of antiquity would easily expand in feeling into that of eternity. 3. In the appellations given to God, *the Lord strong and a hero, the Lord a warlike hero*, we clearly discern the voice of the warrior and the conqueror, *David*, who had so often, in the heat of battle, sought and obtained help from the Lord. *Solomon* would have chosen some other mode of expression, inasmuch as God had stood prominently forth on his behalf under other aspects. 4. The fifteenth Psalm is so strikingly allied to the one before us, that the grounds which were there sufficient to establish, without a doubt, the authorship as that of David, particularly the expression, "in Thy tabernacle," are of equal weight here. The nineteenth Psalm also, which was composed by David, is allied to the one before us. There, as here, the greatness of God, as the Lord of the world, serves in the introduction only as the groundwork of what forms the peculiar object of the Psalmist. Lastly, the idea, that this Psalm is to be considered as a song of victory for the return of the ark of the covenant from a battle, is to be utterly rejected. This view would scarcely harmonize even with the second part; for there the language employed refers to the *coming*, not to the *returning* of the Lord; and the call to the gates to open, proceeds on the supposition that the Lord is entering in through them for the first time, and appears unsuit-

able if He had frequently gone out and in on former occasions. But the first part is wholly unintelligible on this supposition. The question, *Who will ascend to the hill of the Lord, and who will stand in His holy place?* would, on such an occasion, be altogether out of place; while, on the occasion which we have supposed, it would be highly suitable. It served at the commencement of a new state of things to determine the nature thereof, and to bring it before the minds of the people; it served to furnish a counterpoise to the outward pomp which accompanied the bringing in of the ark of the covenant; it served to indicate that real, not mere outward, fellowship with a God such as this, the Lord of the whole earth, and participation in His blessings, are to be obtained only in *one* way, that of true righteousness; it served to indicate to the people the high seriousness of the claims upon the subjects, as seen in connection with the glory of the King who is entering in. This Psalm, which, according to vers. 7-10, must have been sung at the entrance itself, is the first, in point of date, of the sacred songs which were composed with this view. The fifteenth followed at a later period.

The contents are as follows: Jehovah is *God* in the full sense, the *Lord*, because the *Creator*, of the whole earth, vers. 1, 2. Who then will, in truth, ascend the hill of the Lord, and stand in His holy place? Who will dwell *spiritually* beside Him, in the newly-erected holy place, and receive from Him blessing, salvation, and righteousness? Not the posterity of Jacob according to the flesh, as such,—this would be a wretched family for such a King and God,—but only he who, in thought, word, and deed, is pure and without spot. It is only those, who bear this character, that constitute Jacob,—the true people of the Lord,—and not the rude crowd who falsely make their boast of this name, vers. 3-6. The ark of the covenant has now approached the gates. These, poetically personified, are commanded to *open*, that the glorious King, that the Lord, rich in help for His people, that the *God of the world*, may enter in, vers. 7-10.

Ewald has advanced the hypothesis, that the Psalm is made up of two odes originally distinct, vers. 1-6, and vers. 7-10. But the chief reason which led him to adopt this hypothesis, namely, the want of connection and unity between the two parts, disappears entirely on closer investigation. The glory of

the approaching Lord is, in both parts of the Psalm, the fundamental idea. From this proceeds, in the first part, the demand for holiness, and, in the second, the command, addressed in form to the *gates*, but in reality to the *hearts* of His people, to open. The original connection of the two parts with each other is seen in this, that the Psalm *concludes*, as it *began*, with the praise of God as the God of the whole earth; and assuredly therefore in this, that the beginning and the conclusion mutually supplement each other—ver. 1, Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth, in ver. 10, Jehovah, the Lord of the *heavenly hosts*.

The coming of the Lord of glory, the high demands upon His people originating therein, the absolute necessity to prepare worthily for His arrival, form the subject-matter of the Psalm. It admits of applications far beyond the special occasion which called it forth. The Lord may be conceived of as constantly coming, in relation both to His Church collectively, and to His people individually. And His people therefore ought to be continually preparing to give Him a suitable reception. Hence it follows that the Messianic interpretation, which in former times was so very prevalent, has an important element of truth in it. The coming of God to His kingdom took place in a manner infinitely more real at the appearance of Christ than it did at the entrance of the ark of the covenant. That lower occurrence was only the *shadow*, but the *body* was in Christ. At this truly real coming, which has different gradations,—the coming in humility, the coming in spirit, and the coming in glory,—the *demands* rise in proportion to the greater reality. The question, "Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place?" becomes more solemn, and the command, "Lift up your heads, ye gates," is given in a louder tone.

Venema saw clearly that the idea, that the Psalm was sung by alternate choruses, is altogether without foundation. The questions (vers. 7–10), on which alone this idea rests, like the question in ver. 3, and in Ps. xv. 1, are to be considered simply as interrogatory clauses.

The reason why this Psalm has been placed in immediate juxtaposition to the 23d, will appear on comparing ver. 3 here, with ver. 6 there. The 23d Psalm concludes with the hope of dwelling for ever in the house of the Lord, and the Psalm before us begins, after some clauses of a preparatory and introductory nature, with the question, "Who is qualified to dwell

with God on His hill, and in His holy place?" The connection between the two Psalms is so interwoven with the sense, that their juxtaposition cannot be attributed to the collector. The probability is exceedingly strong, that David, from the beginning, united them as one pair; and that the 23d Psalm also was composed on the occasion of the removal of the ark of the covenant. For the purpose of preventing the hypocrites from appropriating to their use what does not belong to them, he follows up his expression of inward confidence in God, with a representation of those demands of a moral nature which God makes upon His people. The Shepherd of Israel is also the Almighty God. Wo to him who trusts in His grace without being holy as He is holy! We have already shown that the 15th Psalm, which is closely allied to the one before us, stands in a similar relation to the 14th.

Ver. 1. *The earth is the Lord's, and that which fills it; the world, and those who dwell upon it.* The God who is in a peculiar sense the God of Israel, is at the same time the Lord of the whole earth, and the sovereign proprietor of all things. With what holy reverence must the subjects of such a King be filled! What high demands must be made upon them! With other gods there may be an animal love and a favouritism for their own worshippers, without regard to their hearts and lives; but the God of Israel,—who is God in the true sense of the word,—cannot, without absurdity, be spoken of as having connection with any except with such as are of a pure heart. The exhortation in Deut. x. 14, to circumcise the heart, is, like the one before us, enforced by the consideration, that Jehovah is the Lord of heaven and earth, and that He regardeth not persons, nor taketh rewards. ארץ denotes the earth in general; תבל, properly, the bearing,—the third Fut. of בל, *it bears*,—the fruit-bearing part of the earth, the οἰκουμένη. Hence the *fulness* is properly applied to the earth, and the *inhabitants* specially to תבל.

Ver. 2. *For He has founded it above the seas, and made it fast above the floods.* That the earth, with all that fills it, and with its inhabitants, is the Lord's, is founded on the fact, that He alone has made it earth,—dry, fruitful, habitable, and that He preserves it such. Without Him, the waters would still or again cover it as they did at the beginning. "Above the seas," "above the floods," imply that it stands at a higher level, so

that it is not immersed below the sea. Compare the examples of *לַי* in similar connections in Ges. Thes. p. 1026. Many expositors apply "the seas," and "the floods," to the great subterraneous cavities which stand in connection with the mundane sea,—to the great deep, which, according to Gen. vii. 11, was broken up at the deluge. "Nothing but the almighty power of God could found the earth on such weak materials." But these interpreters overlook, that at ver. 1 it is only the inhabited and cultivated earth that is spoken of; and, consequently, that it can only be such an act of God as has made and preserves the earth fruitful and habitable, that can be referred to here: the earth, with its fulness and its inhabitants, belongs to the Lord; for He has made it habitable and fruitful, and He preserves it in this condition. The reference to an occult doctrine of a physical character, to which allusion is made only in one single passage of Scripture, and that, too, in a very obscure and doubtful manner, would not be at all suitable in this passage. The Psalmist evidently refers to some act of God, generally known, and frequently spoken of in Scripture. Further, it may be objected to this view, that *יָם* is *seas*, and *נְהַרֹת*, *floods*; and that, though the singular *יָם* might denote the subterraneous water, the plural, as even Luther observed, cannot. Finally, it will not do to tear the passage from its connection with the fundamental passage, Gen. i. 9, 11, to which it manifestly refers, and from the parallel passages, Ps. cxxxvi. 6, "Who stretches out the earth above the waters," where everything preceding and following stands in obvious reference to Gen. i.; Ps. cvi., where, in like manner, the dividing between the land and the sea comes in, in exact accordance with Genesis and Job. xxxviii. 8, where it is mentioned as one of the most wonderful works of God, that "He hath set for the sea bars and doors, and hath shut it in within firm bounds." These observations will, we think, be sufficient to set aside for ever the idea of the subterranean waters.—The change of the mood is not unworthy of notice: *יִסְדָּהּ* refers to the *creation*, *יְכוֹנֶנָּהּ* to the *preservation*. Luther: "For it proceeds from the great power of God, that those cities and countries which are situated on seas and rivers, are not destroyed and torn to pieces." He has founded it above the seas and floods, and He keeps it fast above them.

Ver. 3. *Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and who shall abide in His holy place?* This question has for its foundation

the statements of vers. 1 and 2, and the sense is correctly given by several interpreters: "Who, *then*, shall ascend?" "Is the Lord such a mighty One?" "Who, then, can well be admitted into His holy and glorious presence?" The common translation is, Who *may* ascend into the hill of the Lord? who is worthy to do so? But, on comparing Ps. xv., it becomes obvious that we must keep to the usual sense of the Future. Zion is not for all the hill of the Lord; the temple is not for all His holy place. To Zion, to the outward temple, all might get who had good legs; but to the hill of the Lord, to His holy place, as sure as He is Lord of the whole earth, none get except those who are of a pure heart. These dwell there, always with Him, even when, in a bodily sense, they are absent. On the other hand, the ungodly, even though they can boast of being the seed of Abraham, even though they are indefatigable in their observance of the ceremonies, are, even when present, nevertheless absent:—they walk only on the earth and the stones; God shuts them out from His holy presence. That we must interpret the passage in this way, and that the ascending of the hill of the Lord, and the standing in His holy place, are only figurative expressions of gracious relationship to Him (Mich.: "As a true member of the holy Church, and a denizen of His kingdom"), is evident from the parallel, ver. 5. The "Who shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation," is expository of, "Who shall ascend?" To ascend the hill of God, is to *begin* to walk with God; to abide in His holy place, is constantly to remain in His presence. קים is not, "to stand" (that is עמד: the passages which Gesenius adduces to prove this are not sufficient)—but "to abide."—Luther: "To this question the haughty self-righteous return answer at once, We, we are worthy, especially the Jews. For from the beginning of the world there have been two kinds of those who profess to be seeking after God; yea, there still are, and there will be till the end of time. The first are those who serve God without heart, without grace, without spirit, and only by external works, ordinances, sacrifices, and ceremonies. Thus Cain offered his gift, but kept back his heart and his person." The design of the Psalmist, however, is to repel hypocrites, and to bring self-deceivers to serious thought, while he answers the above question, by declaring, that as sure as the God of Israel is the God of the



whole earth, is God in the true and full sense of the word, so sure can only the pure in heart and conduct stand before Him. Luther, in the style of true theological exposition: "It is not he who sings so well or so many P'salms, nor he who fasts and watches so many days, nor he who divides his property among the poor, nor he who preaches to others, nor he who lives quietly, kindly, and friendly; nor, in fine, is it he who knows all sciences and all languages, nor he who works all virtuous and all good works that ever any man spoke or read of; but it is he alone who is pure within and without."

Ver. 4. *He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who draws not his soul unto falsehood, nor swears deceitfully*, ver. 5. *He shall draw the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from God his Saviour*. The import is this: he, and he only, shall ascend the holy hill of the Lord, and abide in His holy place:—this is what is meant by, *shall draw the blessing, etc.*—The Psalmist unites cleanness of hands and purity of heart. The hands are the instruments of action, the heart the seat of feeling. God's demands upon His people go beyond the domain of action. Those only see Him (and that is altogether the same as what is implied here, in *ascending the hill of the Lord, and abiding in His holy place*) who have a pure heart. The Psalmist in the first clause ascends from outward deeds to the heart, and in the second he descends from the heart to the tongue,—*he who shuns sin in thought, word, and deed*. We have here the same threefold division which obtains in the decalogue: *deed*, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt not steal;" *word*, "Thou shalt not bear false witness;" *thought*, "Thou shalt not covet." But the heart is put here in the second place, for the purpose of showing that everything ultimately is dependent on it,—that purity of hands and tongue has its root in purity of heart, and is important only in so far as it is rooted there. The expression נָפְשׁוֹ לֹא שָׁקַר is not of rare occurrence: it occurs, for example, Deut. xxiv. 15; Prov. xix. 18; Ps. xxv. 1, lxxxvi. 4, cxliii. 8, with this difference, that it is construed in these passages with שָׁקַר, and here with לֹא. The construction with לֹא here is of importance for determining the *signification* of the phrase. The common translation is, "to lift up the soul." But for this sense the לֹא is not suitable. We cannot say, "to lift up his soul to falsehood." לֹא rather demands the signification, *to carry, to carry to,—*

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also;” and on comparing Ex. xx. 7 and the **שׁוֹא** in ver. 5, it is evident that this is the true rendering of our passage,—*he who does not bear his soul to falsehood, he shall bear away*; and at the same time in all other passages. Several interpreters render **שׁוֹא** by “vanity” or “wickedness;” Meyer, “bad ways;” Stier, “everything which the heart makes an idol of instead of the true God;” and some, “idols,” in the proper sense. But if we observe the relation in which **לִשְׁוֹא** stands to **לְכַרְמָה**, it will appear obvious that we can only translate, “to falsehood and deceit.” This translation also will be at once recognised as the correct one from Ex. xx. 7: “Who hath no love for falsehood and deceit, and who, in consequence of this, does not swear deceitfully.”—After the example of Stange, many interpreters render, “who does not utter his person to a lie,” that is, “who does not misuse the name of God to confirm a lie,” and refer to Ex. xx. 7, **לֹא שָׁמַע אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִשְׁוֹא**, which they render, “Thou shalt not utter the name of the Lord thy God to confirm a lie.” But this interpretation depends upon the marginal reading, **נַפְשִׁי**, *my soul*, which is decidedly to be rejected, as God is not introduced speaking throughout the whole Psalm. It is now, therefore, very easy to dispose of this view; and, on the other side, it may be observed that the soul of the Lord cannot stand for His person, nor this for His name; the phrase **נִשָּׂא נַפְשִׁי** has constantly the sense of, “to carry the soul:” **נִשָּׂא** here, from the **שָׂא** in ver. 5, must signify, “to carry,” and *never* signifies, “to utter” (compare on Ps. xv. 3); the connection between **נַפְשִׁי** and **לֵב**, and the obvious opposition between the soul and the tongue, render it impossible to refer **נַפְשִׁי** to God. It is now more the time to point out the *truth* from which the false reading and exposition have proceeded. This is the position, that the words before us have a reference to Ex. xx. 7. The resemblance is so striking, that any exposition which would *tear asunder* the connection between the two, cannot possibly be the correct one. According to our interpretation, however, this connection becomes most manifest as soon as the passage in Exodus is correctly translated. It must be translated, “Thou shalt not bear away the name of the Lord to a lie;” *i.e.* Thou shalt not mix up His name with what is false; thou shalt not utter it to confirm a lie. The Psalmist, by the verbal reference which he makes to this passage, indicates that this bearing of one’s soul

to a lie—the having a pleasure in it—is the ground and fountain of bearing God's name to a lie, and that this last sin is the natural consequence of the first. The only sure preservative against the fearful sin of perjury, is heart-aborrence of deceit and falsehood.—In ver. 5, *he shall carry away the blessing*, we may find, with Amyrald, a contradiction of the idea, that there is efficacy in the priestly and the royal benediction, apart from the moral condition of those upon whom that blessing was pronounced. When the ark of the covenant was brought in, David blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts (2 Sam. vi. 18). *The righteousness*, parallel with *the blessing*, is the blessing itself, inasmuch as it is the clearing up of the character by facts, the answer of God to the subjective righteousness of the worshipper : compare 1 Kings viii. 31, 32. This righteousness, as the gift of God, is carefully to be distinguished from justification. The justification of a sinner before God *goes before* holiness ; the righteousness here spoken of *follows* it. Finally, the purity which the Psalmist here speaks of as the indispensable condition of salvation, is not to be understood as a perfect, spotless holiness. It is enough that the innermost intent of the soul—the spiritual eye of Matt. vi. 23—be pure. But, assuredly, as the *condition* of salvation is always imperfect in this life, so is the salvation itself in like manner imperfect.

Ver. 6. *This is the generation which reverences Him : they who seek thy face, are Jacob.* The Psalmist having defined those to whom access to God has been opened up, brings prominently forward once more the truth, that they, and they only, are real worshippers of God, and therefore partakers of His favour, members of His Church. The name, *those who seek the Lord* (the textual reading יִשְׁכָּחֵם being obviously a contraction for the marginal יִשְׁכָּחֵם, which ought to be rejected), circulated, as it appears, like a coin, and the whole people were wont to apply to themselves this name. But the Psalmist claims it for those to whom it belongs. That man only deserves this name, who fulfils the law of God. That only can be called a reverencing of God, which is concerned about purity of heart.—*To see the face of the Lord*, is to be a sharer in His favour ; and, therefore, *to seek the face of the Lord*, is to be concerned about His favour, sincerely to strive to please Him. And this striving manifests itself in earnest endeavours to obtain purity of heart, as the only means of seeing God, of pleasing Him. “Jacob,” stands for,

“the generation of Jacob.” Jacob, and not Israel, is used, for the purpose of opposing the prevailing fancy of the times. The people laid great stress on their descent from Jacob, and supposed descent from Jacob according to the flesh, and incorporation with the people of the covenant, to be identical. In opposition to this, the Psalmist remarks, that only those who are earnest in their pursuit after holiness, according to the good pleasure of God, are the true posterity of Jacob, and form the people of the covenant, who are under the dominion of grace. The others, notwithstanding their descent from Jacob, belong not to Jacob, but are heathen, and thus children of wrath. We may compare, on this point, those passages in which the ungodly members of the Church, in contempt of their pretensions, founded on mere external relationship, are addressed as heathen, as uncircumcised, or specially as Canaanites, or by the name of some other heathen nation : Jer. iv. 4, ix. 25 ; Isa. i. 10 ; Ezek. xvi. 3 ; see also the Christol. Part 2, p. 398. In the New Testament, Rom. ix. 6, 7 is exactly parallel : “For they are not all Israel which are of Israel.” The sudden address directed to God, *who seek Thy face*, gives additional emphasis to the declaration, which is uttered as it were in the presence of God.—According to Stier and others, the true Israel are here put in the room of those who are descended from Jacob according to the flesh :—“Whoever, among all nations, inquires after God, receives the blessing of Abraham, and belongs to Jacob.” But, in reality, we have here nothing more than a preliminary step to the idea, “among all nations, this is the generation,” etc.,—we have not yet that idea itself. The only distinction drawn, is one among the natural descendants of Jacob ; and the only notion refuted, is the notion, that the grace of God is given along with descent from Jacob, and to every one of his lineal posterity.—The exposition which, to the destruction of the parallelism, understands “Jacob” as in apposition, is to be rejected as harsh and forced : “This, the generation of His worshippers, those who seek Thy face, Jacob ; that is, the true descendants of Jacob :”—the address to God is, on this view, altogether intolerable. The same remark may be made on the interpretation, “who seek thy face, O Jacob, i. e. O God of Jacob ;” as also, on the supposition that אֱלֹהֵי has dropped out of the text.

Ver. 7. The procession, with the ark of the covenant, has approached Mount Zion. The Psalmist addresses its gates, and

commands them to open, that the glorious King may enter in. *Lift up, ye gates, your heads; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come.* The King of glory is the glorious, majestic King. What, in the first instance, is only a poetical figure, becomes, within the spiritual domain, a reality. What the external *gates* would have done if they had been endowed with reason, will in reality be performed by *hearts* which are capable of comprehending the majesty and the glory of the approaching King. Here the doors and gates will in reality open. They will give to the King that wide and ready entrance, which formerly they gave to the world and to sin. This application, which indeed is more than an application,—is really an exposition,—becomes evident as soon as we refer back the command to open to the *why* given by the Psalmist himself.—Along with the ark of the covenant, the Lord also came in all the fulness of His glory, and with all the riches of His grace and justice: compare, in reference to the import of the ark of the covenant, Num. x. 35, 36; Christology, P. 3, p. 523, etc. It was not the mere change of place of a symbol that was then celebrated: it was the bringing in of a new era in the relationship of God to His people; and the Psalmist took occasion to exhort the people to know the time of their visitation. Long had the ark of the covenant been, as it were, resting in the grave: compare the Beitr. P. 3, p. 48. And now that it rose out of it, now that the Lord intended to make His habitation among His people, it was of great consequence for them to receive Him in a worthy manner, that so His arrival might bring upon them, not a curse, but a blessing.

Ver. 8. *Who is He, the King of Glory? The Lord, strong and a hero; the Lord, mighty in battle.* It is certainly more natural to suppose that a second chorus here falls in with the question, than, with others, that the Psalmist represents the gates as putting the question. Even this supposition, however, is unnecessary. The question is of the same kind with those in ver. 3, and Ps. xv. 1, and is equivalent to, "Askest thou who He is?" It is intended merely to awaken attention. Vencina: "The inhabitants of Zion were thereby instructed to contemplate with deep seriousness the characteristics of the King." The *וְ* in the question has, according to several interpreters, the character of an adverb, "Who is there?" and therefore it stands without the article, and forward. Compare Ewald's Small Grammar, § 416.

Others again consider it as really the pronoun. In reference to the answer, Calvin has the following very important remark: "The glorious appellations by which the Psalmist extols the power of God, are intended to show to the people of the covenant that God does not sit idly in the temple, but that He is prepared to help His people, and to stretch out His strong hand to preserve and to save them." Israel, surrounded by mighty nations, and as yet a small people, could found his hope of safety only on the help of his heavenly Hero-King. Compare Ex. xv. 3; Num. x. 35, 36; and 1 Sam. xvii. 45, where David says to Goliath, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel;" and ver. 47, "The battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

Ver. 9. *Lift up your heads, ye doors; and lift them up, ye everlasting gates, that the King of glory may come.* The summons is repeated, with little alteration, for the purpose of connecting with it a second question, as the first answer had not been sufficient, had represented only imperfectly the majesty of the King of glory.

Ver. 10. *Who is He, the King of glory? The Lord, the Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.* Several interpreters, and latterly Koester, interpret *the Lord of hosts* as equivalent to *the God of battle*. But the parallelism to which they appeal in favour of this entirely arbitrary exposition is decidedly against it. The expression, "Lord of hosts," must necessarily have a fuller meaning than ver. 8. For otherwise, no reason can be assigned for the repetition of the question. The new idea contained in vers. 9 and 10 is, *that the God who, in the 8th verse, is represented as the hero of the earth, as the God of the earthly hosts* (Israel had been, even in the Pentateuch, spoken of as the host of God, צבאות יהוה, Ex. xii. 41), *is also the God of the heavenly hosts.* He cannot be the first, in the right and full sense, unless He is also the second, just as He cannot in the full sense be the God of Israel, unless He is also the *God of the world*. What God is on earth, depends upon what He is in heaven. If He has any who are equal to Him there, He is not in the full sense the King of glory upon earth. The conclusion thus comes back to the opening strain of the Psalm, where the Lord, in like manner, had been praised as the God of the world: and the whole Psalm, which was intended to call forth in the Church a living view of the glory of her approaching God, concludes with

that appellation of God which reflects this glory most clearly. Michaelis: Plus enim et majus et brevius quid dicere de eo vobis non possum.—The *hosts* are always *heavenly*, and not *created things* generally. For in the passage, Gen. ii. 1, *the heaven and the earth* is to be regarded as equivalent to *the universe*; and the hosts belong to it, according to that passage, only in respect to one of its two parts. The phrase, *heavens and the earth*, is unquestionably used in the sense of *the universe*, in Gen. ii. 4, where man is spoken of as the product of the heavens and the earth. Just as in the second passage we find attributed to the heavens what belongs exclusively to the earth, so in the first verse there is attributed to the earth what belongs only to the heavens. The heavenly hosts are divided into spiritual hosts—the angels, and material—the stars. No single passage represents the angels as standing in closer relation to the stars, than that they together make up the heavenly hosts; and the confident assertion of Gesenius, “Quippe quas (the stars) ab angelis geniisque cœlestibus habitatas esse existimarent,” must be rejected as altogether without foundation. This appellation refers, throughout, principally and usually to the sun, moon, and stars, on account of the opposition implied to the prevailing Sabeism,—which contributed very much to give the name *Jehovah Sabaoth* its importance.—We cannot translate, with Gesenius and others, *Jehovah of hosts*, but, *Jehovah, of hosts*: the general idea, God, must be derived from *Jehovah*, as has been adverted to in the Christology, P. 3, p. 218. The reasons are these: 1. יהוה cannot be used as a proper noun in the *status constructus*. 2. יהוה אלהים occurs in several passages, as Ps. lix. 6, lxxx. 5. 3. ארני occurs in Isa. x. 16. 4. Κύριος σαβαώθ occurs in the Septuagint, and in Rom. ix. 29, and Jas. v. 40, which shows, that, to a certain extent, צבאות was regarded as standing by itself. On the other hand, those who would isolate Sabaoth *completely*, and maintain that it is to be considered just as a name of God, as Baumgarten has recently done, require to be reminded that it never occurs except in connection with one of the names of God.—In the Pentateuch (Gen. ii. 1) there is to be found the basis of the appellation, but not the appellation itself. That this is not to be attributed to design on the part of the author (as might be said in the case of Ezekiel and Job), but is to be explained by the assumption that the name had not yet been formed, is evident from the fact that it does not occur either in Joshua or

Judges. It would certainly be a very singular circumstance that the word should be omitted designedly in the three most ancient historical books.

## PSALM XXV.

The Psalm begins and concludes with the prayer for *deliverance from enemies* : and this is to be considered as its peculiar theme. The *forgiveness of sins*, which the Psalmist frequently claims in the middle, is introduced only as the ground of the deliverance. But of *moral strength* there is no mention made throughout the Psalm.

There are no traces in the contents of any particular occasion for which the Psalm might be composed ; and the prayer on behalf of Israel at the close, is altogether unfavourable to any such. For the transition from the individual to the whole body was much easier when the Psalm was, from the first, intended to awaken the godly, when they are pressed hard by their enemies, to hope in the guidance and protection of God. Lastly, the form in which the Psalm is composed, is decidedly against any particular reference. The alphabetical arrangement, which obtains here, as in Ps. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv., is throughout adopted in Psalms which are general in their character, and seems, from its nature, to be suitable only for such.

The superscription announces that David is the author ; and with this announcement the contents of the Psalm are fully accordant. David was peculiarly exposed to sufferings, arising from enemies, throughout a great part of his life ; he always treats this subject with peculiar delight, and regarded it as the main duty of his life to comfort others with the same consolation wherewith he himself had been comforted of God. But the alphabetical arrangement has been pleaded as furnishing some ground for doubt on this point : “ this conceit belongs to a later age of degenerate taste.” This might with as much propriety be said of such poems as “ *bejehl du deine wege* ” of P. Gerhardt, and “ *wie schön leucht uns der Morgenstern* ” of Nikola., because these poems are characterized by such conceits as might not have been expected in such eminent and powerful writers. One single superscription, assigning an alphabetical Psalm to



David, is entitled to more weight than this *a priori* assertion. And there are several such superscriptions. And, besides, there are at least two alphabetical Psalms, the ix. and x., which, from internal evidence of the strongest kind, we know were composed by David. Lastly, we deny that the alphabetical arrangement ought to be termed "conceit." It belongs in general to those means which have been adopted for the purpose of giving to poetical compositions that character of *compactness* which so essentially belongs to them, and it stands on the same footing exactly with the parallelism of clauses, and the strophe arrangement. It can deserve to be called a conceit only when it is forced upon resisting materials (its use being, from the nature of the case, confined within a narrow compass), or when it is employed in a composition which requires a strict progression of thought and feeling. It occurs, however, at least when completely carried out, only in a particular class of Psalms,—those, namely, in which the effort is obvious to arrange a collection of individual sayings, which, from beginning to end, bear upon the same subject, but are presented in different aspects, and always with new additions. For such Psalms, the alphabetical arrangement—the carrying out of the thought through the whole alphabet, the symbol of completeness and compactness—is exceedingly natural. De Wette indeed maintains that the want of connection is the consequence, not the cause, of the alphabetical arrangement. But on this supposition there are certain facts which cannot be explained: the alphabetical arrangement does not so completely stand in the way of the connection, as to render abortive every attempt, however zealous, to unite them together. But in the Psalms no such effort is at all conspicuous. The writers of the Psalms were under the less necessity of sacrificing the connection for the sake of the alphabetical arrangement, that they make a much freer use of it than is observed to have been done among other nations. From this fact, the objection of conceit or constraint may be the more easily set aside. Even within its own peculiar province, the alphabetical arrangement is pursued only in so far as it can be done without any constraint. How little force, then, there is in what has been said of the alphabetical arrangement, that it corresponds to a special need, is evident from the fact, that we find it adopted by very different nations, and always in poetry of a particular kind.

Nothing beyond this, of any consequence, has been adduced against considering David as the author of the Psalm. For example, it has been said that the prayer at the close of the Psalm, for deliverance for Israel out of all his troubles, does not correspond to the time of David. But it need scarcely be remarked, that at all times, even the most prosperous, there is enough of trouble; and that our assuming David to be the author of the Psalm, does not necessarily imply that we limit its application to the circumstances of his day.

The low opinions which have been formed as to the merits of the Psalm, proceed from misunderstanding its peculiar character and design. As an alphabetical Psalm, it is beautiful; and whoever reads it in the frame of mind in which an alphabetical Psalm ought to be read, will find it to be both beautiful and edifying.

The alphabetical arrangement in our Psalm is not strictly adhered to. The second verse begins, like the first, with *א*, and the *ב* follows at the second word. The *ג* is either omitted, or it occurs, not at the beginning, but at the middle of the verse. The *ד* is altogether wanting. On the other hand, there are two verses which begin with *ה*. After the last letter *ז*, there is a verse beginning with *ח*. A great many critics, up to Hitzig and Ewald, have considered it necessary to remove these irregularities by emendations. But there are many very weighty reasons to be urged *against* every such attempt. 1. Errors of this kind in alphabetical Psalms are extremely unlikely to occur: the opposite may be expected, viz. alterations made by transcribers, with a view to remove irregularities. 2. Such irregularities occur in all the alphabetical Psalms without exception. 3. There are *gradations* among the deviations in particular Psalms: first, there are cases in which only a single irregularity occurs, and where, of course, a critical emendation might with some appearance of propriety be made; second, there are cases, such as Ps. ix. and x., in which nothing more than an attempt at alphabetical arrangement seems to have been made, and which utterly defy all efforts of emendatory criticism; and, lastly, there are cases in which the alphabetical arrangement is directed, not so much to the *first word* as to the *number* of the verses. The extensive deviations indicate that the minor ones are original, and to be attributed to the author himself. 4. There are special reasons in the Psalm before us why no alterations should be

attempted. The omission of the  $\text{פ}$  is evidently not accidental, as its place is occupied by  $\text{ר}$ , the letter following it in the alphabet: nothing can be suggested either in the case of  $\text{ק}$  or  $\text{ר}$ , which might have been appropriately substituted; and it is as clear as day that the author sacrificed the form to the sense. The first and the last verses are peculiar, inasmuch as they consist each of only one clause, while all the other verses contain two; they thus stand out, as it were, from the series, for the purpose of being recognised as the beginning and the end. And it is natural that they should preserve this character also in reference to the alphabetical arrangement. The  $\text{א}$ , although it begins ver. 1, yet, as if this were regarded in a certain measure as accidental, is repeated at the beginning of the proper series, in ver. 2,—in such a manner, however, as that, while it gets, as it were, what is its due, it has not a whole verse devoted to it, for  $\text{ב}$  follows in the second word; the last verse again, which begins with its  $\text{א}$  (instead of which any other letter would have answered equally well), stands altogether out of the alphabetical arrangement. Hitzig's attempt to join the  $\text{אלהי}$  of ver. 2 to ver. 1, proceeds from an entire misapprehension of this correspondence between the beginning and the end of the Psalm: the same remark may be made on his singular hypothesis in reference to the  $\text{א}$ .

Ver. 1. *To Thee, O Lord, do I bear my soul.* The bearing of the soul to the Lord ( $\text{נשם נפשי}$  means always to bear the soul, to bear towards, never to lift; compare Ps. xxiv. 4, and Deut. xxiv. 15) signifies the longing of the heart after Him. The soul is wherever the object of its regard is. The more immediate object which the Psalmist has in view becomes obvious in the following verse, where we find him speaking of seeking help from the Lord. Hence the longing after God, here spoken of, is the longing after Him as the Saviour, the helper in all trouble: compare Ps. cxliii. 8, where the bearing of the soul to God stands parallel with trusting in Him: "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 bear my soul to Thee." The Psalmist says, that when in distress, he does not, like the ungodly, draw his soul at one time in this direction, and at another time in that; that he does not seek to catch now at this, now at that *ignis fatuus* of human help: but that he goes straight with all his desire to God, and that he rests in His pro-

tection. In the form of fact, there is in reality an exhortation expressed: *I bear*, which is put into the mouth of the sufferer, in whose name the Psalmist speaks, contains the hortative "bear" in it. The lively and undivided *desire* for the help of the Lord, is the indispensable condition, and at the same time the sure ground, of deliverance.

Ver. 2. *My God, I trust in Thee, let me not be put to shame, let not mine enemies rejoice over me.* The import is, "therefore, may I not," etc. The trust in God of this verse corresponds to the bearing of the soul to Him of the preceding verse. The Psalmist grounds his prayer for deliverance on the general truth, that that man shall never be put to shame who hopes in God: the maxim, "that whoever puts his confidence in God shall not be forsaken," is the ground of his hope, his confidence, and his joy. This maxim, from which he draws an inference applicable to his special case, is expressly announced in ver. 3.

Ver. 3. *Yea, all who wait on Thee shall not be put to shame: those shall be put to shame who act perfidiously without cause.* The *waiting* corresponds to the *drawing* of the soul to the Lord, and to the *trusting* in Him, of the preceding verses. The *yea*, which superficial observers have supposed to be dragged in for the sake of the alphabetical arrangement, indicates that the sufferer does not claim anything *peculiar* for himself, but only what belongs to *all* who are in the same circumstances. It is only when this "yea" can be uttered, that the prayer has a solid foundation. The *Futures* are not, according to many interpreters, to be considered as optatives (this would give to the verse a very insipid character); they give utterance to a general truth. The *נִרְאֶה* has its usual sense, *to act perfidiously*. The *perfidiousness* is such as is perpetrated not against God, but against our *neighbour*. Perfidiousness comprehended every violation of duty towards one's neighbour. For there existed a brotherly relationship among all the members of the Church of God: all were descended from the same bodily and spiritual race, all were interested in the covenant; and, as such, all had vowed not only love to God, but also love to each other. And perfidiousness was the want of this due and promised love. Perfidiousness, moreover, might be seen in the violation of some *particular* relationship, arising out of what was general in its origin. Compare Ps. xli. 9. The highest degree of wickedness exists where fidelity is violated *without a*

*cause*,—רִיקָם, without any provocation on the other side,—where perfidiousness is practised against him who is faithful. Many expositors have been led to adopt a false interpretation, from the idea that, as there is no suitable contrast between those who wait on God and the perfidious, the perfidiousness must be that which has *God for its object*. But this ground proves nothing: for hope in God is grounded on a good conscience; the man who is not faithful to his neighbour, cannot hope for the help of God; as often as he attempts to do so, he meets with the terrible reply, “Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity.” We are prevented from considering God as the object of the perfidiousness by the expression, “without cause,” which is, properly, “empty,” and secondarily, “without ground;” as when we speak of “empty,” that is, “groundless excuses;” and stands in the same connection as it does in those clauses which speak of the unprovoked violation of duty towards a neighbour in Ps. vii. 4: compare the corresponding שׁוֹנֵאֵי הַנֶּם in Ps. lxi. 4. In these passages, “without a cause,” cannot refer to God—the expressions there explain themselves. רִיקָם signifies “thoughtless,” “wicked,” or, “in a vain worthless way;” and may be taken as a verbal proof of the Davidic origin of our Psalm, as it occurs nowhere else in a similar connection except in Ps. vii. 4. But quite decisive is the relation between the expression, “mine enemies,” in ver. 2, and the expression, “perfidious without a cause:” Let me, who trust in Thee, not be ashamed, for *all* who wait on Thee are kept from being put to shame: let mine enemies not triumph over me, for *all* who, like mine enemies, are perfidious without a cause, are forbidden to triumph, and shall be put to shame; and it would be a turning of the tables if Thou wert to permit them to triumph, and me to be put to shame. Finally, the expression at the 19th verse, “they hate me with cruel hatred,” is all the more deserving of being compared with the one before us, that it is impossible to fail to observe the correspondence between the beginning and the conclusion of the Psalm.

Ver. 4. *Make known to me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths.* Expositors generally understand by “the ways and paths of the Lord,” “that manner of life which is well-pleasing to Him.” The Psalmist, on this supposition, prays for instruction and guidance that he may walk worthily in these ways. But it is much more correct to suppose that the Psalmist is here

repeating in other words the prayer which he had already uttered in the preceding verse, and that the ways of God are the ways of *deliverance*, which He makes known to His own that they may walk in them—a limitation which results from the person of the speaker: the Psalmist is not speaking of the ways of God *generally*, but only of those which relate to godly sufferers; and these, according to His nature and word, can be none other than the ways of *deliverance*. That this interpretation is the correct one, is clear from the connection, which would be broken in an unpleasant manner by the prayer for moral guidance; also from the circumstance, that in the xxxiv. Psalm, which is nearly related to the one before us, the prayer is *only* for the protection of God in trouble. It is still further clear from the *for* in the 5th verse: “Teach me Thy way, and lead me in it, *for* Thou art the God of my deliverance.” It is impossible to do justice to this *for* in any other way than by supposing that the making known of the ways, and the guidance in them, indicate nothing else than safety and deliverance. How strong this proof is, is evident even from the remark of De Wette: “That the second clause of this verse is not closely connected (according to his exposition) with what goes before (and yet *ו* shows that such a connection must necessarily exist), and that we must not give to ‘my God of salvation’ too exact an interpretation!” Further, the 10th verse is in favour of this exposition, where, as is undeniable and generally allowed, “the ways” are “those in which He leads His own.” Compare “all His ways are truth” in Deut. xxxii. 4. In like manner also, ver. 9.

Ver. 5. *Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; I wait on Thee continually.* Most expositors consider “in Thy truth,” as equivalent to “in true godliness, which is well-pleasing to Thee,” or even (Hitzig) “in fidelity to Thee.” But this view is opposed, in the first place, by *ו*, to which we have already adverted in exposing the false interpretation put upon the preceding verse. Secondly, *אמת* is always, “the truth and faithfulness which belongs to God,” and never, “the truth which He desires, and which is well-pleasing to Him,” or “faithfulness towards Him.” Compare Ps. xxx. 10, xxi. 22, xci. 4. Lastly, this exposition is opposed by the 9th verse: “All the ways of the Lord are grace and *truth*.” Here, as in the above-mentioned, and in all other passages, “the truth of God” is “His faithfulness in fulfilling His promises.” In so

far as this should be exhibited in the experience of the Psalmist, he represents it as the way in which he prays that God would lead him (הָדָרִיקָה, generally with ב of the way in which one is led), just as he says in ver. 9, "The meek God leads in righteousness, in the paths of the same." Compare also Ps. xxvi. 3. After the words, "teach me," we must supply, "Thy truth, let me know it by experience." It appears that the ו here stands instead of a vau at the beginning of a verse, where it could not have been conveniently placed; and that the Psalmist, for the purpose of making this apparent, repeats a word which he had already used, and introduces it in an abrupt manner: the strange appearance of the לִמְדֵנִי was meant to suggest that it was thus placed from regard to the alphabetical arrangement. The reason assigned in the second clause of the verse, applies equally to the preceding verse, as to the first clause of this one. God must undertake for the Psalmist, because He is his Saviour, and the only ground of his hope.

Ver. 6. *Remember Thy tender mercies, O Lord, and Thy favours; for they are from eternity.* God cannot be unlike Himself: He cannot deny His character. Love and goodness have been His attributes from eternity; He has always had compassion on His own people, as a father has on his children; and therefore He cannot do otherwise than make the Psalmist, who is one of His children, partaker of His love and pity.

Ver. 7. *Remember not the sins of my youth, and my transgressions: according to Thy grace remember me, for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.* Calvin explains as follows the connection with the preceding verse: "Because our sins raise up a partition wall between us and God, so that He does not hear our wishes, or stretch out His hand to help us, David now takes this obstacle out of the way. He acknowledges that he cannot otherwise, than by having his sins forgiven, be made partaker of the favour of God." But the forgiveness of sin is rather that in which God first *makes known* that favour and pity, for the manifestation of which the Psalmist had prayed in the preceding verse. If he has really become partaker of *this*, salvation and deliverance will follow as a matter of course. God remembers His *tender mercies*, for He cannot do otherwise, since they have dwelt with Him from eternity; and therefore He cannot remember the sins of the Psalmist's youth, for to remember them would be to give scope to His *strict justice*, and not to His *tender*

*mercy.* The Psalmist makes mention of his sins of youth, not as if he were now an immaculate saint, but because in youth the power of original corruption is particularly strong: my sins, in which my *youth* particularly was so rich. Luther: "For youth is not fit for virtue, or for anything that is good; because the blood is still too young and fresh, it cannot govern itself, or think of anything that is useful or good. For if any one will allow a youth to grow up, and do as he likes, he will become quite a devil; before one is aware what he is doing, it is already done." Compare Job xiii. 26; 2 Tim. ii. 22. That the temptations to sin are strong in youth, is obvious not only in the case of individuals, but also in that of nations. Moses reminds the Israelites (Deut. ix. 7) that they had provoked the Lord from the day that He had led them out of Egypt, and then represents to them, in detail, the sins of their youth. It is all the more important to make this remark, that the Psalm, according to its *conclusion*, is intended not only for individual members, but also for the *whole body of the Church*. The "transgressions" is a stronger word than "sins:" the climax implies that the Psalmist acknowledged the whole magnitude, and all the aggravations of his transgressions. In the words, "think on me according to Thy grace," the Psalmist does not ask God to act towards him in an arbitrary manner, but, like every pious suppliant, that He would act according to the necessity of His own nature. The strict and inexorable righteousness of God comes into operation in regard to those only who are without the covenant and the promises. God is under the necessity of remembering His own children, according to His grace. The words, "for Thy goodness' sake," point to this necessity in the nature of God. This is the ground in God from which the fulfilment of the prayer proceeds; because Thou art good, therefore canst Thou not be severe and relentless towards the weakness of Thy people. If God were not good, it would be in vain to offer up to Him such a prayer as this.

Ver. 8. *Good and upright is the Lord; therefore does He teach sinners the way.* The Psalmist, in the passage from vers. 8-10, in following up, "for Thy goodness' sake," enters upon the consideration of the Divine perfections, for the purpose of obtaining thereby stronger confidence in God's compassion, and new zeal in prayer. The principles on which the early petitions depend are here expressed. Vitringa, at the fundamental pas-



sage, Deut. xxxii. 4, has some very important observations upon ישר, *upright*, in so far as it is used in reference to God. It denotes agreement between the Divine nature and actions on the one hand, and the idea of what is good or Divine on the other, *perinde ac architectis rectum dicitur quod exactum est ad libram aut calamum*. Vitringa observes, that in this ישר there was made known the true idea of God, which the popular and mythic theology of the Gentiles had corrupted, and remarks, "that in speaking of the operations of Divine providence, we ought to take great care lest we entertain of God the blasphemous and absurd idea that He can do anything which is inconsistent with right reason, equity, and purity." God, because not good, would not even be upright, were He to fail to assist His own people in spite of their sins of infirmity. The clause, *He teaches the way*, properly, *He instructs in the way* (which explains the construction with ב, which occurs instead of the usual construction with the accusative also in Ps. xxxii. 8), is equivalent to, *He is their leader in the path of life, their helper, their protection*. We cannot, as most interpreters do, consider the words as having any reference whatever to *moral instruction*. This idea is opposed by the relation in which they stand to what goes before, and to what follows. The Psalmist merely expresses in this verse, in the form of a general affirmation, that the regular course of God's procedure was to grant what he had there besought from God for himself, and which he will still beseech from Him. The verse before us stands in the same relation to vers. 4-7, as ver. 3 does to vers. 1 and 2. But in vers. 4-7, the discourse is not concerning moral instruction, but concerning forgiveness of sin and salvation. That God helps *sinners*,—that is, such as are at the same time righteous (the expression is not *the sinners*: there is also an important difference between חטאים and פשעים or רשעים), or, what amounts to the same thing, His own people,—is a necessary outgoing of the goodness and righteousness of God, tends to the praise of these attributes.

Ver. 9.—*He guides the meek in righteousness, and teaches the meek His way*. Calvin misinterprets this clause: "He speaks here of the *second* favour which the Lord imparts to His believing people, after that they have become the willing subjects of His kingdom." According to the *correct* exposition, the Psalmist speaks here of the same *favour* of which he had spoken in the preceding verse. There, as here, the subject is the imparting

of help and salvation. The *meek* here are the sinners of the preceding verse; from which again it is evident what sort of sinners it is that we are to think about,—those, namely, who are at the same time meek. He leads them *in righteousness*; that is, He gives to them, who do not oppose might with might, justice against their oppressors. Righteousness appears here like a road along which God leads His people, like *truth* in the 4th verse. The abbreviated Future ירך stands in the sense of the usual form. The whole verse expresses the truth on the foundation of which *the prayer* of the 1st verse rises; and, as it is evident that it refers to *what one experiences*, or, *what happens to one*, that it is altogether inadmissible to think of moral instruction and guidance *there*.

Ver. 10. *All the ways of the Lord are grace and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.* Calvin: “The sum is, God acts in such a manner towards His faithful people as that they experience Him, at all points, to be gracious and true.” The keeping of the covenant and the testimonies stands, according to the 8th verse, in opposition to bold and wilful transgressions. *Sins of infirmity* cannot deprive a man of his interest in the promises of the covenant. The covenant itself provides for them the means of expiation and forgiveness, when they are confessed and repented of.

Ver. 11. *For Thy name's sake, O Lord, thus wilt Thou forgive mine iniquity, for it is great.* The ו in וסלחת is what is termed the *vau conversivum* of the Future; or, according to Ewald, p. 551, Sm. Gr. 613, the *vau* relative of the first mode. “On account of Thy name,” is “on account of Thy nature.” The name of Jehovah,—arising out of His manifestations,—brings before the mind for contemplation all that Jehovah is, renders present His whole historical character. It is the *goodness* and *righteousness* of God, according to ver. 8, that is here brought particularly under notice; according to which, He cannot do otherwise than open up to His own people the fountain of forgiveness. Luther: “We have a throne of grace for sin, so that our Lord God must absolutely shut His eyes, and say, as it stands in Ps. xxxii. 1, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin. This is our theology, as we pray in the petition of the Lord's Prayer, Forgive us our sins: from this we know that we live only under grace. Grace, however, does not only take away sin; it also bears with it, and endures it: this is

the import of the throne of grace." De Wette is mistaken: "An opposition—not for my sake, not on account of any merit of mine." The Psalmist cannot be excluding his own merit as the ground of forgiveness of sin, for it never occurred to him. The opposition is rather, "Because Thou art good and upright, do not take vengeance on mine iniquity with inexorable severity, but *forgive it*." The words, "for it is great," form the ground of the Psalmist's prayer for forgiveness. His iniquity is so great, that he must be irremediably lost if God were to deal with him according to his works.

Ver. 12. *Who is the man who fears the Lord? He teaches him the way which he may choose.* The "Who is the man?" expresses the sense, that wherever there is such a one, he shall not fail of the gracious guidance of God; and that the *fear of the Lord* and *deliverance* are inseparably, and without exception, bound together. *The way* here also, as what follows sufficiently shows, is not to be understood in a moral sense. The fearers of God have, in their journey through life, a faithful leader and guide; the Lord points out to them the way of deliverance. The ungodly, on the other hand, left to themselves, choose the way of destruction; they run upon their own ruin.

Ver. 13. *His soul spends the night in good, and his seed possesses the land.* The soul of the God-fearing man, is his own person in opposition to his posterity. *To spend the night in good, is to enjoy an enduring prosperity.* The second clause alludes to those passages in the law in which the Lord promises to His people lasting possession of Canaan, provided they continue in the fear of God: compare, for example, Ex. xx. 12; Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxviii. While the ungodly, with their posterity, are rooted out from among their people, the promise is fulfilled to the godly and to their posterity who resemble them. ארץ, with the poetical omission of the article, stands for the land of Canaan. As the land is here used only as an example of individualizing designation for the Divine blessings attendant on faithfulness to the covenant, it is easy, without any fear of misunderstanding, to distinguish between the general substance of the thought,—viz., the enjoyment of Divine blessings, of salvation,—and its special Old Testament dress. Our Lord quotes the passage in this way in Matt. v. 5.

Ver. 14. *The friendship of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He makes known to them His covenant.* At the first

clause, compare Prov. iii. 32: "The ungodly is abomination to the Lord, but His intimate friendship is with the righteous," סודו; Job xxix. 4. The second clause, literally, "His covenant is in order to make known to them," is "designed to be made known to them." Comp. on the infinitive with ל, Ewald, p. 621, Sin. Gr. 544. Or it may be thus expounded: "His covenant is for the fearers of God, that He may make it known to them." The making known of the covenant is not *inwardly*; it takes place *in matters of fact*, through the events of their history, in which the covenant-relation is realized. Several expositors, in opposition to the parallelism, the connection, and usage, suppose the Psalmist to be speaking of insight into the meaning of the law.

Ver. 15. *Mine eyes look always towards the Lord, for He takes my feet out of the net.* Comp. Ps. ix. 15.

Ver. 16. *Turn Thyself to me, and be gracious to me; for I am lonely and miserable.*

Ver. 17. *The troubles of my heart they enlarge; bring me out of my distresses.* צרה is, properly, "narrowness." We cannot take הרחיבו in an intransitive sense. The many who oppress the Psalmist, stand over against the one from whom he can hope for deliverance. Substantially, the enemies and haters (comp. the 19th verse) are the subject; but the circumstance that they are not named expressly as such, increases the emphasis. Everything had conspired against the Psalmist; compare יחיר of the preceding verse, out of which the subject is to be taken. Several interpreters, and lastly Hitzig, wish here to alter the text. They take the ו from the end of הרחיבו, and join it to the next clause, and point הרחיבי: *make wide the straitnesses of my heart.* But one does not see how the more easy could ever be supplanted by the more difficult reading. There is in the mere description of the greatness of the trouble, in the first clause, a stronger cry to God for help, than if the cry had been at the same time expressed. The first clause of this verse corresponds exactly to the second of the preceding, and the second to the first. On an attentive consideration, it is obvious that this arbitrary alteration does not give a suitable sense, as the troubles do not admit of being enlarged.

Ver. 18. *See my misery and suffering, and forgive all my sins.* The ל is not the mark of the accusative, but is properly to be translated *forgive: grant forgiveness to all my sins.*

Ver. 19. *See my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with unrighteous hatred.* If God once sees, He cannot but help: but that He should see and not further overlook, is rendered necessary from their great numbers and malicious wickedness.

Ver. 20. *Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I trust in Thee.* Muis: "An excellent reason:—otherwise I should have trusted in Thee in vain. The glory of God demands that He help."

Ver. 21. *Blamelessness and uprightness shall preserve me, for I hope in Thee,* who helpeth the upright. Otherwise the expectation that salvation shall follow uprightness would be a foolish one. Luther: "Simple and right; i.e., that I am upright and without blame in my life."

Ver. 22. *Redeem, O God, Israel out of all his troubles.* This verse, which Rosenmüller supposes to have been added at a later period, is obviously intended to be a closing verse, from the circumstance of its containing only one clause. It has this in common with the 1st verse, which, in like manner, stands to a certain extent out of the alphabetical arrangement, as the 2d verse also begins with *ſ*. The 1st verse begins with *ſ*, that the Psalm might have, as it were, the signature of an alphabetical one on its forehead; and inasmuch as the *ſ* gets thus only a part of its rights, it has assigned to it the first word of the 2d verse. The transition from the prayer, in regard to the necessities of the individual, to one on behalf of the whole Church, is all the more easy, that the Psalm throughout has no special application. There is a similar conclusion in Ps. xxxiv. 23.—Elohim, the *general* name of God, is used here, although Jehovah had been used throughout the Psalm, because Israel is destitute of all *human help*. The opposition which called this forth is distinctly expressed in the preceding context.

## PSALM XXVI.

The Psalmist begins at ver. 1 with the prayer to God for help in trouble, which he grounds on his earnest moral efforts and his unfeigned piety, especially *his trust* in God. He then turns first, in vers. 2-8, to expand this *basis* of his prayer: his heart is pure, and needs not fear the strictest scrutiny; for (as the expansion of, *I have trusted in the Lord*) he has had the

love of God and the faithfulness of God always before his eyes and in his heart, and in regard to them (*I have walked in mine integrity*), he has shunned all intercourse with the wicked in their wickedness: towards his neighbour he has acted blamelessly, and towards God his heart is filled with fear and love. After this follows the development of the *prayer*, that God would not, as regards community of *experience*, join him with those from whom he is *inwardly* separated: that He would not give him over, like the wicked, to *death*. He obtains, in ver. 12, the *confidence* of being heard in this prayer, so that, at the conclusion, he is able to give utterance to a purpose involving the most assured confidence of salvation—to *thank* God.

We have thus an introductory and a concluding verse, and two main divisions. All the significant numbers of the Old Testament we here find brought into use. The whole Psalm has twelve verses: the main body is complete in ten; the first division of this main body, containing the description of the fulfilment of the duties of the *covenant* (comp. Ps. xxv. 10, *such as keep His covenant*), in seven, the number of the covenant; and the second division, containing the prayer for the blessing of the covenant, in three, which is the number of the Mosaic blessing.

The situation of the Psalmist, and the occasion of the Psalm, have been almost without exception misunderstood by recent expositors. Thus De Wette remarks: "The prayer in ver. 9 has no special reference, but means, that when God sits in judgment and inflicts punishments, He will exempt the Psalmist from these;" and Ewald concludes from the same verse, "that the Psalm was composed on the occasion of a pestilence." The situation is not that of one who *fears* misery; it is that of one who *finds* himself already in misery: the prayer is not one for preservation from misery, but for deliverance out of misery, and for defence against utter destruction, against that *annihilating* punishment which belongs only to the *wicked*; while of the *righteous* it is said, "God afflicteth me sore, but He does not give me over to destruction." There is not a word throughout the whole Psalm of general judgments or pestilences. That this is the correct view, is evident from the very first word, *judge me*; that is, "interpose to give me justice, deliver me from a condition in which, if it were to be regarded as permanent, it would be unrighteous to suffer me to remain." The prayer for

the *judgment* of God always proceeds from such as are already in misery. It is still further evident from the 11th verse, *deliver me*, or *redeem me*, after which De Wette inaccurately supplies the words, *from threatening judgment*, and also from the clause, *have mercy on me*. The same use may be made of the first clause of the concluding verse, *my foot standeth in an even place*, which implies that *hitherto* the Psalmist had been standing on difficult and dangerous ground.

All attempts to find out an individual application for our Psalm, or to mark out any historical circumstances with which it may be connected, have utterly failed. Thus Ewald, from the strong contrast drawn between the wicked and the righteous, concludes that it was composed at a late period, and from vers. 6-8, that it was composed in the temple. The circumstance, that the trouble is nowhere carefully defined, and that the language used is manifestly and designedly as general as it could possibly be, is sufficient to show that the Psalmist speaks in the name and out of the soul of the righteous man. If this be established, it is also clear that the Psalm is of a hortatory character. The theme is this: "Only he who can with truth say, *I have walked in mine integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord*, may hope for Divine aid in trouble, but *he* may do so with full confidence." The general tendency is also clear from the connection with Ps. xxv.

In pointing out the general character of our Psalm, we also remove an objection which Köster has drawn, from the graphic descriptions, and from the uniform division of the verses into two parts, against its Davidic origin. Its origin is fully confirmed, not only by the superscription, but also by its manifest relationship to Ps. xvii., xviii. 21, xv. and xxiv.

The manifest resemblance between the clause, *judge me, O God, for I have walked in mine INTEGRITY*, at the beginning of our Psalm, and the one, *INTEGRITY and uprightness shall preserve me*, near the close of Ps. xxv., is sufficient to lead to the idea, that the two Psalms are very nearly related to each other. This idea is confirmed by the similarity between them as to formal arrangement: in Ps. xxv. we have, 1. 20. 1.,—an introductory verse, two decades, and a concluding verse,—and in the Psalm before us, 1. 10. 1. Perhaps also in the 25th Psalm, the effort not to go beyond the number 20 may have been the cause why the 1 and the 7 were omitted. Along with this *outward*

similarity, there is an *inward* resemblance of the closest kind. The contents of the one Psalm supplement those of the other. In the one Psalm, the suffering righteous man is directed to seek refuge in the Divine *compassion*, which secures forgiveness for manifold sins of infirmity: in the other, again, he is led, from a consideration of the Divine righteousness, which must make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, to entertain the firm hope of deliverance. We have, therefore, before us a pair of Psalms, which point to the compassion and the righteousness of God, as the two foundations on which the Lord's people may rest a confident hope of deliverance. In order that the two might be connected, as it were, by a *bridge*, the idea which, in the one Psalm, is brought prominently forward, and has the first place assigned to it, is introduced as a subordinate element at the close of the other.

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Ver. 1. *Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity; and I have trusted in the Lord, therefore may I not slide.* The two members of this verse are parallel to each other. *I walk in mine integrity*, corresponds to, *I trust in the Lord*; and *judge me, to, may I not slide.* In each member there is contained the description of a subjective condition, and a prayer grounded on that condition. This manifest parallelism would be destroyed, were we, with most recent expositors, to translate: "and I trust in the Lord without sliding." Against this interpretation, moreover, we may urge: 1st, That to slide occurs frequently in the sense of *to perish*, Job xii. 3; Ps. xviii. 36, xxxvii. 31; while there is no such expression anywhere else, as *to slide in trusting in God.* 2d, *I have trusted in the Lord*, which is not at all a suitable expression in an address to God. 3d, *My foot standeth in an even place*, at the close of the Psalm, announces that the prayer, *may I not slide*, has been heard, just as, *I shall praise the Lord*, implies that an answer has been received to *judge me, O God.* *Judge me* is, in the mouth of a righteous man, equivalent to, *help me.* For if God takes up the cause of such a one, He must decide it in his favour. Only he can say, *help me*, in confidence of being heard, who can with a good conscience also change *help me* into *judge me.* That עַן is more than openness or sincerity, that it denotes moral blamelessness, and purity in all its extent, is evident from its development (4-6), and from



its opposite in ver. 10 : compare also the similar Ps. ci. This is also the *fundamental meaning*. In 1 Kings xxii. 34, the word is used in an improper or popular sense. To *walk* is to *act*. The blamelessness of the Psalmist is that in which his conduct rests, the guiding principle of his life. The blamelessness of the Psalmist is the quality, the character, the walk, the procedure thereby determined. Hence it appears that the suffix in *mine integrity* is by no means superfluous, as it is permissible to interpret, *in the integrity to which I have been accustomed*.—To *walk in integrity* has reference to the commandments of the *second* table ; and to *trust in the Lord*, to those of the *first*. To *walk in integrity* is co-ordinate with *to trust in the Lord*, only in the sense in which the commandment to love our neighbour is co-ordinate with the commandment to love God, in Matt. xxii. 39. Trust in God is the *fountain* of integrity. Whoever places his hope in God need not seek to advance his worldly interests by neglecting his duties : he expects everything *from above*, and, at the same time, always takes heed that he do not deprive himself of the favour of his heavenly Saviour through violating His commandments.

There follows now, in vers. 2-8, the development of *I have walked in integrity, and trusted in the Lord*. The Psalmist first *affirms* the cleanness and the purity of his heart, ver. 2 ; then he *grounds* this affirmation, vers. 3-8, in which he first descends from piety to morality, vers. 3-5, and then comes back again from morality to piety, as at ver. 1. The first division of the Psalm, which is complete in *seven* verses, has thus a *threefold* division within itself—an introduction, and two strophes, each of the latter consisting of three verses. The thrice-repeated name of Jehovah is in unison with this.

Ver. 2. *Prove me, O Lord, and try me ; for my heart and my reins are purified*. The Psalmist had, in the preceding verse, grounded his prayer for help on his trust in God, and on his integrity. But these could form a good basis for prayer only if they were true, unfeigned, *heartfelt* ; for, as everything depends on the heart, it is at it that the law points expressively. In order, then, to represent them as such, the Psalmist calls upon God to try his innermost heart, and affirms that this trial will be most satisfactory in its results. Ps. xvii. 3 is exactly parallel. The reading in the text is צרופה, the part. paul, *my reins and my heart are purified*. The union of the feminine

singular with the plural is quite common : compare Mich. i. 9, Ew. Sm. Gr. p. 568. The connection with the first clause may either be thus explained : the Psalmist confidently exhorts God to make trial ;—for his heart has been purified, so that the trial cannot but be satisfactory to him,—when Thou makest the trial, Thou shalt find, etc. : or we may consider the two clauses as simply co-ordinate, and the first in the sense, *I need not fear the strictest scrutiny*. The reading on the margin, *אֶפְתָּח*, the imperative, is a mere conjecture, and is indebted for its existence only to the effort to produce a conformity between the two clauses. The textual reading is favoured by the *for* at the beginning of the following verse, which, with the marginal reading, could not be so easily explained.

Ver. 3. *For Thy loving-kindness was before my eyes, and I walked in Thy truth*. The *for* refers, not only to the verse, but to the whole section, vers. 3–8 ; the object of which is to establish the assertion of the Psalmist, that he did not fear the strictest scrutiny, because (or, and that) his heart is purified. To a purified heart there belongs first *sincere piety* : this the Psalmist claims for himself, here and at the end of this section, in the second half of ver. 6, and in vers. 7 and 8. The second part of purity of heart is *true righteousness* : this the Psalmist claims in vers. 4, 5, and the first half of ver. 6. The copiousness in regard to piety in the second strophe, corresponds to the brevity on the same subject in the first. The Psalmist designedly begins and ends with piety : righteousness, of which it is the cause and source, is in this way enclosed within it. The import of *I have walked in Thy truth*, is obvious from the parallel, *Thy love was before my eyes*, i.e. *I have always kept my eyes fixed upon Thy love*. Hence the truth of God,—His faithfulness to His promises,—is the domain within which the Psalmist spiritually moves, the territory on which he walks : *I continually thought upon the truth*. The inward connection between morality and piety is here clearly exhibited. Whoever has the love of God before his eyes, and His truth in his heart, or, in one word, whoever *trusts* in God (for our verse is only the development of *I have trusted in the Lord*, ver. 1), will not sit with men of falsehood, etc. Wherever the consciousness of the grace and faithfulness of God rules the life, the man will quietly expect from on high that which one living without God in the world, and acting under the impulse of his own strong natural desire

for enjoyment, will endeavour to take in his own way, and with violation of the holy commandments of God.—Expositions such as those of Hitzig, *for love of Thee was before mine eyes, and I have walked in faithfulness to Thee*, disappear of themselves, as soon as we gain a real insight into the organism of the Psalm. Besides, אמת is not “faithfulness:” חסד יהוה signifies always, “the love of God,” never, “love to God” (compare Ps. v. 8), and יהוה אמת always, “the truth of God;” compare Ps. xxv. 5. It will not do, with Maurer and others, to understand by *the truth of God, His commandments*, because חסד and אמת always refer, when used in this connection, to the love of God, and to His faithfulness in keeping His promises. Lastly, we cannot translate, with Muis: “I have Thy love and truth always before me for imitation.” For the love and the faithfulness of God are never brought before us as a pattern or example, but always only as a ground of confidence.

Ver. 4. *I sat not with men of falsehood, and with dissemblers I do not come.* The change of tense is to be carefully observed. The Preterite indicates what the Psalmist had hitherto done; the Future, what he would take care to do. It is not without design that the Psalmist begins with *falsehood*. The conviction of the truth of God raises him above all temptation to be untrue. This reference to the preceding verse clearly requires us to understand שוא in its usual sense of “lying,” “falsehood.” We cannot, therefore, with Hitzig, translate it by *crime*, nor, with others; by *vanity, worthlessness*: the parallel term is also against all such renderings, נעלמים dissemblers, qui frontem aperiunt, mentem tegunt. After *I do not come*, we are to understand, *to their meeting or assembly*, which is very easily supplied out of the first clause. Compare Genesis xlix. 6.—Ver. 5. *I hated the assembly of the evil-doers, and with the wicked I do not sit.* The import is: “I take no part in the assemblies for the ruin of others.” In ver. 4, also, the “sitting,” and the “coming,” do not refer to intercourse and conversation generally, but to the making common cause in some respect or other.

Ver. 6. *I wash mine hands in innocency, and I will compass Thine altar, O Lord.* The threefold Jehovah of the section is so divided, that it opens it, and concludes it, and stands here in the first verse of the second strophe,—the strophe of the ascent from morality to piety. *The hands* are considered, in the first clause, as the instruments of action: *innocence* is the spiritual

water; compare Ps. lxxii. 13, where *the washing of the hands in innocency* corresponds to *cleansing the heart*; Job ix. 30, where instead of *innocency* there stands “potash;” and Deut. xxi. 6, and Matt. xxvii. 34, where the hands were washed in protestation of innocence. The Psalmist describes himself as one integer vitæ scelerisque purus.—The second clause is translated by Gesenius and others: “I go round about Thy altar.” But סובב never occurs in the sense of “to go round anything.” And besides, there is no mention elsewhere of *processions round the altar*. Luther seized the true sense: “I hold fast by Thine altar, O Lord.” To *encompass*, is used of a single individual, to denote a clinging to, or strong attachment to: compare Jer. xxxi. 22; see on the passage the Christology, P. III. p. 567. The altar of the Lord, which the Psalmist approaches, is placed in opposition to the assembly of the wicked, which he shuns. The Fut. parag. may very suitably be taken in its usual sense: “I will encompass.” As the Psalmist had done it hitherto, so is he determined to continue to do it in future. The changes of the Preterite, of the common Future, and of the paragoric Future, are assuredly not accidental, and must not be overlooked. De Wette does not seem to have had a correct view of the contents of this verse: “Besides pure morality, the poet is a zealous observer of religious rites.” To this it may be replied, it is not the outward worship of God, as such, that is referred to in the clause, *I have trusted in God*, of which the passage before us is merely the development. The verse, moreover, is connected with the one following; and from that verse it is obvious that the object which the Psalmist has in view in coming to God’s altar, the thing which brings him there, is not that he may offer outward sacrifices (to this, as a matter of inferior moment, assuredly no allusion is made), as if they were meritorious in themselves, but that he may bless and praise God, and may express his *trust* in Him in the place consecrated to His service, and in the presence of His Church. Thus the expression, *I encompass Thine altar*, is very suitable after *my heart has been purified*, and stands related, as is obviously designed by the Psalmist, as cause to effect, to *I wash my hands in innocency*.

Ver. 7. *That I may cause the voice of praise to be heard, and may make known all Thy wonders.* There is no reason for translating תשמע, contracted for תשמענה, contrary to the usual import of the infinitive with ל, by *in that I tune up*. Though the con-

struction of השמיע, followed by ב, cannot without difficulty admit of the sense of *tuning up*, there is no objection here, as in Ezek. xxvii. 30, to take the sense of *to cause to be heard, to cause that others hear*, with ב as the instr. ב. The wonders of the Lord, the manifestations of His glory in guiding Israel, and especially the Psalmist, form the subject of the praise. Only he whose heart is so full of these wonders, that his mouth cannot refrain from uttering them, can offer up, in a manner worthy of being heard, the prayer, *judge me, O Lord*, and shall be made to share in *new wonders*. For wonders are designed only for *trust*, and trust calls forth praise and thanks.

Ver. 8. *O Lord, I loved the place of Thine house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.* The Psalmist proceeds to show that he has approved himself, through fulfilling the commandments of the first table, as one to whom the help of God belongs. The sum thereof, even in the law, is love to God; and this love is directed, not to a distant and abstract God, but to one made known to His people, and dwelling in the midst of them: just as a Christian can love God only in Christ, so, under the Old Testament, love to God was at the same time love to the place of His house. The honour of God is His glory, which is wherever He is, for He is the glorious God:—*where Thou dwellest, the glorious God*; compare Ex. xl. 34, 35; Num. ix. 15, 16.—De Wette maintains, that the circumstance of so much importance being attached to repairing to the sanctuary, betrays the late period of the writer. But there is assuredly nothing said of *repairing* to the sanctuary; and the idea, that as there is but one Lord, so there is but one *sanctuary*, is exceedingly suitable to the time of David. It is shown in the Beitr., P. 3, p. 54, etc., that even during the period of the Judges, the ark of the covenant, which had its place at Shiloh, was considered, as it ought to be according to the law, as the heart, the spiritual centre-point of the nation, and the Lord and the ark were viewed as inseparably connected together. As a proof that in David's time the ark of the covenant, which was brought by him to Mount Zion (compare, for example, Ps. xv. 1), occupied the same position, it is sufficient to refer to 2 Sam. xv. 25: "And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of the covenant into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and His habitation." The ark and the Lord appear here as inseparably con-

nected: to see the dwelling-place of the Lord, is at the same time to see Himself. In full accordance with this, are those Psalms, manifestly of Davidic origin, in which the expression of hope of *help* from Mount Zion so frequently occurs: compare, for example, Ps. xiv. 7, xx. 3.

The development of *I have walked in mine integrity, and trusted in the Lord*, is followed by the development of *judge me, and may I not slide*.

Ver. 9. *Take not away my soul with the wicked, and my life with men of blood.* עַי here plainly refers to עַי in vers. 4, 5. The Psalmist prays that God would not, in contradiction to His own nature, and His word grounded therein, bind him up in community of *outward condition* with those with whom he had always avoided having any communion in *thought* and *action*; that He would not visit one, who was already in a suffering condition, with that irremediable *ruin* which is the portion of the wicked—the penalty of *daring sin*, not the fatherly chastisement of *infirmity*: compare Ps. lxxxvi. 1, 2: “Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul, for I am holy: O Thou my God, save Thy servant who trusteth in Thee.” Calvin: “It might appear, at first sight, an absurd prayer, that God would not involve the righteous in destruction with the ungodly; but God, in the exercise of His fatherly indulgence, permits His people to give such free expression to their feelings, that they may, even by the exercise of prayer itself, alleviate their care. For David, in giving utterance to this wish, sets the righteous judgment of God before his eyes for the purpose of delivering himself from care and fear, inasmuch as nothing can be more strange to God than to blend together good and evil.” There is an allusion to Gen. xviii. 23, etc.

Ver. 10. *In whose hand is crime, and whose right hand is full of bribery.* Compare for the first clause, Ps. vii. 3; and for the second, Ps. xv. 5.

Ver. 11. *But I walk in mine integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me.* The reason why the Psalmist, in this second part, makes mention only of duties of the second table, is because these are more tangible, because mistakes as to one's own condition or that of others are not so easy here, and because the opposites are clear, and cannot be mistaken for each other.

Ver. 12. *My foot stands in an even place; in the assemblies will I praise the Lord.* עמרה is the prophet. Preterite. The Psalmist in faith sees his deliverance as already present. It is clear as day that the first clause refers to this, and not to righteousness. This is required by the connection, by the parallelism, by the relation in which the words stand to *may I not slide*, ver. 1 (whose fulfilment they announce), by the ordinary use of the term, Ps. xxvii. 11, cxliii. 10, and by the analogy of the Preterites in the concluding verses of those Psalms which are generally prophetic. The *even place* stands in opposition to a *difficult territory*, full of *steep cliffs* and *precipices*.—The second clause expresses, in like manner, the confident expectation of being heard and delivered:—the Lord will give me *opportunity* to praise Him. The assemblies are not private meetings of the faithful for edification, but assemblies for the public worship of God in the temple: compare vers. 6 and 7, and Ps. xxii. 26. The words, *I shall praise the Lord*, proclaim the fulfilment of the prayer, *judge me, O Lord*. The “Jehovah” completes the threefold repetition of the word in the conclusion and introduction, which, in this respect, correspond to the main body of the Psalm.

At the conclusion of the exposition it is necessary to advert to the charge of *self-righteousness*. The older expositors had already prepared the way for the charge. Amyraldus remarks: “David speaks in such high terms of his innocence and piety, that the Psalm can be fully interpreted only by considering David as a type of Christ, and by taking it for granted that he had not so much himself as Christ before his mind when he composed it.” And De Wette has openly taken notice of the subject in the way of an objection to this Psalm. The poet, he thinks, speaks with so much self-complacency and confidence, as to let it be seen that he fully considers himself entitled to a better lot than is assigned to other men. We, whose minds have been enlightened by the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of the righteousness of faith without works, are reminded by such language of the prayer of the Pharisee. The ground of this error lies in the prominence given to legal observances among the Hebrews: to these there was more attention paid than to the requirements of morality. But that this whole charge is founded upon a complete mistake, is evident from what has been said at Ps. xvii. 1, xviii. 20, and, in the introduction to the

Psalm before us, on its didactic tendency, and its connection with Ps. xxv., which, according to De Wette, "is distinguished for the most beautiful humility, and acknowledgment of unworthiness." To all this the following observations may still be added.—That the Psalmist is very far from representing himself as a spotless saint, and that the righteousness and piety of which he speaks, is as yet *to be formed*, and relates only to the *fundamental tendency* of the soul, and does not exclude manifold sins of *infirmity*, is evident, irrespective of the connection of our Psalm with the preceding one (a connection, however, which must not be impossible), from the circumstance, that the Psalmist acknowledges, as a right in itself, the suffering to which he is exposed: it is *destruction* only, not *chastisement*, that he deprecates,—this he knows to be perfectly right in itself, and to have been fully merited by him. Righteousness in *this* sense is, even in the New Testament, spoken of as the indispensable prerequisite of salvation. It is thus that we read, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" that is, they shall experience Him to be gracious. Our Psalm is a commentary on this statement, and, indeed, generally on the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Let it not be said, that though this righteousness should undoubtedly be in existence, yet it must not, on any account, be a matter of consciousness: false humility is really a lie, and cannot be acceptable to a God of truth. Such a consciousness is not incompatible with the doctrine of the righteousness of faith, except when that doctrine is misemployed as subservient to the purposes of rationalism; *ought* and *am* are separated by an immense gulf: the righteousness of faith, in the scriptural sense, is the parent, not the enemy of integrity of life. Assuredly the Christian poet sings, that he who has washed away his sins in the blood of Christ, cannot but maintain a holy walk.—The prayer of the Pharisee has nothing to do with our Psalm: the righteousness there is *imaginary*, here it is *real*; there it consists in the *careful observance of rites and ceremonies*, here it is *inward piety and outward morality*; there it is *absolute*, here it is *limited*.—Finally, though there were here the expression of inordinate self-complacency, it could not well be traced to the prevalence among the Hebrews of superior regard to the ceremonial over the moral law. For how can the Psalmist be conceived to refer to ceremonial observances, when his whole language has reference to his trust in God, to his love to God,



and to the blamelessness of his walk as the outward expression of the purity of his heart?

Instead of bringing forward such an unwarrantable charge, it would have been much more becoming to have expressed admiration at the high purity of the moral and religious feelings which pervade this Psalm, at its entire freedom from all false particularism, at its living insight into "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and at its decisive opposition to everything approaching to Pharisaism, whose fundamental error is the separation between religion and morality, accompanied with completely raw conceptions as to the former.

### PSALM XXVII.

The Lord is the Psalmist's *light* and *salvation*; therefore he may not fear, though in the midst of the greatest dangers. If he only remain an inmate in the house of God, in possession of the favour of God, he is hid; for God protects His own. Therefore, though he is in the midst of the oppressions of enemies, he is sure of deliverance and victory, vers. 1-6. The Psalmist had, in the first part, risen to heaven on the wings of faith, and, looking down from thence on the trouble and danger deep below upon the earth, *despised* them. Now he descends again, with the power which he had there acquired, into the midst of the troubles and oppressions of earth. The tone of triumph now disappears; but there still remains so much of joy, that the Psalmist, even in the midst of his melancholy and complaint, can still pray, *in the second part*, with heartfelt confidence, vers. 7-12, that God would take pity upon his trouble, and would deliver him out of the hands of those who, through artifice and force, seek his *ruin*. After these two strophes,—the one, that of confidence, the other, that of prayer; the one, that of the descent from God to trouble, the other, that of the ascent (thereby rendered possible) from trouble to God,—there follows the *conclusion* in vers. 13 and 14, which brings together within a short compass the contents of the whole Psalm, and points out what is really its *scope*: if the Psalmist place not his trust in God, he must—so great is his danger—necessarily, despair. Hence he exclaims to his soul, expressively and repeatedly, "Wait on the Lord," which forms the essence of the whole Psalm.

It will not do to subdivide the two chief divisions of the Psalm, each into two strophes of three verses, though the 4th verse would seem, at first sight, to lead us to make such an attempt. For the 6th verse draws the conclusion which it contains, not only from the 4th and 5th verses, but also from the whole preceding paragraph; and in the second part there is no break in the sense at ver. 9.

The Psalmist has evidently paid particular attention to numbers. The main body of the Psalm is complete in *twelve*,—the number of the people of the covenant: the whole Psalm contains twice *seven*,—the signature of the covenant. The word *Jehovah* is repeated six times in the first half, in manifest accordance with the six verses in each of the two chief divisions, and in reference to the twelve verses of the whole main body of the Psalm. In accordance with the doubled seven of the verses of the whole, the word *Jehovah* occurs seven times in the second half, the second strophe (7–12), and the conclusion together. If we count up the number of times the word *Jehovah* is repeated in the first strophe and the second together, we find it amounts to *ten*,—the signature of completeness. The names of God occur in the conclusion three times,—the signature of the blessing.—That the position of the name of *Jehovah* was designed, even as to most minute particulars, is evident also from the circumstance, that it *begins* and *concludes* the Psalm, and that it also marks where the first strophe ends, and the second begins. •

The situation referred to in the Psalm, is that of one who is completely surrounded by enemies, ver. 6, who in every way seek his ruin (which is the most earnest wish of their hearts), ver. 12; who is destitute of all human help, ver. 10; and who, unless God interpose, is utterly ruined, ver. 13.

The intimation given in the title, that David is the author of the Psalm, is confirmed by *internal* evidence. It is impossible to refer the Psalm to a later age than that of David, because at ver. 3 the author speaks of God hiding him in His *pavilion*, and in His *tabernacle*, and in the 6th verse, of offering unto God sacrifice in His *tabernacle*. While it is evident that the *הֵיכָל*, from the use of which in the 4th verse an argument has been drawn against the Davidic authorship of the Psalm, was applied to the holy tabernacle, as is proved by what has been said on the 5th Psalm, there cannot even be the shadow of a

proof adduced to show that, under Solomon, the temple was still called a *tabernacle* or *pavilion*. And in proof that David was the author of the Psalm, it may be said, not only in general, that among the manifold kinds of troubles, there is here, in remarkable correspondence with his experience, peculiar prominence given to distress arising from *the oppression of enemies*, but also, in particular, that the Psalmist speaks like a *warrior* borne down by *hostile armies*, and that the idea uppermost in his mind is that of a *battle* that has been waged, and of a *camp* that has been pitched against him.

All attempts to find out any particular event in the life of David, to which the Psalm may more especially be referred, have failed. And from the failure of these, we may draw the inference, either that David originally uttered the Psalm from the soul of the oppressed *righteous man*, or, that if he wrote it in reference to a particular occasion, he generalized his own experience.

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?* Calvin: "David, in laying, as it were, in the balances all the power of earth and hell, considers the whole as lighter than a feather, while God alone infinitely outweighs it all." He represents misery and trouble under the figure of darkness, and the Lord, who graciously sends help, under that of light, which enlightens the darkness: compare Micah vii. 8, "If I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light." What, therefore, he first expresses figuratively by "my light," he immediately expresses in proper language by "my salvation." The Psalmist recognises God as his light and his salvation, first, from His *word*—from the promises of Divine aid which are held out in the law to the righteous, directly and indirectly, under the form of history, in the experience of those who stand on the same ground with himself, particularly the patriarchs; and second, from his own personal *experience*—every case in which the Lord had manifested Himself as the Psalmist's salvation, has strengthened his conviction that He is so. The question, "Whom shall I," etc., throws aside, as it were, with indignation, every cause of fear. The Psalmist calls God the *strength* of his life, because He protects his life, of which his enemies seek to rob him, as

surely as the strong walls of a fortified town defy the assaults of an enemy, and afford protection to the inhabitants.

Ver. 2. *When the wicked wretches come near against me, to eat my flesh, mine opponents and my enemies against me: THEY stumble and fall.* The case is, in the first instance, as it is also at ver. 3, a *supposed* one. But it is evident from the 6th and 12th verses, that the Psalmist really was in a situation very *analogous* to this supposed one. While the Psalmist rises above *possible* dangers, he, at the same time, rises above those also that are *real*, which he therefore afterwards sets before the eye in a stronger and more defined manner, because an over-hasty glance at them, which easily assume an unreasonable importance, might have disturbed the view of the real relations of things. Luther, not wholly correctly, connects this verse with the one preceding it, by the word *wherefore*. The verse, like the one which follows it, carries forward the thought, "Whom should I fear, of whom should I be afraid, even when, *for example*, the wicked?" etc. The idea of *hostile* approach does not lie in קרב, but in על, to come near *over* any one, so that one falls upon him, sets on him. The metaphor in *to eat my flesh*, is taken from savage beasts of prey. צרי ואיבי is not in apposition to מרעים. In that case, ל is inexplicable. It is evident that this word cannot be "redundant." When it appears to stand thus, as it does in Ps. cxliv. 2, it renders the *my* more emphatic than a simple affix could do: *my deliverer to me* = MY deliverer, tenderly expressed. But in the case before us such an emphasis is unsuitable. It is necessary rather to supply בקרב, *though my opponents and enemies come near to me*: and there is the less objection to this, as קרב is elsewhere connected with ל, Job xxxiii. 22. It is not without reason that the Psalmist gives prominence to the word *evil-doers*. For he cannot expect victory over his enemies unless he stand to them in the relationship of a *righteous man to the wicked*: this was the case in all the conflicts which David had to maintain. הנה is a word of emphasis, —*they*, not I, with whom this would assuredly be the case, did not the circumstance that the Lord is my light and my salvation disturb their otherwise very accurate calculations. The Preterites כִּנְיָלוּ and נִבְּלוּ are explained from the confidence of faith.

Ver. 3. *Though an host encamp against me, yet my heart is not afraid: though war rise against me, yet in this case I am full of confidence.* This verse agrees remarkably with Ps. iii. 6.

מִחַנָּה is, in all probability, here, as at Gen. xxxii. 9, united to a feminine for the sake of the symmetry with חֶקֶם בְּזוֹת, "in this," is, "even in such circumstances, to all human appearance desperate;" compare Lev. xxvi. 27; Job i. 22. The exposition, "I trust *in this*, namely, that Thou, O Lord, art my light and my salvation," is unnecessary, because, though undoubtedly בָּטַח is generally construed with the ׀ of the object, we do repeatedly meet with it in an absolute form, in Judges xviii. 7; Jer. xii. 5; Prov. xi. 5. It is moreover opposed by the analogy of the preceding clauses, which merely expand, "I am afraid of no one," without again pointing to the *cause* of the fearlessness. "I am full of confidence," corresponds exactly to "my heart is not afraid." Luther's translation depends on this exposition: "I trust in Him," being only a free rendering.

Ver. 4. *One thing I desired of the Lord, after that I seek: 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 meditate thereon in His holy place.* The Lord is the Psalmist's light and salvation, affords him protection against all enemies and all dangers. On this account he has only one prayer, one wish,—if this be granted, happen what may,—namely, that the Lord may abide with him, in which everything else is given to him; that he may never lose His favour, or be shut out from His fellowship. For the Lord (ver. 5) protects *His own* in all dangers.—The change of tense in שָׁאַלְתִּי and אֶבְקֶשׁ, is to be carefully attended to: it indicates that this prayer and desire extend throughout the whole of the Psalmist's life. The Preterite denotes the action completed, concluded, but yet reaching unto the present time; Ew. Sm. Gr. 262 (Venema's *semper* is more correct than Schmidt's *jam olim*): the Future marks still more particularly the continuance of this effort in the present.—The prayer is a true one, only when it goes forth on the ground of effort and exertion, when the longing desire of the heart is directed towards its object.—The "dwelling in the house of the Lord," towards which the prayer and the desire are directed, is here, as in all other passages (compare Ps. xxiii. 6, xv. 1), to be understood *figuratively*, as equivalent to, "being an inmate of God's house," "to stand towards Him in a confidential relation," "to enjoy His favour." The cause of this figurative language is, that the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple itself, bore a symbolical character, represented the con-

nection between God and His people who dwelt with Him spiritually there; compare the proof of this in Part III. of the Beitr. p. 831, etc.—It is for this reason that the Psalmist desires to be, and to continue to be, an inmate in God's house. To this the words point, "That I may behold," etc.; that is, "that I may in this way behold what is inseparably connected therewith," etc. When God takes any man into the number of His *own people*, such a one beholds also His beauty, and enjoys the opportunity of meditating upon it in His sanctuary. נִצַּח יְהוָה, means always the beauty of the Lord: compare Ps. xc. 17, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," i.e. let it be made known in our experience; Zech. xi. 7.<sup>1</sup> To behold it, is to experience it, to know God as beautiful in His dealings. The expression in the 13th verse is exactly parallel: "to see the *goodness* of the Lord."—The בָּקַר means always, "to search for," Lev. xiii. 36, xxvii. 33; Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12; "to meditate on," 2 Kings xvi. 15; Prov. xx. 25, in accordance with the Chaldaic usage, and the fundamental sense of the word, "to open," "to cleave:" compare Gesenius on the word. As the word is never followed by כ of the object, the object of the inquiry and the meditation cannot therefore be contained in the בְּהִיכָלוֹ, but must thus be drawn from *what goes before*: "and meditate *thereon*," namely, on the beauty of the Lord manifested in the experience of the inmates of His house, in His holy place. The *holy place* is mentioned as the place of meditation, because there *thanks* are offered to the Lord—for the manifestations of His beauty. This exposition is confirmed by the 6th verse, where the Psalmist expresses his hope that, being delivered by the Lord, he shall offer joyful offerings in His *tabernacle*: compare also Ps. xxvi. 7, according to which the Psalmist lets the voice of *praise* be heard in the sanctuary, and makes known all God's wondrous works.—According to the usual interpretation, the Psalmist expresses a wish to be delivered from danger, to serve God undisturbed in the temple, and to enjoy the pleasure of looking upon the splendour of the sanctuary. Some translate, "that I may spend my life in the house of Jehovah, for the purpose of beholding the splendour of Jehovah (Luther: 'the beautiful service of God'), and viewing His temple" (others,

<sup>1</sup> Venema: The beauty of the Lord here denotes whatever in the Lord is sweet, pleasant, and salutary to the sinner; and therefore His virtues of goodness and grace, together with all their signs and effects.

“repairing to His temple”). This translation, in the first place, is contrary to the *usus loquendi* in three respects. It is altogether arbitrary to consider “to dwell in the house of the Lord” equivalent to “to attend it carefully,” “to abide in it;” compare against this at Ps. xxiii. 6. This difficulty is not removed by Hitzig’s violent supposition, that the Psalm was composed by a *priest*: for not even the priests dwelt in the temple. נָעַם יְהוָה is arbitrarily translated by “the splendour of the Lord;” and this is just as arbitrarily supposed to signify the splendour of His sanctuary, or His splendid service. בָּקֵר is never united with ב, and means neither “to view,” nor “to repair to.” If we interpret, *agreeably to etymology*, the clause, “to behold the beauty of the Lord,” etc., we shall be compelled to abandon the idea of outward dwelling in the house of the Lord; for that which is derived from the dwelling of the Lord, cannot be regarded as the consequence of outward presence in the temple. This exposition is, moreover, opposed by the *parallel passages* in which dwelling in the temple is spoken of: in all these, the idea is that of *spiritual* presence; compare, for example, Ps. xxiii. The fifth verse is also opposed to it. The thought of that verse, “for He protects me,” is not at all fitted to give the reason why the Psalmist wishes to be in the temple; this is clear from the fruitless attempt of De Wette to refer the “for,” with which he does not know how to begin, not to our verse, but to the first paragraph of the Psalm (vers. 1–3). It is also altogether inadmissible, if we understand *there* the “hiding in the pavilion,” and the “concealing in the tabernacle of the Lord,” in a figurative sense, to interpret literally the “dwelling in His house.” Lastly, only on the figurative view of “dwelling in the house of the Lord,” can we give any explanation of “one thing I desire of the Lord,” etc. The one thing which gives the Psalmist strength and courage against the whole world, is the favour of God; hence the one thing which he *desires* and *seeks after*, is not his bodily presence in the temple, with which in such a connection a man can have nothing to do, but the possession of the favour of God. In reality, “to dwell in the house of the Lord,” must be similar to, “to have Him for light and salvation.” This is clear, moreover, from the circumstance, that the same consequence is deduced from “the dwelling in the house of the Lord,” in ver. 5, which is deduced from “the Lord is my light and salvation” (1–5), namely,

safety against all attacks of enemies; and also from the circumstance, that in ver. 6 assurance of victory in present trouble is deduced from the two taken together, "the Lord is my light and my salvation," and, "I dwell in the house of the Lord."

Ver. 5. *For He hides me in His pavilion in the time of trouble, He covers me in the covering of His tent, He lifts me up upon a rock.* The Psalmist here gives the ground why, in view of the oppression of his enemies, "the dwelling in the house of the Lord, the possession of His favour," is sufficient for him: whom the Lord loves, him He also protects. Corresponding to the representation of the gracious relation to the Lord, under the figure of dwelling with Him in the temple, we have, in the first two clauses of this verse, the protection which is the consequence of this gracious relation, represented by the figure of a sure *place of refuge and concealment*, which the Lord affords to His persecuted people, beside Himself in His tabernacle. These two clauses have been misunderstood in two ways. First, by those who, like the Jewish expositors and Knapp, understand the words in a coarse literal sense, and suppose that David on one occasion found shelter in the holy tabernacle, and was in this manner delivered out of the hands of his enemies. This is opposed by the last clause, which must necessarily be taken in a figurative sense. Second, by those who, with De Wette, maintain that the pavilion and the tabernacle of this passage are not at all the holy place, but are only emblems of protection, taken from the master of a house, who gives protection in his house to a stranger, from some peril to which he may be exposed. This is undoubtedly the origin of the figurative expression; but that the friendly pavilion and the friendly tabernacle are the *sanctuary of the Lord*, is clear from the corresponding expression, "the house of the Lord," in ver. 4: "I have only one wish, to abide in the house of the Lord; for He hides me in His house, or His tabernacle;" and "His tabernacle" in 6th verse: "He hides me in His tabernacle; therefore shall I bring forward *thank-offerings* in His tabernacle." It will not do to refer to Ps. xxxi. 20, "Thou keepest them secretly in a pavilion;" for there it is in a pavilion, here it is in *His* pavilion. פָּנֶה, *a pavilion*, is used poetically for the *holy tabernacle* in Ps. lxxvi. 2. It has already been adverted to in the introduction, that the expression, "in His pavilion and in His tabernacle," involves in insuperable difficulty the supposition that the Psalm



was composed at a period posterior to that of David. Solomon's temple, especially, could not possibly be called "a pavilion." The name, "tabernacle," might have been carried forward from the earlier to the later sanctuary: there is, however, no proof even of this.

Ver. 6. *And now mine head shall be lifted up above all mine enemies round about, and I will offer in His tabernacle offerings of joy, I will sing and praise the Lord.* This verse concludes the first strophe: in vers. 1-5, the conviction that the Lord is the Psalmist's light and salvation, and that he dwells in the house of the Lord, gives him confidence against all conceivable dangers: *here*, in the possession of this favour of God, he is completely sure of victory in the difficulties in which he *now* finds himself. וְעַתָּה is either "and now,"—quare etiam nunc in presenti periculo,—or it may be considered as the particle of inference, "and now, since it is so (compare Ps. ii. 10, xxxix. 7), I shall triumph securely over my present enemies." On, "my head shall be lifted up," compare Ps. iii. 3. The clause, "I will offer," etc., shows that the Psalmist feels as sure of deliverance as if he had already obtained it. He is already preparing to offer *thanks* for it. *Joy-offerings* are offerings which are accompanied with rejoicings for deliverance, and are themselves matter-of-fact rejoicings. The תְּרוּעָה stands here, as in Num. xxiii. 31, and in all other passages, in the general sense of "shouts of joy:" comp. קול תְּרוּעָה in Ps. xxvi. 7. De Wette and other expositors give, "offerings of the sound of trumpets:" "the holy trumpets were blown at the burnt and thank-offerings," Num. x. 10. But this passage refers only to the public thank-offerings on holy days. We never read of trumpets being used at private offerings.

At the beginning of the second strophe, the tone changes at once. Instead of triumphant confidence, we have mournful supplication. But the last verse of the first strophe softens the transition. There the Psalmist has descended from the serene heights of heaven to the earth: from the contemplation of *possible* dangers, in which he conquers, through the aid of his heavenly helper, to whom in faith he rises, he has begun to turn to the consideration of those that are *real*. At first, the tone of triumph still continues: the danger is rather too small than too great for him. But, in proportion as he gets a nearer view of it, it becomes greater; he is terrified, and begins to sink; and

retains only so much of his early confidence as to enable him to cry out, and to say, "Lord, help me." But this is in reality a *very great deal*; and for a man who has begun to take to heart the sufferings and the dangers of this life, it is really enough. — It is in this transition from triumphant confidence to mournful supplication, that is to be found the *truth* of the Psalm, and also much of its practical power. We could not have found ourselves in it, had the tone of triumph been continued to the end. The first strophe is sufficient only for *painted* suffering.

Ver. 7. *Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice, and be gracious to me, and answer me.* In reference to קוֹל אֶרְפָּא, compare what has been said on Ps. iii. 4. The קוֹל is not redundant, it indicates a *loud* cry.

Ver. 8. *My heart always holds forth to Thee Thy word, "Seek My face:" Thy face, O Lord, I do seek.* As always, so particularly now, the heart of the Psalmist in trouble is turned towards God, expecting deliverance from Him alone; and whoever is in such a state of mind is all the more sure of being delivered by God, inasmuch as His word commands us to seek Him in trouble, and promises that those who seek shall find Him. אֲנִי and אֶבְקֶשׁ stand in the same relation to each other as שְׁאַלְתִּי and אֶבְקֶשׁ do in ver. 4: *always, and particularly now.* It is impossible to translate simply: *my heart says to Thee.* There was no need for inserting "Thy word," which we have supplied, inasmuch as the clause, "seek My face," shows by its form, that what the Psalmist says to God, is only an echo of what God has said to His people. "To seek the face of any one," is to "seek to be admitted to his presence:" compare Prov. xxix. 26, "Many seek the ruler's face." As admission into the presence is allowed only to those who enjoy the favour of the ruler, it is the mark and expression of this favour, and because it is so, is *sought after*; so, to seek the face of the Lord, is to seek to be admitted into His presence, and in reality to seek to enjoy His favour: compare 2 Sam. xxi. 1, "There was a famine in the days of David, and David sought the face of the Lord;" Ps. xxiv. 6, and cv. 4. In reality, "to seek the face of the Lord," is "to seek the Lord;" 2 Sam. xii. 16; 2 Chron. xx. 4, xv. 2. The Divine saying, to which the Psalmist here refers, occurs, though not exactly in the same terms, in Deut. iv. 29, "And ye seek from thence the Lord thy God, and thou findest Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart (compare here, 'my heart says to Thee'), and with all

thy soul." The *seeking* of the Lord, and the *finding* Him, are there placed in inseparable connection with each other. Hosea v. 15 refers, like the passage before us, to the same expression: "I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and *seek My face*: in their affliction (verbatim from Deut.) they will inquire after Me:" compare the Beitr. ii. p. 61. There, as here, "to seek the face of God," is substituted for "to seek God."—Muis, De Wette, and other interpreters, translate the first words: "my heart speaks of Thee." But, in this way, the signification of the Preterite is misunderstood: אמר with ל signifies, with a few exceptions, "to speak to some one," and the sense of, "to speak of one," is unsupported. "To seek the face of the Lord," is considered as equivalent to, "to repair to the temple." But this sense is one in which the phrase is never used; and, in the case before us, it is excluded both by the reference to the fundamental passage, and by what follows in the next verse, "*hide not Thy face*:" the whole scope and connection, moreover, are altogether opposed to any reference to repairing to the temple.—After the example of the Vulgate, "*de te dixit cor meum: require O facies mea*," Hitzig translates, "my heart speaks of Thee, *Seek Him, my face*." But, irrespective of all other considerations, the phrase בקט פני יהוה will not admit of such a rendering.

Ver. 9. *Hide not Thy face from me, drive not away Thy servant in anger, Thou who hast always been my helper; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God, my salvation.* The "hiding" of the face stands opposed to the "showing" of it, which God in His word hath promised to those who *seek* it with all their heart. The אל תט—the apoc. Fut. in Hiph.—is not to be translated, "turn not away," but, "drive not away:" compare הט, in the sense of "to set aside," "to put aside," which suits very well to the hiding of the face, in Job xxiv. 4; compare also xxxvi. 18; 2 Sam. iii. 27. "Thy servant," contains in it the ground of the prayer: "Do not act towards Thy servant as Thou actest only towards the *wicked*." This ground is given still more distinctly in what follows: "Thou who hast always been my helper." This corresponds to the expression at the conclusion, "my salvation-God;" and must therefore denote the abiding relation in which God stands to the Psalmist, on which he grounds his prayer for special deliverance. The Preterite היה, denotes past time stretching forward to the present.

Ver. 10. *For my father and my mother forsook me, and the Lord takes me up.* The Psalmist gives the reason why he had called upon the Lord for assistance so mournfully in the preceding verse: the love of God is the only love that is sure, in heaven, or on earth: the love of *men* disappears on the approach of misfortune, in which they recognise a dispensation to renounce love; but the love of God is proved most gloriously in affliction: the afflicted are above all others dear to Him.—In the clause, “father and mother have forsaken me,” the Psalmist speaks of something which *had already happened*; and the translation, “*though* they forsake me,” is inadmissible. But there is no reason why we should feel ourselves necessitated to seek for an individual reference. Every one who is in great trouble may speak in this manner. Father and mother stand as an individualizing designation of those who are united to us by the closest ties, and in whom love towards us, when we are in a state of suffering, might be expected to continue the longest. Whoever has no parents, puts his *friends* in their room. It lies deep in human nature that suffering should cool, if it does not extinguish, love: men are only too much inclined to seek in the sufferer the cause of this. This is seen in the case of the friends and the wife of Job; compare also Ps. lxxxviii. 8. The proverb, “that the unfortunate may lay their account with contempt,” is verified even in the case of nearest relatives. David had, in all probability, had experience of the instability of human love in suffering under the very form to which he here refers, and made choice of this expression in reference to his own personal experience. His parents, whom, according to 1 Sam. xxii. 3, he took care of in misfortune, were, assuredly, on many occasions (from the character of human nature, it could scarcely be otherwise), ill pleased with him by whom their peace had been to often disturbed, and he must have had to bear with many hard speeches at their hand. *The Lord takes me up*, like one who takes a weary wanderer, or a fugitive who has lost his way, into his house, and treats him kindly: compare ver. 5; Josh. xx. 4; Judges xix. 5.

Ver. 11. *Teach me, O Lord, Thy way, and lead me in an even path, because of mine enemies.* Most expositors are of opinion, that the Psalmist prays that the Lord would lead him by His Spirit and preserve him from sin. Calvin saw that this sense would not do in connection with what precedes and follows,

where the whole language is about Divine assistance against enemies. The way of the Lord here is the way of salvation: this limitation flows from the person who is speaking, for the paths of God can be only paths of safety for His servants. The *even* path forms a contrast to the stones and rocks which rendered the Psalmist's progress through life so difficult. Ps. xxv. 4 is exactly parallel, where we met with the same false exposition: compare also Ps. xxvi. 12. "Because of mine enemies," points out the cause, more fully opened up in the following verse, why the Psalmist stood so much in need of Divine guidance and help.

Ver 12. *Give me not over to the will of mine enemies; for there are false witnesses risen up against me, and such as breathe violence.* The soul of the enemies stands for their passions, because the soul is wholly absorbed by these. By "the false witnesses," and "such as breathe violence," two classes of enemies are meant: those who seek to accomplish their ardent wish to annihilate the righteous man by cunning lies and deceit, and by false and slanderous accusations; and, second, those who employ open violence.  $\text{יִפְחַד}$  is the *status constructus* of the adjective  $\text{יָפֵחַד}$ . This is to be derived not from  $\text{יִפְחַד}$ , but from the Fut. Hithp. of  $\text{פָּחַד}$ , which occurs in the same form in Hab. ii. 3: compare  $\text{יִיב}$  from  $\text{רִיב}$ . "Those who breathe violence" (not, who breathe out), are "those whose every breath is violence:" compare Prov. vi. 19, "A false witness that speaketh (lit. *breatheth*) lies;" "breathing threatenings and slaughter," Acts ix. 9; "Spirare minas" in Latin; and "*κακίας καὶ συκοφαντίας πνεῖ* in Aristoph. Knights, 435.

The conclusion now follows, summing up once more in narrow compass the contents of the Psalm, trouble and distress in the world, and hope in God.

Ver. 13. *If I had not believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living, . . .* That this verse is not to be immediately connected with what goes before, but marks the beginning of the *conclusion*, is clear from the circumstance, that whereas in the former verses God is addressed, here He is spoken of, and that this verse contains the foundation for the exhortation of the last verse, to trust in God.—Had the Psalmist brought the sentence to a conclusion, he would have added, "I must have yielded to *despair*, or I should have *been ruined*." This fatal word, however, he finds it very difficult to utter; and ere he does so, a voice within is raised, exhorting him to con-

tinue firmer and firmer in his trust in God, which he designated as his only ground of hope. Among all the passages which contain similar aposiopeses, there is none so exactly like the one before us as Gen. xxxi. 42: "Except (לֹא) the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, . . . (it would have been all over with me); for Thou wouldst have sent me away empty." Compare also Gen. i. 15; Zech. vi. 15. Ewald, p. 663. In this aposiopesis the Masorites have not been able to find their feet: they put their so-called *puncta extraordinaria* over the לֹא, which perplexed them: they are, however, just as little deserving of regard as the Keris. The old translators, with the exception of the Chaldaic, leave out לֹא altogether: no conclusion, however, ought to be drawn from this against it; they may have been of the same opinion as De Wette, who remarks, "We may very easily get quit of it, seeing it yields no very suitable sense." In favour of the genuineness of לֹא, it may be remarked, that it would certainly never occur to any one to insert it; and that, on deep reflection (such, however, as a glossarist was not likely to indulge in), it appears to be indispensably necessary to complete the sense. The bare and unconditional clause, "I believe to see," etc., is unsuitable and incongruous, after the anxious prayer of the preceding verse for deliverance from false witnesses and those who breathe violence, whose look cries out to the Psalmist that he is *lost*; and then the exhortation of the following verse implies that weakness had come over the Psalmist, and that danger had assailed him with great violence: the weakness is here, the remedy is there. טוֹב יְהוָה is explained by several interpreters as "the good things of the Lord," "His blessings and acts of kindness." Gesenius: "optima dei munera." But טוֹב יְהוָה always signifies the "goodness of God," "the goodness of His nature:" compare Ps. xxv. 7, xxxi. 19; Zech. ix. 17, where the goodness and the beauty of the Lord occur together (Chrysostom, P. 3, p. 135, 6); and this sense is especially demanded here by the corresponding clause in ver. 4, נֶעֱמַד יְהוָה. To see the goodness of the Lord, is to experience His excellence. The "land of the living" stands in opposition to "the land of the dead," or "Sheol;" compare Jer. xxxviii. 11; Ezek. xxvi. 20, xxxii. 32. The reference, revived by Claus and Stier, to the "life to come," has been completely set aside by Muis. It is assuredly in this life, ere he "go whence he shall not return.

to the land of darkness and the shadow of death," Job. x. 21, into which his enemies are on the point of sending him, that the Psalmist hopes still to see the goodness of the Lord. The writers of the Psalms are far removed from that resignation, which gives up to the *ungodly* everything on this side the grave. Their faith is far too fresh and powerful for this.

Ver. 14. The reflection, that the grace of God is his only ground of hope, and that but for it, his *own* weakness, and the fury and might of his *enemies*, would have brought him into an irremediable condition, and left him the prey of despair, gives the Psalmist occasion to exhort himself to trust in the Lord.—*Wait on the Lord: be strong, and may He strengthen thy heart; and wait upon the Lord.* The strong part of the soul speaks to the weak, as is the case throughout the whole of the 42d and 43d Psalms. We cannot entertain the idea, that the Psalmist is addressing the pious, and that he makes an application of his own experience to the case of those in similar circumstances. In this way, the connection with the 13th verse would be altogether broken. The individual who is here exhorted to trust in God, must be the same one who had there declared, that but for his trust in God he must become the victim of *despair*. Instead of, "may He strengthen thy heart," most translators have, "may thy heart get strong." But we cannot give up the usual sense of the Hiph. either here or in the passage, Ps. xxxi. 25;—these are the only two passages in which the Hiph. of *נָצַח* occurs. And the strictly grammatical translation in the passage before us, brings out a much finer meaning. The Psalmist, after having exhorted himself to be strong, directs attention to Him who alone can give the strength to comply with this exhortation. He does not express *His name*, because none but He who is the fountain of all strength can be thought of, when we speak of being strengthened. There is something very great in the expression, "be strong." Calvin: "When trembling comes upon thee, when temptation shaketh thy faith, when the feelings of thy flesh are driven hither and thither, *be not overcome*, but rather rise up with indefatigable power of mind." Nature cannot accomplish this: none but He can bring it about, who giveth might to the weary and sufficient strength to the weak. He gives not only *outward* strength, but also that which is inward: He not only gives *deliverance* to those who trust in Him, but He also *works* trust in Him.

## PSALM XXVIII.

The Psalmist first sends forth the petition that he may be heard in his prayer, remarking, that unless this be done, he is given over to *irremediable destruction*. This forms the introduction (ver. 1). After repeating this petition at the beginning of the first division, he unfolds his request, viz. that God would not entangle *him* in that destruction which is the portion of the *wicked*, and would inflict upon *these*, specially his *enemies*, the *punishment* which they deserve, vers. 2-5. He obtains assurance of *being heard*, and praises the Lord as the Saviour of His anointed one and of His people, vers. 6-8. The *conclusion*, ver. 9, contains the prayer that the Lord would reveal Himself in *all future time*, as He had done *on the present occasion*, as the Saviour of His people.

That ver. 1 is to be considered as *the introduction*, and ver. 9, which corresponds to it, as *the conclusion*, is obvious, not only from the contents, but also from the circumstance that the assurance of being heard (ver. 6), which verbally is appended to the *prayer*, does not belong to the first but to the second verse. The main division of the Psalm thus consists of *seven* verses. This number is again divided, as it frequently is, into *a four* and *a three*. The strophe of *confidence* points to the Mosaic blessing, not only by the *three verses*, but also by the *threefold* repetition of the word Jchovah. Any further remarks on the formal arrangement we shall make in the introduction to Ps. xxix., which, along with the one now before us, makes up one pair. We shall there find the arrangement, 1. 7. 1., proposed here, confirmed; and, at the same time, we shall see why Jchovah occurs here, in all, five times.

The *situation* is that of one who is in great danger, and is utterly lost unless the Lord help (ver. 1); who prays *earnestly* for deliverance (vers. 2-6); and is threatened with *destruction* (ver. 3).

The *person who speaks* is a *righteous man* (ver. 3), the Lord's anointed (ver. 8); and whose cause also is identical with that of *the people* (vers. 8, 9). It is here that lies the difference between this Psalm and Psalm xxvi. The situation and the fundamental thought in both are—that God cannot bind up together in similarity of outward fate those who, inwardly are



different, and that the lot of the wicked cannot be the same as that of the righteous. There, it is the oppressed *righteous man* in general that speaks: here, it is specially the oppressed *righteous King*.

The contents of the Psalm throughout apply very well to David during the time of Absalom's rebellion, when, to all appearance, the design of God was that the lots of the righteous and the wicked should be exchanged; the people were brought into danger on account of the king; and the enemies especially were those who "spoke peace to their neighbours, while mischief was in their hearts." But, in the absence of all special historical circumstances, it is in the highest degree probable, that the design of David, in composing the Psalm, was to draw out a form of prayer, grounded on his own experience at this time, for the use of his successors who should walk in the footsteps of his righteousness: compare Ps. xviii. 50. If this be the case, it is manifest, at the same time, that the Psalm in reality possesses a didactic and hortatory character:—the righteous king, in a time of severe trouble, desires to set before his eyes the righteous judgment of God, which will not permit the righteous to be involved in the lot of the wicked, nor the wicked to go unpunished; to be calm and composed in dependence on this; and to wait with confident expectation for the help of God. This didactic tendency is particularly obvious in the 5th verse, where the form of address to God is abandoned.

The assertion of Ewald and Hitzig, that the portion from the 6th to the 9th verse was first written after the danger had gone past, is based on the false idea, that the Psalm has an individual character; proceeds from mistaking the nature of the transitions in the Psalm; and overlooks the truth, that faith is the substance—the *ὑπόστασις*—of things hoped for, Heb. xi. 1.

Ver. 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I cry, my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like those who go down to hell.* The expression, "my rock," points to the immutability, the certainty, and the inviolable faithfulness of God: compare Ps. xviii. 1, 3, xix. 14, p. 342. This address contains in it the ground of the prayer, "be not silent." The faithful God, who chastises His people, but does not give them over to death, cannot be *silent* when circumstances are such, that it

may with truth be said, that to be silent is the same as to bring destruction. The "be not silent *from* me" needs nothing to be supplied. The idea of "removing to a distance from" is clearly involved in that of "silence;" and, on the other hand, every answer implies the idea of an approach and a nearness of God. "Lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like," etc.; literally, "lest Thou be silent from me, and I become like," etc., equivalent to, "lest, in the great danger to which I am now exposed, I utterly perish." Calvin: nullus sum, si a me discesseris; nisi tu unius succurras, perii. בּוֹר, *a pit*, is used in the sense of the grave, Isa. xiv. 19; of Sheol, Isa. xiv. 15 and Ps. xxx. 3. We are manifestly to take it always in this sense in the common phrase יוֹרְרֵי בּוֹר. For this phrase designates everywhere "the dead." But as we must here translate, "those who go down to the pit," not, "those who have gone down," we must think of the long journey to Sheol, and not of the short journey to the grave.

Ver. 2. *Hear the voice of my supplication when I cry to Thee, when I lift my hands to Thy holy oracle.* The lifting of the hands was the usual attitude of prayer, not only among the Israelites,—comp. Ex. ix: 29, xvii. 11, 12; 1 Kings viii. 54; Ps. lxxiii. 4; Lam. iii. 41; 1 Tim. ii. 8,—but also among the heathen: comp. the passages in Iken, Dissert. i. p. 220. The lifting up of the hands symbolized the lifting up of the heart. That the Psalmist lifted up his hands, not to heaven, but to the most holy place, where was the ark of the covenant (comp. 1 Kings vi. 19), is to be understood in the same sense in which we call upon God in Christ. God had, in loving condescension to the weakness of His people, who were unable to rise to that which is unseen, except through the medium of something visible, taken, as it were, a form in the midst of them, in anticipation of the incarnation of His Son, by which this want, which lies deep in the nature of man, was satisfied in a manner infinitely more real: compare the Beitr. P. iii. p. 629, and at Ps. xxvi. 8. That by דְּבִיר is meant the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, admits of no doubt. The derivation, however, and the import of the word, may be disputed. According to the ancient expositors, the most holy place was so termed, because it was from it that God returned answers to those who consulted Him: Aquila and Symmachus, χρηματιστήριον; Jerome, λαλητήριον. Modern expositors again, after the example of Simon and Iken, Diss. i. p. 214, give the word the sense of "the back part:" compare

particularly Gesenius's Thes. It appears, however, that this exposition owes its introduction merely to the ground which has been assigned for considering the primary sense of כַּפֶּרֶת to be "a covering,"—viz. awe for what is deep. Etymologically, there can be no objection to the old exposition. דְּבִיר is, properly, "what is said," and secondarily, "the place where it is said;" just as אִסִּיף is, properly, "what is gathered," and then, "the season when the fruits are gathered." The appellation given to this part—the place where God speaks to His people, or converses with them—stands in most beautiful harmony with the appellation given to the whole, אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, the tabernacle of *meeting*, where God meets with His people. The most holy place is, as it were, the audience-chamber. But the proper basis of this exposition, which its opponents pass over altogether in silence, is given in the passages, Num. vii. 89, "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of one *speaking with him* from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark of testimony," and Ex. xxv. 22. Finally, the signification given by the old expositors answers remarkably well to the passage before us:—this passage alone is sufficient to refute the objection of Iken, that דְּבִיר is never used in a connection in which there is any reference to a speaking on the part of God. The Psalmist had prayed that God would not be silent to him—that He would hear his supplication. What, in these circumstances, could be more natural, than that he should stretch out his hands to the place whence God *speaks* with His people, and that he should, with full confidence, look for an answer from thence to his cry for help?

Ver. 3. *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace to their neighbours, and have mischief in their hearts.* There are marks of quotation to be supplied at the beginning of this verse. There are here given the *contents* of the prayer which God has been called upon in the preceding verses to hear: "that God would not deliver the Psalmist His servant over to destruction, inasmuch as, according to His own word, that is the portion only of the wicked." מִשֵּׁךְ is, "to draw," "to draw away," "to carry off:" comp. Job xxiv. 22; Ezek. xxxii. 20. In the parallel passage, Ps. xxvi. 9, the expression used is אֶל תִּסְמַךְ. The description of the character of the wicked, with whom the Psalmist desires

that he might not be united in community of lot, is borrowed from that of his enemies. "David," says Venema, "tacitly transfers these crimes to his enemies, whose real character was what is here described." The description corresponds rather to domestic villains, who endeavour by the arts of dissimulation to gain their object, such as Absalom and his party, than to public enemies, whose weapons are those of open violence. The wicked are described as men who conduct themselves as they ought to do only as to their lips, but are hostile in their intentions and their deeds towards him, who, both by the special appointment of God and by the laws of nature, is their *neighbour*, united to them by that common bond by which all the members of the Church of God are united to each other, or even, in addition to this, by the ties of tenderest affection. Between רַע and רֵעָ there is a significant paronomasia.

Ver. 4. *Give them according to their conduct, and according to the wickedness of their actions: give them according to the work of their hands; make good to them their portion.* This is the second petition of the Psalmist. The first was, "that the Lord would not punish him with the wicked;" the second, which is here, is, "that He would not let the wicked go unpunished." *Them*, that is, the wicked and evil-doers, particularly *my enemies*. The objection which has been taken against this prayer of the Psalmist, and so many others of a similar kind, is most assuredly an ungrounded one, inasmuch as the Psalmist prays that God would do nothing more than what He necessarily must do according to His own nature. "He practises the *jus talionis* according to His own righteousness. Justice reverberates: the unrighteous blow which I aim at another recoils, according to the moral government of the world, back upon myself." Compare Matt. vii. 2. On מַל compare at Ps. vii. 4.

Ver. 5. *Because they regard not the operation of the Lord, nor the work of His hand, therefore shall He destroy them and not build them.* The Psalmist recalls to his recollection the *objective* ground of his petitions, on which his confidence of being heard depends: "It is not without thought that I have directed this prayer to God; for, inasmuch as they regard not, etc., the Lord will destroy them and not build them up. I pray thus for that only, which the Lord will do and must do." The operation of the Lord, and the work of His hands, is the exercise of His righteous judgments against the ungodly. Com

pare Ps. xcii. 5; Isa. v. 12. Not to regard *these*, is the sure way to become ourselves involved in these judgments. For he who does not fear the judgment of God, gives himself over to iniquity. That the not regarding the operation of the Lord comes here into notice, in so far as it produces wickedness, is obvious from the manifest reference to the preceding verse: "The operation of the Lord, and the work of His hands," corresponds to "their conduct, and the work of their hands." The idea conveyed consequently is, "because they do not regard the judgment of the Lord, and therefore give themselves over, without fear, to wickedness." Several interpreters give, "may He destroy them." But with the optative form, we can see no reason why the address to God should have been given up. We cannot substitute for "not to build," "not to build up again." Nothing is more common than to find what had been expressed positively, repeated, for the sake of strengthening the impression, in a negative form.

Prayer, according to the will of God, is followed now in natural order by confidence. The Psalmist obtains from the holy place the answer for which he had prayed, and makes this known in joyful expressions.

Ver. 6. *Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications.* The words of the second verse are here designedly repeated, only the imperative is changed into the Preterite. The Lord be thanked, exclaims the Psalmist joyfully, *I now possess* what I have prayed for.

Ver. 7. *The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I have been helped: therefore my heart rejoices; and with my song I will praise Him.* The sense is: "The Lord is my Saviour: He has manifested Himself as such by the help which He has granted me: therefore," etc. מִשִּׁירִי is properly, "out of my song;" in so far as the song is the fountain of the praise that goes out from it. אֲהַדְרֵנּוּ is the full poetic form, with the characteristic He of the Hiphil retained.

Ver. 8. *The Lord is their strength, and He is the saving stronghold of His anointed one.* There follows here the song spoken of in the preceding verse, so that we are to read this verse as if with marks of quotation. The reason why we have "their," without any noun going before to which it might refer, obviously is, that the king in the preceding verses had prayed for himself, not so much as an individual, but as a king, and as

thus one with his people. Compare ver. 9. The Psalmist so sunk his personality in his official position, and so identified himself with his people, that he wrote *simpliciter* ל instead of ל. When the Psalmist, in the second clause, applies to himself the title of "the anointed of the Lord" (compare Ps. xviii. 50), he must thereby be understood as expressly asserting, that the help which had been vouchsafed to him as king was therefore imparted in him to the people of God. On the plu. ל, compare at Ps. xviii. 50.

In the conclusion, the Psalmist prays that the Lord would do *eternally* that which He had now done.

Ver. 9. *Help Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance, and feed them, and lift them up for ever.* On the first clause, compare the fundamental passage, Deut. ix. 29: "They are Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest out by Thy mighty power and Thine outstretched arm." On "feed them," compare Ps. xxiii. 1. On "lift them up," 2 Sam. v. 12. Several expositors render "carry them," and refer to Isa. xl. 11. But ל never signifies in Pi. "to carry," not even in Isa. lxiii. 9, but always "to lift up," "to lift on high," "to prop up."

## PSALM XXIX.

The key to the interpretation of this Psalm is to be found in its conclusion: "The Lord sitteth enthroned as King for ever: the Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people through peace." From this it is obvious that the Psalm has no *personal* reference, but that the Psalmist has sung it from *the soul of the people*, the congregation of God, and for their edification. Hence also it is obvious that the *situation* is that of the suffering, the danger, and the hostile oppression of the people of God, and of the fear of the little flock in view of the might of the world. Hence it is clear from what point of view we are to contemplate all that goes before. The words, "the Lord has might," which form the sum of the whole Psalm, are introduced merely as the foundation for the declaration, "the Lord will give might." The majesty of God in nature is described only for this reason:—that the Church may thus see that there is a shield ready prepared for her against all anxious cares.

In the *introduction*, vers. 1 and 2, the heavenly servants of God are exhorted to give to the Lord glory and strength. In the *main division*, vers. 3-9, the Psalmist describes the manifestation of Divine glory and strength which forms the basis of this exhortation. As the result of this manifestation—the revelation of the glory of God in a thunder-storm—the celestial servants of God comply with the exhortation given them in the 1st and 2d verses: *in His temple every one says, "Glory!"* The *conclusion*, in vers. 10 and 11, expresses the hope and confidence which sprung up for the Church of God out of this manifestation of the Divine glory and majesty: if her God is *such* a God, her own powerlessness need give her no further concern.

There is no ground for the idea, that the Psalm was occasioned by the sight of a thunder-storm. "The freshness of the painting, the vigorous conceptions, and the rapid transitions of the whole," will give rise to this view only when low ideas are entertained of the power of *poetry*. According to the analogy of Ps. xvii. and Job xxxvii. vers. 1-5, where, in the case of similar descriptions of nature, no one ever thought of any outward occasion; it was *in spirit* that David here also heard the "voice of God."

The Psalm before us gives us a very instructive example as to how we ought to interpret the language of nature, and to turn it to our own edification. Every thunder-storm, every hurricane, should tell us that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church of God, or against ourselves, if we are really members of that Church and servants of God. Everything depends on our being sure of our *condition*. The revelations of God in nature speak a *double language*: they speak to every man according to his own spiritual condition. The thunder-storm, for example, is a matter-of-fact *promise* to the pious—to the Church of God; while to the ungodly—to the world—it is a matter-of-fact *threatening*. Whoever feels assured of the love of God, sees, in the manifestation of the omnipotence of God, a ground of consolation; whereas to those who are conscious of being objects of the Divine displeasure, the sentiment inspired by such appearances is that of terror.

The artistic arrangement of the Psalm is seen not only in the circumstance, that both the introduction and the conclusion consist each of two verses, and that the description of the thunder-storm occupies exactly seven verses, but also in the positions

of the *names of God*. In the introduction and conclusion the name Jehovah occurs in every clause, that is, eight times in all,—which can scarcely be accidental. In the main body, the “voice of the Lord” occurs seven times (Luther has introduced an eighth voice of the Lord), which, as the number of verses is exactly the same, seven, cannot be regarded as accidental. As the seven thunders of the Apocalypse (x. 3, 4) were obviously borrowed from this Psalm, it is clear that attention must have been directed very early to these appearances. In like manner, it can scarcely be considered accidental that the name Jehovah should occur, in all, in the main division, ten times. This outward signature of completion indicates that it is complete and concluded within itself. Köster’s idea, that the art displayed in the arrangement is too high for David, requires no further refutation, after the discoveries which we have made in the preceding Psalms. In fact, it is characteristic of David to aim at the highest possible kind of artistic arrangement.

The Psalm before us is united to the 28th, and forms with it one pair. The *fundamental idea* in both Psalms is the same, and is expressed in both, to all appearance designedly, almost in the same words: compare “the Lord is their strength,” Ps. xxviii. 8, with “the Lord will give strength to His people,” xxix. 11, where the relation of *לַיְהוָה* to *לְעַמּוֹ* is specially noticeable. The differences also render still more evident the design to draw attention to the connection between the two Psalms, than even an unlimited agreement, which might have been accidental. The distinction between the two Psalms is, that the Psalmist in the 28th has to do with domestic, and here with foreign enemies. Then, there is a very striking agreement in the arrangement of the two Psalms: in the one, there is an introduction and a conclusion of one verse; in both, a main division of seven verses; and in the other, an introduction and a conclusion of two verses. Further, the nine verses of the 28th, and the eleven of the 29th Psalm, make up together two decades, the verse which is wanting in the one Psalm being supplied from the other. Finally, the five repetitions of the name Jehovah in the 28th mark it out as a half—as incomplete: compare on the number five as the signature of incompleteness, the divided ten, Bähr. Symb. P. I. p. 183. Still more remarkable is the circumstance, that the five repetitions of the name Jehovah in the preceding Psalm, the eight repetitions of it in the introduction and con-



clusion of this one, together with the seven repetitions of "the voice of God," make up the number twenty, which is exactly the number of verses in both Psalms.

Those who are opposed to the idea of attaching any importance to the numbers in the arrangement of the Psalms, and are suspicious as to the existence of any design in the positions of the names of God, and of the juxtaposition of two Psalms as one pair, through which the same, or a similar train of thought may run (although as to this latter point none of the ancient expositors felt any difficulty), and are disposed to bring forward the common objection of artificial arrangement or conceit, would do well to bestow a thorough examination on those two Psalms: those who do so, will scarcely fail of obtaining new light on the matter.

Ver. 1. *Give to the Lord, ye sons of God, give to the Lord glory and strength.* The call addressed to the celestial servants of God, to praise His glory and strength, directs attention to the glory of the manifestations thereof set forth in what follows. If the highest creatures of God, the angels, must humble themselves in the dust before these manifestations; and if they feel themselves, in consequence thereof, called upon to express their devout acknowledgment, and to give utterance to liveliest praise; should not the servants of God on earth be led thereby to banish from their minds all care and all fear, deeply impressed by a sense of the presence of Him "who appointeth to the clouds, to the air, and to the wind, their way, their course, their path, and who will find out a way where His people can walk?" The Bne Elin are the same as those who, in other passages, are called Bne Elohim. In both cases, the explanation of the plural seems to lie in the idea, that the Divine unity is a unity, not of poverty, but of riches. In the one true God all that fulness is concentrated which the heathens divided among their many gods. He alone is *instar multorum*. Elohim and Elin are the abbreviated forms of אֱלֹהִים and אֱלִים: compare Deut. x. 17, "For Jehovah, your God, He is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords;" Dan. xi. 36; Ps. cxxxvi. 2, 3. As this use of the plural of majesty is very widely spread throughout the language (see on this subject the "Dissertation on the names of God in the Pentateuch, in the Beitr."), there is no reason for adopting the

idea of Ewald, that the plural is expressed doubled in the compound—an idea opposed by all the parallel passages, and which it is impossible on logical grounds to justify.—Very many of the older expositors understand by the Bne Elim the kings and the mighty men of the earth, referring to Ps. xvi. 7, where, instead of Bne Elim, we find “kindreds of the people” introduced. This exposition has been partially revived by Köster. “Sons of God,” he supposes, is an expression which may be applied to whatever is powerful: the angels in heaven, kings on the earth. But, that the mention of angels is peculiarly suitable here, appears from comparing the really parallel passages, Ps. ciii. 20, 21: “Bless the Lord, ye His angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word: bless the Lord, ye His hosts, ye ministers of His that do His pleasure:” and Isa. vi., where the seraphim who stand round the throne of God, sing, *Holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory*, and ascribe to the Lord glory and might. Not only is Bne Elohim, but also Bne Elim, used in other passages very decidedly of angels: see Ps. lxxxix. 6. On the other hand, neither Bne Elim, nor Bne Elohim, nor Bne Eljon, is ever used of the mighty men of the earth: for in Ps. lxxxii. 6, to which Köster appeals, it is distinctly denied that the mighty ones of the earth are the sons of God: “I thought that ye were gods, and sons of the Highest, all of you; but ye shall die as men.” Finally, the 9th verse is decisive against the reference to the mighty ones of the earth, where everything in the temple of God says, “Glory!” It is impossible here to think of the earthly temple; for the rulers of the nations assuredly are not there. Nothing but the heavenly sanctuary can be meant, in which the angels make known the praise of God. Most assuredly, however, there is an indirect reference made, in the passage before us, to the potentates of earth; and it is to this that the application made in Ps. xvi. 7, etc., of the first and second verses, refers:—the exhortation to the angels to praise the glory and the might of God, is intended to convince the Church of God that she has very little reason to quail before the potentates of earth,—the glory and the might of her God, which even the angels devoutly praise, is a sufficient ground of confidence in the face of a whole hostile world.—Several expositors take “glory” here in the sense of praise, and נָּ in the sense of renown. But, that נָּכֹד is rather to be understood of “glory,” is evident from

the clause, "Give to the Lord the glory of His name;" and, that *ny* signifies here, as it always does, "strength," is evident from the connection in which the expression, "the Lord will give strength to His people," in the conclusion, stands to the clause, "Give to the Lord strength," at the opening of the Psalm: He has strength, therefore He will give strength. This exposition, moreover, is refuted by the parallel passage, Ps. xvi. 6, 7: "Strength is in His holy place; give to the Lord strength;" and by the fundamental passage, Deut. xxxii. 3: "Ascribe ye greatness to our God." In the fundamental passage, and in those derived from it, "to give," is "to ascribe glory, strength, greatness to God," "to recognise these as present," "to glorify Him accordingly." The design of vers. 1-9 is to awaken the mind to a vivid perception of the truth, that the Lord *possesses* glory and strength: from this the inference which concludes the whole is drawn, that the Lord will give strength to His people.

Ver. 2. *Give to the Lord the glory of His name; adore the Lord in holy attire.* The name of the Lord is considered as the product of His deeds: the glory of His name is the glory which belongs to Him as resulting from His glorious manifestations and deeds. The expression, "in holy attire," is equivalent in sense to, "with deep reverence." As the earthly priests, before engaging in the service of God, must put off their usual clothing, and clothe themselves in *holy garments* (the expression is used in this sense in 2 Chron. xx. 21: compare also Ps. cx. 3, xvi. 9), so must the angels, His servants in heaven, do the same. Their usual clothing is too mean to allow of their drawing near in it to their holy and exalted Lord, and testifying that reverence with which the glorious manifestations of His omnipotence have filled their minds.

There follows now the description of that revelation of the glory of God in a thunder-storm, which formed the basis of the preceding call to the angels to do Him homage.

Ver. 3. *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.* The "Jehovah" of the first clause, is supplemented in the second, and the "water" in the third. Thunder is "the voice of the Lord" only for believers. An ungodly Hebrew would assuredly not consider it as such. Every gentle breath of air is also the voice of the Lord: all nature proclaims His glory: God speaks in everything to men. But because our ears are dull of hear-

ing, that especially is called His voice, by which He speaks in loudest tones, and proclaims to us, in spite of all unwillingness on our part to hear, His omnipotence and His majesty. The "waters" are the clouds, "the waters which are above the firmament," Gen. i. 7; "the dark waters," Ps. xviii. 11; "the multitude of waters," Jer. x. 13: compare Ps. lxxvii. 17, Job xxxvi. 28. Several interpreters apply the term to the waters of the sea and rivers. But the word "many," in the last clause, is decisive against this: it shows that the waters form a part of the storm itself; for only in this case is their multiplicity of importance to the object in view, inasmuch as it serves to bring forward the greatness of God in the storm. The designation of God as "the God of glory," points back to vers. 1, 2, and shows that the description which begins in our verse, serves as a basis to the exhortation which is there addressed to the angels to praise the glory of God.

Ver. 4. *The voice of the Lord is power: the voice of the Lord is majesty.* It is generally remarked that  $\alpha$  with the substantive supplies the place of the adjective. But in this way the article is left altogether out of sight. The  $\alpha$  in this passage must rather be considered as indicating that in which the being of anything consists; Ewald's Sm. Gr. p. 528. The voice of God has its essence in the power and majesty which appear in it: it is, as it were, power and majesty itself.

Ver. 5. *The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.* The lightning is here, as it is also at ver. 7, and Ex. ix. 28, considered as an appendix to the thunder. The cedar is named, as the queen of the forest; and in the way of climax, the cedars of Lebanon are introduced in the second clause, because they are the stateliest of all. With the same omnipotence with which God breaks the cedars of Lebanon, He can also annihilate the *mighty ones* of earth (frequently represented by this emblem), who threaten to endanger His Church.

Ver. 6. *And He maketh them to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young buffalo.* The "them" must be referred to the cedars. As the skipping of the *trees*, however, is only the consequence of the skipping of the *hills*, these also are mentioned in the second clause. Sirion is, according to Deut. iii. 9, the Sidonian name of Hermon. Terms of rare occurrence and of antiquated character are congenial to poetry. Jo. Arndt has,

with great accuracy, expressed the practical import of this verse : "Just as in great storms the hills quiver and quake before the thunder, so our beloved God is able by His word to make the proud and lofty quiver and quake." Schmid, in like manner : "sic etiam hostes Jehovæ cum omni sua potentia coram ipso irato dissilient, fulminibus judiciorum ejus disjecti."

Ver. 7. *The voice of the Lord heweth with flames of fire.* The brevity of this verse depicts the rapid motion of the lightning, which comes in here as the wounding instrument in the hands of the voice of the Lord, the weapon with which it adds *destruction* to *terror*. The verb חָצַב means always to hew, never to cleave, or to scatter; so that the expositions, "He scatters," "He casts abroad," i.e. "fiery thunderbolts," are to be rejected : compare Hos. vi. 5; Isa. li. 9, where חָצַב is used in speaking of an avenging God. לִהְיוֹת אֵשׁ is in the accusative (comp. Ew. § 512), "with flames of fire." It stands related to the voice of God, as what is particular does to what is general.

Ver. 8. *The voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness to quiver; the voice of the Lord maketh the wilderness of Kadesh to quiver.* Expositors ask why the *wilderness* is represented as quivering by the thunder. The only correct answer is, that the wilderness gives the impression of something great, immense, terrible : compare Deut. i. 19, "The great and terrible wilderness;" viii. 15, "Who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, where were serpents, and scorpions, and drought;" Deut. xxxii. 10, "He found him in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness." The wilderness is, next to the hills, the most appropriate symbol of the power of the world : its quivering before the voice of the Lord must convince every pious mind of the folly of giving way to fear before the might of the world. In this way we see the reason why, as an ascending climax, in the second clause the particularly horrible wilderness of Kadesh, the northern part of the Arabian desert, is introduced. It forms, as it were, one pair with Lebanon and Sirion. The symbols of the power of the world on the north and south of the Lord's land are overwhelmed with terror at His voice. This parallelism with Lebanon explains why that part of the terrible Arabian desert is mentioned which borders immediately on the land of Canaan.

Ver. 9. *The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to cast their young, and strips the forest; and in His temple everything says :*

*Glory.* The opposition between the *hinds* and the *forest* tends to impress upon our minds, that the Lord, in a thunder-storm, makes known His power over *every* created thing; that which is great shall not escape Him because of its greatness, nor that which is little because of its littleness. יחלל, Pil. from חל, can only be translated, "makes them bring forth;" i.e. "so terrifies them with the loud peals of thunder, that they cast their young before the time:" this is evident from Job xxxix. 1; compare also 1 Sam. iv. 19. According to ver. 3 of Job xxxix. the hinds bring forth their young *easily*; so that there can be no room for the idea of Bochart and others being referred to here, that they bring forth with difficulty. "It strips the forests," is, it strips them of their attire, their branches and leaves. The Chaldee has correctly given the sense of the last words: In His upper sanctuary all His servants praise His glory before Him. A common exposition is, The whole *universe*, heaven, and earth, and sea, together with all that they contain, are awed by the glory of the Lord, as seen in a thunder-storm, and feel themselves called upon to praise Him. But the only correct point in this exposition, is its opposition to another, according to which, by "the temple," is meant "the temple at Jerusalem." The temple of God, however, is much rather, according to xi. 4, xviii. 6, His heavenly dwelling-place, and those who there praise His glory are the angels. The correctness of this interpretation appears also from vers. 1 and 2. The angels in this verse, after they have seen the Divine glory, comply with the exhortation which the Psalmist had addressed to them, grounded upon that manifestation. If they, the highest of all God's creatures, are filled with holy awe before the Divine glory, how great must that glory be, and how easily may the Church of God, which is sure of His protection, trample all danger and all fear under foot! He, whom angels praise, must impart to His people unassailable protection against all their enemies. The suffix in כלו, refers back to the temple,—its entirety, the entirety of that which is therein, or of those who are therein. כלו never occurs without a preceding noun to which the suffix refers. כבוד, which is to be considered as a *cru*, "Glory!" has its commentary in the words, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory," of the seraphim in Isaiah; where the holiness denotes not specially moral excellence, but also the infinite superiority

of God to all created beings, His glory. Compare what has been said on Ps. xxii. 3.

Several expositors have endeavoured to exhibit a regular progression of thought in the description of the thunder-storm: first, the storm is seen in the *sky* (ver. 3, 4); then it attacks the *hills* (5, 6); and, last of all, its influence is felt in the *plains* (8). But this progression is altogether forced. Verse 4th contains a description of the voice of the Lord, which is wholly general: it is impossible to see, according to this view, in what way verse 7th is brought in; and in verse 8th, it is not the *plains* that are mentioned, but the *wilderness* with its frequently lofty hills.

There follows now, in vers. 10 and 11, the application: If God is the God of glory, His people need be afraid of nothing.

Ver. 10. *The Lord sat at the deluge, and therefore the Lord sits as King for ever.* As the Lord on one occasion manifested Himself at the deluge as King and Judge, in the *destruction* which He prepared for the ungodly, and in the *deliverance* which He afforded to those who feared Him, therefore will He also,—this confidence the Psalmist had acquired from the majestic sight which he had seen with the eye of his mind, and from the “glory!” of the sons of God, which had penetrated the very depths of his soul,—throughout all eternity, manifest Himself as King and Judge in the deliverance of His people, and in the destruction of all His and their enemies. *Sitting* is the position peculiar to a king and judge: comp. John iv. 12; Rev. xviii. 7; see also Ges. Thes. on the word. It is more accurately defined by the second clause: “as king” belongs in reality also to the first. That the ל in *למבול* has reference to *time*, at the deluge—compare on this usage, Ew. Sm. Gr. 527; Ges. Thes. 730; the ל is, in such cases, as it is always, the particle of proximity—appears from the corresponding לעולם, in which the usage of ל seems to have given rise to its usage in *למבול*. The article points to a particular flood, and directs attention manifestly to the deluge—an event which would occur all the more suitably to the mind of the Psalmist, that the Lord had, on that occasion, manifested His glory in the tempest. This is evident, as *מבול* is used only of the deluge, Gen. vi. 17, vii. 6, 7, etc.—a word which, even at the time when the Pentateuch was composed, had disappeared from the ordinary language, and had been handed down as a kind of proper noun

for that particular flood, with the memory of it, from the times of old. The Fut. with the V. conv. נִבְּרָה, intimates, that what is to come, develops itself out of what has already been.—Other translations of the verse are to be rejected; such as: the Lord sits on the floods; He directs the inundations which follow a thunder-storm, and guides them; or, He is enthroned *above* the floods of the sky. But, in addition to the Preterite and the נִבְּרָה, it may be urged, that into the conclusion of the Psalm, where an *application* only is appropriate, an unsuitable element is introduced.

Ver. 11. *The Lord shall give strength to His people; the Lord shall bless His people with peace.* The second clause points to the beginning and end of the Mosaic blessing: "May the Lord bless thee—and give thee peace." Jo. Arnd remarks on the first clause: "This is glorious consolation against the contempt and persecutions of poor Christians, the little flock, which has no outward protection in the world, no outward strength. But the Holy Ghost imparts consolation, and says, The world shall not give strength and power to the Church, but the Lord; as-king Jehosaphat comforted himself when he said, 'With them is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord of Hosts;' and John, 'He who is in us, is greater than he who is in the world.'"

## PSALM XXX.

This Psalm, which consists in all of twelve verses, may be naturally divided into two parts—an *introduction* of five, and a *main body* of seven verses. In the *introduction*, the Psalmist takes a rapid survey of the subject of his poem: the Lord has graciously delivered him out of great danger, danger which threatened him with *entire destruction*, vers. 1-3; then, intimating that he sings for the *Church*, he exhorts all the pious to praise the glory of God, His forgiving mercy, which had been manifested to him on this occasion, vers. 4 and 5. In the *detail*, he first gives an account of his *misfortune*: prosperity had produced in him pride and false confidence; out of this sinful state he had been roused by a judgment which God had permitted to befall him, vers. 6, 7. He next tells us what the *prayer* was which he had offered up to God from the depths of that misery



into which he had been sunk by Hîm in punishment of his pride, vers. 8-10; narrates the *deliverance* which, in answer to this prayer, had been vouchsafed to him, ver. 11; and concludes with a promise of eternal *gratitude* for the deliverance thus wrought out, ver. 12.

The *occasion* for which the Psalm was written is announced in the title: "A Psalm, a song of the dedication of the house of David." We cannot, with De Wette (Introd. p. 32), consider these words as designative of the *tune*,—as if the Psalm were to be sung to a tune which was generally sung at the dedication of houses. The words do not admit this interpretation; a song of the dedication of a house cannot possibly be a song like the song of the dedication of a house; the contents possess nothing at all similar to what would be the contents of a poem composed for such an occasion. Every attempt has failed to prove that the titles ever indicate the tune to which the Psalms are to be sung; and this idea has simply originated in the difficulty felt in endeavouring to give a satisfactory explanation. In like manner, we must reject the explanation given by Calvin, Grotius, and others, that the house is the palace of David; and that the Psalm was composed when David consecrated his house a second time by a religious service, after it had been polluted by Absalom. The term חֲנֻכָּה is never used except as applicable to the consecration of a *new* building; and the contents of the Psalm do not at all accord with such an occasion. The *house* clearly is the house of God, the temple. And the title indicates that the Psalm was sung at the dedication by David of the site of the future temple, as recorded in 2 Sam. xxiv. and 1 Chron. xxv. The object of the Psalm is very correctly given by Venema: "That the remembrance might be perpetuated to all posterity of the occasion on which the site of the temple to be erected by Solomon was selected, and the temple itself consecrated by a sign from heaven."

Against this view nothing of any consequence can be urged, except that the dedication of the future site of the temple, by the erection of an altar, can scarcely be called the dedication of a house. But really one does not see why it may not. That a house of God may be where there are no splendid buildings, but only a simple *altar*, is evident from Gen. xxviii. 22; and that the house of the Lord was really here present, is unquestionably evident from 1 Chron. xxi. 26: "And David built there an altar

unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire, upon the altar of burnt-offering." The place was, in the fullest sense of the word, even in David's time, a *sanctuary*, yea, *the sanctuary*, and therefore *the house* of God; and in reality there was nothing added to its dignity by Solomon. The Lord had declared it to be His house; He had granted David the forgiveness of his sin on the condition of his erecting the altar; He had, at its dedication, consecrated it by fire from heaven. David recognised in this altar the sanctuary of the Lord; he sacrificed there not only once, but he used it ever afterwards as a place of sacrifice. Besides all this, we have one passage in which it is expressly said, that David gave to that place the name of *the house of the Lord*,—an appellation which he would regard as all the more appropriate from the circumstance, that he foresaw that the form would very soon be superadded to the reality, in that edifice which he knew would be completed by his son, and in the preparation for which he henceforth himself engaged with so much alacrity: compare 1 Chron. xxii. 2, etc. The passage is 1 Chron. xxii. 1: "And David said, This is the house of the Lord, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel."

On the other hand, and in favour of this interpretation, we have the contents of the Psalm, in exact agreement with 2 Sam. xxiv. and 1 Chron. xxi. First, there is an agreement in reference to *David's sin*. Here, as there, it was no outward sin on the part of David that brought down the Divine judgment: it was a sin which lay concealed within the recesses of the heart. His sin here, as there, was *pride*, which led him to consider what had been given him by the Lord as acquired by his own might, and as a lasting possession. Here David expressly tells us this, in the 7th verse, where his sin is represented as consisting in his saying, in his prosperity, "I shall never be moved." Buddeus, who remarks on the numbering of the people, "The thing itself shows that David, in the whole matter, was actuated by pride and vain-glory," takes a correct view of the matter, in opposition to that of J. D. Michaelis, who cannot understand what a sin is, which lies wholly within the heart: and by others who follow him, such as Keil, on Chronicles, p. 351, who maintains that the numbering of the people was for *military* purposes, was like an enrolment for service, and proceeded from that love of conquest which David had acquired in his old age, in consequence of

having brought so many wars to a successful termination. It is expressly said in 2 Sam. xxiv. 2, that David's design was "to take the number of the people;" and the remark of Joab in ver. 3 renders it evident that David, in so doing, was seeking to gratify his pride and vain-glory much in the same way that an avaricious man gratifies his avarice by counting his gold. It is clearly evident from Ex. xxx. 12, that the numbering of the people, which is in itself an action entirely innocent, and in some circumstances absolutely necessary, may very easily become a sin through pride. The *punishment* also shows that the essence of the sin was pride: quia David multitudine populi superbire voluit, ideo Deus eum diminutione populi punivit. Thenius, in his remarks on the passage, has shown clearly, that it is only by a false interpretation that 2 Sam. xxiv. 5 can be made to favour the view taken by J. D. Michaelis.—Further, the calamity spoken of is one which came upon the Psalmist after a long season of peace and prosperity, vers. 6, 7. This was the case at the numbering of the people. The pride, which prompted David to that act, had been induced by prosperity.—The calamity referred to in the Psalm was *very severe*, but it was of *short duration*: the pain was quickly and suddenly changed into joy; compare ver. 2, ver. 11, and especially ver. 5: "Weeping lasts for an evening, and in the morning there is joy." Such was exactly the case at the numbering of the people. The calamity—which so rent the heart of David, that, in a state in which it might be said that he was rather dead than alive, he besought the Lord to make an end of it, at the expense of *his own life*—came suddenly to a close, after it had lasted less than one entire day. The calamity, according to 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, "lasted from morning till the time of *meeting*." That by this, we are to understand, "the evening religious assembly," *i.e.* "till the time of the evening sacrifice" (1 Kings xviii. 36, comp. with ver. 29; 2 Kings xvi. 15), is clear from the context. Of the two religious assemblies of the day, the first is excluded by the expression, "from the morning." The interpretation given by many, "till the time appointed," is inadmissible, inasmuch as with the morning only a part of the same day can be contrasted, and, from the succeeding context, it is evident that the judgment did *not* last till the time appointed by God, but was *shortened* in consequence of David's repentance.—The punishment, according to ver. 7 of our Psalm.

was one which broke the *power of the kingdom*. This was the case at the numbering of the people. The *enemy*, the usual instrument of Divine judgments in the Psalms, especially in those that were composed by David, comes into notice here only as *rejoicing* over the calamity of the Psalmist—an expression which indicates simply his presence; and this is in accordance with 2 Sam. xxiv. 13, where, among the three evils submitted to David's choice, we find this, "that he was to flee three months before his enemies while they pursued him."—Here, as there, the *deliverance* followed in immediate connection with the *prayer* of David.—Verse 11, "Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness," may be compared with 1 Chron. xxi. 16, "Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces." Lastly, verse 4th indicates, in accordance with our view of the title, that the Psalm was prepared for the purpose of being used in public worship.

Our Psalm affords a very remarkable proof of the correctness and originality of the Titles. The circumstances above adverted to, are so very far from being obvious, that the title could not possibly have been framed from a later combination thereof.

The idea, arbitrarily entertained by Hitzig, that the Psalm was composed by Jeremiah, is refuted by the obvious allusions to it in the song of Hezekiah, as recorded in the 38th chapter of Isaiah: compare vers. 18 and 19 of that chapter, with the 9th verse of this Psalm.

The forgiving mercy of God towards His own people is expressly pointed out in ver. 5 as the *kernel* of the Psalm. It is very remarkable that, previous to the laying of the material foundation of the temple, this should have been pointed out by God Himself, as the spiritual basis on which the temple was to rest. David comes forth in this Psalm, as the interpreter of this announcement,—an announcement implied in the procedure adopted on the occasion by God.

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Ver. 1. *I wilt exalt Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast exalted me, and hast not permitted my foes to rejoice over me.* Muis: "*I will praise thee*," is followed in the second clause by the *ground*, why he desires to praise God: and he expands this in the two follow-

ing verses, for the purpose of showing how *great* is his obligation to praise Him." The three verses are bound together as one whole, by the thrice-repeated address to God. The first clause, "I will *exalt* Thee," stands in manifest reference to the second, "because Thou hast *exalted* me." Calvin: "Because he was, as it were, exalted from the grave to the vital air, he promises that he will exalt the name of God. For as God exalts on high by His hand when we are sunk in the deep, so it is, on the other hand, our duty to exalt His praise with heart and lips." The term דלה, properly to *draw water*, is explained by the circumstance, that the calamity is represented under the figure of a *deep well*, into which the Psalmist had sunk. That we are not to dream of a literal rendering, is manifest from the 3d verse, "Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave;" and from ver. 2, where "Thou hast drawn me up" corresponds to "Thou hast healed me." שׂמח with ל' designates, according to the connection, *malicious pleasure*. It signifies, properly, to rejoice at any one, so that the joy pertains to him, or bears reference to him. David's enemies, like those of every pious king, were the numerous enemies of the Lord,—*the ungodly*: compare 2 Sam. xii. 14, "Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to *the enemies of the Lord* to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." As these had hitherto contemplated with *envy* the previous manifestations of the grace of God towards him, so now they derived a peculiar gratification from the calamity with which he had been visited. They hoped that he would now be utterly destroyed—a consummation which they had in vain looked for in the days of Absalom. This hope was frustrated, when they saw that God had forgiven the infirmity of His repentant servant, and that He did not destroy him along with the ungodly.

Ver. 2. *O Lord, my God, I cried to Thee, and Thou didst heal me.* Every severe suffering appears under the figure of a sickness, and the Lord, who removes it, under the figure of a physician. - Compare Isa. vi. 10; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. "To heal," here, is explained by the "helping" of ver. 10, and the "gladdening" of ver. 11. To conclude from the expression, "Thou didst heal me," that David had been literally ill of a bodily disease, would be as absurd as to conclude from the expression, "Thou hast drawn me out," of the 1st verse, that he had fallen into a well.

Ver. 3. *O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from hell; Thou hast brought me alive from among those who go down to the pit.* David had been brought near death, through grief, on account of the sufferings in which his criminal conduct had involved his people: compare on Ps. vi. 6, 7. He was, as it were, dead, though still literally alive: compare 2 Cor. i. 10. Calvin: "He thought that he could not otherwise adequately describe the greatness of the favour of God, than by comparing the darkness of that time to that of the grave and the pit." In reference to יִרְדֵּי בֹר, compare on Ps. xxviii. 1. "From those," is "taking me out of the number of those." The marginal reading יִרְדֵּי מִי, "from my going down," that is, "so that I may not go down," is to be decidedly rejected. For the infinitive of ירד is always ירד (compare ver. 9), and the Psalmist represents himself in the first clause as one who had already sunk to Sheol. The Masorites made the change because they could not understand how the Psalmist reckoned himself among the dead.

After this short glance at the circumstances, there follows in the 4th and 5th verses the announcement of the *kernel* of the doctrine which they contain, which extends far beyond the range of individual and personal experience, and is of importance to the whole community of believers. These are exhorted to concur in the praise of the Psalmist for the deliverance vouchsafed to him, because it gloriously illustrates the nature of God.

Ver. 4. *Sing to the Lord, ye saints of His, and praise His holy memorial.* The memorial of the Lord is what presents itself to the mind when we think of Him; therefore, everything by which He makes known His nature,—His historically manifested properties, His character as exhibited in His acts. Were He the *hidden God*, He would have no name, no memorial. The fundamental passage is Ex. iii. 15: "This (viz. Jehovah, the God of your fathers) is My name for ever, and My memorial unto all generations,"—that is, I shall always from this time make Myself known as possessed of this property, so that it shall not be possible for men to name Me except by it, or to think of Me except according to it. Compare Isa. xxvi. 8; Ps. cxxxv. 13, xcvi. 12; Hos. xii. 6. The addition קְרָא presents us with the *contents* of the memorial. The holiness of God is, in this passage also, His infinite elevation above all created being: compare on Ps. xxii. 3. This the Lord manifests in the most glorious manner, in the "being compassionate, gracious, and

merciful." Compare Hos. xi. 9, where, in like manner, the forbearance and the grace of God are represented as the outgoing of His holiness. What is mentioned here in two words as *the holy memorial* of God, is set before us in a more expanded form in the 5th verse. The historical character of God, as the Holy One, rich in forgiveness, and infinitely elevated above all human passion, had been manifested in the experience of David. This furnished an opportunity for calling upon the whole Church to praise Him in this aspect. What the Lord does in the first instance to an individual, pertains for ever to the whole Church; and the people of God ought joyfully to avail themselves of every such opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Ver. 5. *For His anger brings on a moment, His favour life; weeping in the evening remaineth over the night, and in the morning joy is there.* This verse gives the basis of the exhortation to praise the Lord, and especially His holiness. That בְּאַף is not to be translated, "*during His anger*," but, "*through His anger*," is obvious from the opposite term, "*through His favour*:" compare the בְּרַחוּם in ver. 7. The literal rendering is: "Because a moment (is) through His anger, life through His favour:" the import is: "Because through His anger there comes only one sorrowful moment, and then there comes again life through His favour." The "*moment*" is defined by the connection and the parallelism to be a *sorrowful* one. The *life* is to be explained neither as *bare* life, nor simpliciter as *deliverance*. It includes both,—life in the proper sense, and deliverance: compare on Ps. xvii. 11. It is explained, on the one hand, by ver. 3, where the Psalmist says, that the Lord had brought him back to life from the *death* into which he had as good as fallen, and by the "*my blood*," in ver. 9th; and on the other hand, by ver. 11, and by the *parallel* term "*joy*." God delivers His people from apparent death, and bestows upon them deliverance. Mere life could not be called life; it would only be *death* in disguise.—From attempting to bring out the most exact parallelism possible, and from not at the same time observing that the רגע is defined by the connection to be a moment of *sorrow*, denoting suitably the opposite of חיים, critics have been led into two false expositions. Several, like the Septuagint and Hitzig, force out of רגע a false sense: "*sudden death* lies in His anger." Most, however, display their ingenuity on חיים. It is

made to denote *the whole of life*: "His anger lasts only *one moment*; His favour, on the other hand, diffuses happiness among His people throughout their *whole lifetime*." But then, *לעולם* never occurs as equivalent to "all the days of life;" it is rather used throughout the Psalms in opposition to death, in the full sense of that term: compare, for example, xvi. 11, xxxiv. 12, xxxvi. 9. Even in the *second* clause, there is nothing said of the long continuance of the deliverance, of which the Psalmist could as yet know nothing, but only of the short duration of the suffering and of the sudden transition to joy. The same observation may be applied to vers. 2 and 11.—In the second half of the verse, *weeping* is personified, and represented by the figure of a wanderer, who leaves in the morning the lodging into which he had entered the preceding evening. After him another guest arrives, viz. *JOY*. *לֵךְ* can refer only to the first clause: in the second, the substantive verb must be supplied.—The contents of the verse are applicable to those only who are exhorted in the 4th verse to praise the glory of God therein represented, which forms the ground of their joyful hope and of their patience in affliction, viz. the pious. The Divine judgments are frequently *annihilating* in their character to the *ungodly*: in their case, joy never follows weeping.

There follows after the introduction a more full and distinct description, on the one hand, of the distress which David by his own sin had brought upon himself; and, on the other, of the grace of God which had wrought out his deliverance.

Ver. 6. *And I said in my security, I shall never be moved.* Calvin: "An effeminate indolence had stolen over his spirit, so that he was disinclined to prayer, and had no sense of his dependence upon Divine grace, but trusted too much to frail transitory prosperity." The "speaking" here, is the speaking of the *heart*. There is no necessity arising from this passage for supposing that there is another form of the noun *שָׁלוֹם*, instead of the usual one, *שָׁלוֹה*: compare on the dropping of the feminine termination before the suffixes, Hitzig on Hos. xiii. 2. The phrase itself, "in my security," may be understood either as equivalent to "when I was prosperous" (Luther), or as indicating *that carnal security of the soul* which is also caused by worldly prosperity, as in Prov. i. 32, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them," and the adj. in Ezek. xxiii. 42. In favour of this last interpretation it may be urged, that the words, except when



considered in this view, are not sufficiently explicit. It is only from the *spirit* in which they are spoken that they have a sinful character. Considered in themselves, they might be taken as an expression of *living faith*.—The deepest insight into the dangers of prosperity, and the necessity which thence arises for affliction, had previously been exhibited in the *law*: compare, for example, Deut. xxxii. 15, “But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation:” but especially Deut. viii. 11–18, where almost every word agrees exactly with the case before us: “Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and thine heart be lifted up, and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for He it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.” Besides Israel (compare Hos. xiii. 16, “According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me”) and David, we have in the Old Testament a remarkable example of the dangers of prosperity in the case of Hezekiah, who stood so nobly when in adversity. These dangers are not only incident to worldly prosperity, but are also to be dreaded in a season of spiritual enjoyment. J. Arnd says: “Behold! we have here a very affecting warning in the example of beloved David, which should teach us to fear God during our days of prosperity, and never to be confident, or to put our dependence on earthly things. How did the prophets preach against the mighty kings and nations in their prophecies against Babylon and others! All those mighty nations, cities, and kings who depended on their own might and riches, have been broken and laid waste, and levelled with the ground; while, on the other hand, all who acted humbly, feared God, and cherished a sense of dependence on His grace, have been maintained, and shall continue to exist for ever. The sentence also is to be understood in a spiritual sense: many a one is so strong in faith, so spiritually minded, so joyful, so full of confidence, that he bids defiance to the devil and the world, and says, with David, ‘I will not fear though hundreds of thousands were encamped against me.’ But when our beloved God tries us a little, when He withdraws from us His grace, O then all is over with us, and we are ready to sink

into hell, and to give up all for lost. This God does, that we may become acquainted with our own weakness, and may know that we are entirely dependent on Divine grace." The Berleb. Bib.: "A change is necessary, in order that the soul may be brought to know that its firmness is entirely dependent on the strength which God has imparted. If its beautiful day had no evening, if its sun were never darkened, the soul would infallibly ascribe all to its own power and care. But as soon as God withdraws His sensible co-operation, evening and darkness destroy its beautiful day: and it then knows that everything comes from this source and sun, and that everything proceeds from the will of God, and through the working of His grace, without any merit on our own part at all."

Ver. 7. *O Lord, through Thy mercy Thou hadst imparted strength to my mountain: Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was confounded.* David complains of his folly, in that it was necessary for him to learn by misfortune that his prosperity was nothing else than a gift of Divine grace, the continuance of which did not depend on any power in its possessor, but on its heavenly Author. The verse may be thus paraphrased: "I have learned by painful experience that the power of my kingdom had its root in Thy favour; for, when Thou didst withdraw Thy grace, I was in a miserable condition, and felt myself to be irretrievably lost." It is of importance to compare the *history* here. How speedily were all the foolish ideas, which led David to number the people, dissipated, when the Divine judgments broke in upon him! נתתי, with the accusative of the thing and the dative of the person, is "to appoint anything to any one:" compare 2 Chron. xxxiii. 8, "The land which I have appointed for your fathers;"—in the parallel passage, 2 Kings xxi. 8, it is נתן, "gave." The "mountain" is in general a striking emblem of dominion. But there was in the case before us a particular reason why the Psalmist selected this figure. A mountain was the centre, and therefore the natural symbol, of David's kingdom: compare 2 Sam. v. 9, "And David dwelt in the fort, and called it the City of David." On the top of the high and steep eminence, in the *ἄνω πόλις*, the royal city was situated (Neh. iii. 25), which was termed the King's upper house. Its situation must have rendered it a place of great security. This is evident from the contemptuous language used by the Jebusites when David was

endeavouring to obtain possession of it. They insinuated that the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend it. Micah iv. 8 is exactly parallel to our passage. The prophet employs the hill of the daughter of Zion, and specially the tower of the city built upon it, as an emblem of the dominion of the seed of David: compare Christol. P. III. p. 273. Those passages are analogous, in which the hill of Sion appears as the symbol of the kingdom of God, on account of the sanctuary erected upon it: Isa. ii. 3; Ps. lxxiii. 17, etc. Hence the expression, "Thou hast imparted strength to my mountain," is, "Thou hast imparted strength to my kingdom:" compare 2 Sam. v. 12, "And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had *exalted his kingdom*." Those expositions are to be rejected in which the mountain is considered as symbolical either of security, or of dignity and greatness. Neither security nor dignity can have strength imparted to them. According to our exposition, the passage stands in remarkable agreement with the *history*. The Divine judgment, which followed the numbering of the people, destroyed to a great extent the strength of the kingdom.

There follows now (vers. 8-10) the prayer which David, after he had been brought to a right state of mind, offered up to God as the fruit of the Divine chastisement. Calvin: "David, who had hitherto been sound asleep, is suddenly alarmed, and begins to cry to God. For as iron, when it has become rusty through long rest, cannot again be made use of till it has passed anew through the fire, and been struck again with the hammer, so, when carnal confidence has obtained the mastery, it is impossible for any man to address himself in right earnest to prayer, until he has been struck by the cross, and made fit for the work."

Ver. 8. *To Thee, O Lord, I cried; and I supplicated the Lord for His grace.* Several expositors consider this verse as expressive of future time, and consequently read it with marks of quotation, as if it formed part of the prayer. This is the view taken by Luther: "I will call upon Thee, O Lord; I will supplicate the Lord." But in opposition to this, it may be urged, that, in the second clause, God is not addressed, but is spoken of. Hence it is better to interpret the future, as arising from the living realization of the events which should take place in it.

Ver. 9. "*What profit is there to Thee in my blood, that I*

*should go down to the grave? Will dost praise Thee? will it make known Thy truth?*" The two first questions (literally, "What gain is there in my blood? What gain hast Thou if Thou spill my blood, if Thou suffer me to die; or in my going down to the grave?") are answered in the two verses which follow. God would have *very little* profit. He would be deprived of the praise of the Psalmist, who, in the midst of all his weakness, had continued to be His servant, and whose praise consequently had been pleasant to Him: compare the parallel passage, Ps. vi. 5. אֱמֶנָה is neither "grace," nor "faithfulness," nor "friendship," but, as always, "truth." Prominence is here given to that attribute of God which the Psalmist will praise, if God does not give him over to death: compare the song of Hezekiah in Isa. xxxviii. 19, "The living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known Thy truth;" and ver. 18: "For the grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot make known Thy truth." God would be chargeable with *untruth*, were He to punish His own people with irremediable destruction, after having declared in His word His readiness to forgive their infirmities on their sincere repentance.—1 Chron. ii. 14–17 shows how exactly these words suit the situation to which we suppose them to refer. David had made an offer of his own life, for the deliverance of his people, to the angel with the drawn sword, whom he beheld with eyes which had been opened by a sense of his guilt. Even this offer shows that he looked upon himself as rather dead than alive. The sufferings of his people, of which he himself had been the cause, pierced his heart so severely, that he believed he must have died had they been prolonged.

Ver. 10. "*Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me; Lord, be my helper.*"

David, after repeating his prayer, tells us that he had been heard. Ver. 11. *Thou turnedst for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.* פָּז is a hair garment, which mourners put on: it was, as it were, the *robe of penitence* in which they were led through suffering to self-examination, and through it to humiliation, under the mighty hand of God, to the acknowledgment of their sin, and to penitent prayer for forgiveness.

The conclusion consists of promises of *thanks*.

Ver. 12. *In order that glory may praise Thee, and not be silent; O Lord, my God, I will praise Thee for ever.* Several translators give: "for this reason," etc. But למה, when joined to verbs, never signifies "for this reason," but always, "in order that:" and this signification, as Calvin saw, is here even more suitable than any other. As David, in ver. 9, had grounded his prayer for deliverance on the plea that otherwise he would not have it in his power to praise God, so now he sets forth the praise of God as the final aim of the deliverance which had been actually wrought out for him. And what a motive was there in this for David not to become weary in praising God! The "glory" indicates what value God puts upon the praises of the Psalmist. He is made after the image of God, there is something divine in him: compare at Ps. vii. 5, xvi. 9. The expression, "in order that glory may praise Thee," is, "in order that my soul may praise Thee, which is glory; or, whose praise is pleasant to Thee, because it is glory." We are not to think of an elision of the suffix, which *never* takes place. The reference to the Psalmist, that the glory which is to praise God belongs to him, comes out from the connection. The "for ever," indicates that the Psalmist will set no limits to the praise of God. In reality, it corresponds to "all the days of our life" of Hiezekiah, in the 20th verse.

### PSALM XXXI.

After the Psalmist has shortly set forth his *prayer*, and indicated the *basis* on which it rests, in the introduction (ver. 1), he brings forward the *latter* of these very prominently in the *first division* (vers. 2-8): the Lord *may, must, and will* help him in his trouble, because He is *his* God. With confidence thus acquired from the consideration of the general relationship of God towards him, he proceeds, in the *second division* (vers. 9-18), more immediately to the trouble itself, which he *describes* at length in the *first half* of this part (vers. 9-13), and then in the *second half* (vers. 14-18) he brings it to God. In the *third division* (vers. 19-21) the Psalmist obtains from God the heart-felt assurance of help, and extols loudly the goodness of God towards His own people. A *conclusion* (ver. 22) sums up in a few words the personal experience of the Psalmist; and an

*appendix* (vers. 23, 24) unfolds the *lesson* which the Church ought to learn from this narrative:—all the pious should be led thereby to love God, and confidently to trust in Him in the time of trouble; for, as the example of the Psalmist shows, He will not fail to manifest Himself as faithful to His people.

This Psalm also is distinguished by an *elaborate formal arrangement*. The main body is governed by the numbers 3, 7, and 10, and is completed in two decades, if we reckon together the three verses of the third and the seven of the first part, which are intimately related to each other:—in the first, we have confidence *anticipating* an answer; and in the third, confidence *resting* on the inward response of God. The second decade is divided into two parts of five verses each. If we add the *conclusion* and the *introduction*, it appears that the Psalm is an alphabetical one in point of numbers. There is also an evident attempt at alphabetical arrangement as regards the first letters of the verses in the paragraph from ver. 8–12. If we add the *application*, the verses amount to 24,—the doubled twelve,—the signature of the people of the covenant.

Several abortive attempts have been made to find out a *particular historical occasion* for the Psalm. It represents, as Cocceius has well remarked, the perpetual conflict which believers and the Church have to maintain in this world, and the deliverance and victory by which that conflict is ever anew followed. The Psalmist does not speak in *his own person*, but in the person of *every righteous man* who finds himself engaged in severe warfare. The want of all special historical reference speaks in favour of this view. Then the *language* of the Psalm is *exceedingly easy*; while in those called forth by individual suffering, the style is more or less *involved*. In like manner, there is the fact, that there are in this Psalm several reminiscences from other Psalms which had proceeded from a heart in a state of great emotion. Last of all, there is the alphabetical arrangement. All alphabetical Psalms have a general character.

That *Jeremiah* found the Psalm suitable to his circumstances, and drew consolation from it, is evident, besides other facts, from chap. xx. 10, where we find the very peculiar language of the first half of the 13th verse repeated word for word. Modern expositors, entirely misunderstanding the relation subsisting between Jeremiah and the more ancient sacred writings, and particularly the Psalms, have, from the simple fact of the above

agreement, drawn the conclusion that he was the *author* of the Psalm. The conclusion is just as valid as would be the inference that it had been composed by our Saviour, because He made use of the language of the 5th verse on the cross. The more general reasons—such as those drawn from the sameness in point of spirit, the union of complaint and hope, the elegiac mood, etc.—do not suggest Jeremiah any more than any other believer under the Old Testament dispensation. There is, moreover, not the shadow of a reason for setting aside the superscription, which expressly announces the Psalm to have been David's.

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First, the Introduction in ver. 1. *In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness.* The Psalmist prays for something which God must grant. His prayer rises on the firm foundation of *his faith*, which God may not put to shame; and of *God's righteousness*, which renders it impossible that the lots of the righteous and the wicked should be interchanged. On "Let me never be ashamed," the Berleb. Bib. correctly remarks: "Which would be the case, wert Thou not to fulfil my desire and prayer;" and Venema: "He shows that he feels himself to be in such a situation, that he must either be immediately delivered, or put to shame for ever." To be put to shame *now*, is the same thing as to be put to shame *for ever*; for matters have come to the very last extremity with the Psalmist: compare vers. 9-13, particularly the words, "They devise to take away my *life*," with which this description of the trouble concludes, and, "Deliver me *speedily*," of ver. 2. Now the servants of God, notwithstanding all their weaknesses, are not put to shame *for ever*. God may, yea, must visit His people with transitory suffering; but He cannot be God, and give them over to *destruction*. This is the part only of the wicked, not of those who put their trust in God. It is utterly impossible to substitute "goodness" for "righteousness." The only question is, whether the prominent idea intended here to be conveyed is faithfulness in fulfilling promises, or justice in dispensing to each one according to his works. In favour of the latter view, we have the mention made of the *righteous* in ver. 18; of *them that fear God*, in ver. 19; of *those who trust in God*, ver. 6, as the objects of the Divine assistance; and tho

corresponding expression in the verse before us itself, in *Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust*. The righteousness of God demands that He should not give over to destruction (as is the case with the wicked scoffers) *those who trust in Him*—it being of course understood that it is a *real, heartfelt* trust that is meant, such a trust as springs from a *pure conscience*: compare at Ps. xviii. 1; Ps. xxvi.

The first division is from ver. 2 to ver. 8. The Psalmist utters the prayer to God for deliverance, grounds it upon the inward relation in which he stands to God, and expresses his assurance of being heard.

Ver. 2. *Bow down Thine ear to me, deliver me speedily: be a strong rock to me, and a fortress to help me*. Of the two elements contained in the Introduction,—the Prayer and its Basis,—we have the first here, and the second in ver. 3. Jo. Arnd: “O God, Thou hearest such light tones, that Thou hearest even my sigh! Ah! delay not too long! I have no temporal defence, no place of strength and safety; be Thou my castle and stronghold. Here we learn how the children of God ought to speak to their beloved Father, namely, as friend to friend, or as a child to his father: Ah! my beloved Father, bow down Thine ear to me. See, this is what faith, what child-like love and confidence does! It embraces the Lord, and falls upon His neck! O Lord, Thou knowest, and Thou alone art acquainted with my trouble: to Thee alone will I complain, and speak, as it were, secretly into Thy ear.” It is of the nature of fervent prayer to realize the presence of God in the most lively manner; so that, in the prayers of the godly of the Old Testament, even before the incarnation of the Word, He took, as it were, flesh and blood. Hence it is that, in the Psalms, we find the strongest possible instances of what have been termed anthropomorphisms and anthropopathies. The non-existence of the anthropomorphisms of *feeling* is just as objectionable, yea, more so, than the existence of the anthropomorphisms of *dogma*, which are met at the threshold of the Old Testament by the law forbidding images—a law which is based on the absolute *spirituality* of God. Aversion to anthropomorphisms of feeling, or inability to make use of them in a way consistent with inward truth, is the result of practical atheism. “A strong rock and a fortress” is literally a rock of security, and a house of a mountain-top: compare Ps. xviii. 2.



Ver. 3. *For Thou art my rock and my fortress, and for Thy name's sake Thou wilt lead me and guide me.* The Psalmist had, in the preceding verse, prayed to God that He *would be* his rock and fortress; and he now grounds this prayer on the fact, that the Lord *is* in reality his rock and fortress, because he *knew* Him as such, by the faith which God never *puts to shame*. God must, in the particular case, necessarily help him, because He stands towards him in the general relation of a helper. Hence we see how little ground Koester has for maintaining that the "for" is illogical, and for drawing from this his conclusion that the Psalm is a compilation. The "for" refers to *both* clauses of the verse. Even in the second clause, the special thing to which the Psalmist lays claim, is referred back to its necessity. Not to allow trouble to darken consciousness, is one of the highest and most difficult tasks set before sufferers. —The expression, "for Thy name's sake," is equivalent to, "for the sake of Thy historically manifested glory," viz. "Thy righteousness" of ver. 1: compare at Ps. xxiii. 3. The words תַּחַתִּי and תְּהַלֵּנִי (compare on the meaning of נָהַל, Ps. xxii. 2) are to be considered as expressive, not of *prayer* (Luther: "Wilt Thou not lead and guide me?"), but of *hope*. This is evident from the connection of the verse with what precedes, and from what follows, when the Psalmist passes from hope to *confidence*. The prayer of the preceding verse, "that the Lord would deliver the Psalmist," is here based on the consideration, "that the Lord will deliver him for His name's sake."

Ver. 4. *Thou wilt lead me out of the net which they laid for me, for Thou art my strength.* Ver. 5. *Into Thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou redeemest me, God of truth.* The Preterite, פָּדִיתָ, is to be taken in the prophetic sense, as expressive of confident *hope*, and stands like the Preterite in the 7th and 8th verses. The *basis* of this confidence is pointed out in the designation of God as *the God of truth*: "God of truth" corresponds to "my strength," in the preceding verse. That God is a God of truth, affords security for deliverance, inasmuch as He has revealed Himself in His word as the righteous rewarder; so that He would not be *acting in accordance with truth*, were He not to help.—Our Lord uttered on the cross the words of the first half of the verse before us; and this circumstance led many of the old expositors to apply the whole Psalm directly to the Messiah. Huss repeated frequently on the way to the stake

the words: "Into Thine hands I commend my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, my Lord Jesus, God of truth."

Ver. 6. *I hate those who regard lying vanities, and I trust in the Lord.* The Psalmist had in the preceding verse rested his hope of deliverance on Jehovah—the God of truth. In the verse before us he expands this thought. He does not, like the ungodly world, which he hates, put his trust in deceitful vanities, in idols, which cannot afford the assistance which they promise to their votaries: he places his trust in the Lord, the I AM, the God of truth, who performs what He promises; and therefore he is sure of deliverance. The emphasis does not lie on the *trust*, but on the *object* of the trust. Many expositors substitute אֲנִי אֶשְׂנֵא, "Thou hatest," instead of אֲנִי אֶשְׂנֵא; but the sense does not suit the connection, and Ps. xvi. 4 and xxvi. 5 are in favour of the first person. אֲנִי, in the sense of, "to wait upon anything," occurs in Hos. iv. 10, and Zech. xi. 11. הַבְּלִיָּה, "vanities," is applied to idols in Deut. xxxii. 21, in parallelism with אֵלִים: and also in Jonah ii. 9; Jer. x. 3, 15, 19. That it refers here primarily to idols in the proper sense, is evident from comparing Ps. xvi. 2-5. The remark of Calvin, however, is substantially perfectly correct: "All those vain hopes which we invent for ourselves, and which withdraw our trust from God, David calls vanities, and even vanities of nothingness or of lies, because they delude and deceive us, though they feed us for a long while with their mighty boastings." הַבְּלִיָּה stands in opposition to הוּא of the preceding verse—the I AM, the pure and absolute entity, in opposition to the nonentity; and שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר, "the lie," is opposed to אֱמֶת, "the truth." They are in themselves nothing, and, on this account, they are *deceitful* to all those who place their hope in them. אֲנִי, on which many have stumbled, is to be explained by considering the words, "I hate, etc.," as equivalent to "Those whom I hate, etc." Jo. Arnd remarks: "The soul *remains* with that on which it depends, on which it places its hope, where it seeks comfort and rest, with which it is united. Is thy soul united with any earthly thing, has it conceived an affection for it, does it depend on it? Woe to thy poor soul, it will remain where its hope is. Therefore look well to what it is that thy soul is depending on."

Ver. 7. *I will be glad, and rejoice in Thy goodness, Thou who seest my trouble, who knowest the necessity of my soul.* The sufferer sees, with the eye of faith, the deliverance for which he

hopes already present,—the prayer with which the paragraph begins is based on *hope*, and the hope soon passes on to *confidence*,—and exhorts himself, now that God had performed His part, to render Him joyful thanks. The exposition of Michaelis and others, “Let me give thanks,” “Give me, by delivering me, occasion to render thanks,” is confuted by the Preterites. —The *seeing* is not without meaning. When God sees the misery of His people, He also helps them. ידע with ב is used of a knowledge which dwells with strong emotion (in this case, that of love) upon its object: compare Job xxv. 15. The exposition of Luther, “Thou knowest my soul in trouble,” which has been again brought into notice by Stier, is negatived by passages such as Gen. xlii. 21, where צרת נפשי already occurs, and Ps. xxv. 17.

Ver. 8. *And Thou dost not give me over into the hand of my enemy; Thou settest my feet in a large room.* “To shut up into the hand,” is to give over into the power, in such a way that there can be no deliverance. The phrase is made use of by David, 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. Compare xxvi. 8, xxiv. 19. On the second clause, compare Ps. xviii. 19.

There follows now the *second division* (vers. 9–18), in which the Psalmist, in the spirit of heartfelt trust in the helping grace of God, to which, after much exertion, he had attained, proceeds, *first*, to describe at length his trouble (vers. 9–13), and, *second*, to pray for deliverance (14–18).

Ver. 9. *Lord, be merciful unto me, for I am hard pressed; mine eye is decayed because of vexation, my soul and my body.* Compare Ps. vi. 7. We have already seen at this passage, and at Ps. x. 14, that בעם does not signify *grief*, but *vexation* or *indignation*, especially at the unrighteous conduct of enemies.

Ver. 10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength is broken through my iniquity, and my bones are consumed.* The expressions, “in grief,” and “in sighing,” are to be explained from the effect being conceived as *resting* in its cause. The sense is, “my constant pain, my continual sighing, wear me out before the time, end my life, shorten my years.” גבלה is “to waste away,” “to tend towards dissolution.” כשל is in many places “to stumble,” “to sink from weakness:” compare, for example, Ps. cix. 24. It is applied here to sinking, broken *strength*. Many of the expositors are altogether at sea in their efforts to explain, “through my iniquity:” it was

not the *guilt* of the Psalmist, say they, but the *wickedness* of his enemies, that had involved him in suffering; he appeals to the *justice* of God (ver. 1), and represents himself as an *upright* and *pious* man, suffering innocently. They therefore explain the term, "through my *suffering*." But *py* is always "iniquity," and never "suffering," such as befalls an innocent man, nor even "punishment." The *wickedness* of enemies, and the *guilt* of the Psalmist, co-exist as causes that have brought on his distress: the Lord, on account of his guilt, has given power to the malice of his enemies to injure him. Neither are the *guilt* of the Psalmist and his own *righteousness* inconsistent with each other: he was a righteous man in regard to the prevailing tendency of his life; but this was quite compatible with the existence of manifold sins of infirmity, which rendered it necessary that he should be purified by the cross. The righteousness of God may have brought on the Psalmist's suffering; but that need not prevent the Psalmist from hoping that the same righteousness will effect his deliverance. Sins of infirmity call for *punishment*, not *destruction*; and it is that this, which the Psalmist finds to be already near, may be averted, that he appeals to the righteousness of God. Finally, the Psalmist might be innocent in reference to his enemies, and might, nevertheless, be given over to suffering by God on account of his guilt. It is, moreover, altogether impossible for us to keep out of view the guilt as the cause of the suffering, inasmuch as, according to the teaching of Scripture, *every* suffering is, and must be, a punishment, since God is just. To recognise in our sufferings a righteous retribution, is the prime condition of the hope of deliverance: he only who can say with the heart, "My strength is broken through mine iniquity," will be able to utter with inward truth the prayer, "Deliver me for Thy *righteousness*' sake." The case of Job affords a remarkable illustration of this. His despair of a prosperous issue to his sufferings arose solely from that lack of a knowledge of sin, which rendered it impossible for him to reconcile his experience with the righteousness of God. The same point, which is merely *hinted* at here, occupies the *foreground* in other similar Psalms, as, for example, the 38th. The *bones* are mentioned as the seat of strength. Very severe pain penetrates the bones and the marrow, and renders the whole man thoroughly feeble.

Ver. 11. *On account of mine enemies I have become a reproach,*

*and even to my neighbours very much, and an object of aversion to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.* The Psalmist complains of the loss of his reputation, which, to a man who feels himself deserted by God, is altogether insupportable, and even to those in fellowship with God, is very difficult to be borne. Calvin: "He says the multitude of his enemies have gained over almost the whole people to their side, and therefore even amongst his friends and acquaintances he has been covered with disgrace: in these circumstances, public opinion carries away our souls like a mighty hurricane." Jo. Arnd: "It cannot be worse with us than when we are so overwhelmed with lies and slanders that we come to be utterly despised, so that people are ashamed of us and shun us, and it is reckoned disreputable to associate with us, and even our intimate friends forsake us. This was the case in a remarkable manner at the crucifixion of our Lord: His friends stood afar off; for had they come near, they would have been recognised as connected with Him. It is a piece of the curse, a portion of the poison, and one of the most murderous blows, of the devil, so to slander a man that he is looked upon as an abomination and a curse." The groundwork of this description is to be found in the painful trial which David experienced during the persecution of Saul. The  $\pi$  is causal: "on account of,"—"the reproach arises from my enemies." The Psalmist first says in general, "I have become a reproach," and then mentions particularly those whose contempt he felt peculiarly to be painful, "and (particularly, I have become a reproach to my neighbours) very much—in a high degree." *Those who see me in the street*, etc. Not only will no one associate with me under the same roof, or hold confiding intercourse with me, every one flees from me as soon as I am seen in the streets.

Ver. 12. *I am forgotten in the heart like a dead man; I have become like a broken vessel.* מלב is, properly, *out of the heart*. On "a broken vessel," the Berleb. Bib. remarks: "which is good for nothing, which can be made no use of, cannot be made whole again, for which no one cares, and the fragments of which are thrown away." That this last clause refers not only to the contempt, but also, in general, to the completely comfortless condition of the Psalmist, is evident from the "for" with which the next verse opens.

Ver. 13. *For I hear the slander of many; fear is on every side:*

when they take counsel together against me, they devise to take away my life. The sufferer here assigns the basis of the clause, "I am like a broken vessel." The thought of the *slandering*s of the enemies is naturally followed by that of their *acts of persecution*: "fear is on every side," etc. In order to be able to perpetrate these without hindrance, they devised their slanders. They withdrew public sympathy from their victim by covering him with disgrace, that they might then be able to sacrifice him undisturbed and unpunished. On הוֹכֵר יֵהֵר compare Ps. ii. 2. The representation of the trouble closes with intimating that the enemies were preparing to make a determined onset against the *life* of the sufferer. If this be the case, God, as was brought prominently forward in the first part, must, as sure as He is the Psalmist's God, put forth His helping hand without delay: *delay* is dangerous; not to help now, is the same thing as not to help at all.

Ver. 14. *And I trust in Thee, O Lord; I say, "Thou art my God."* Calvin, by the following remark, removes the apparent contradiction between the confidence in God expressed here, and the complaints uttered in the previous verses:—"He was indeed sunk in the darkness of sorrow and in dreadful affliction, yet the hidden light of faith still glimmered inwardly in his heart; he sighed under his heavy load of trial, yet he still had strength left to call upon God." On "Thou art my God," he remarks: "There is nothing more difficult, when we see our faith despised by the whole world, than to direct our language to God alone, and to rest on the testimony of our conscience that 'He is our God.'"

Ver. 15. *My times are in Thine hand: deliver me from the hands of my enemies, and from my persecutors.* עֲתִידִים never signifies *fate*, but always *times*. The Psalmist affirms that the times, with their sufferings and joys (comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 30), are in the hand of God, and that it requires only a nod from Him to transform the evil into good; while he rises on the wings of faith above the visible world, even after no such change appeared any longer possible.

Ver. 16. *Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; deliver me through Thy goodness.* On the last clause, which refers to Num. vi. 25, compare at Ps. iv. 6. The words, "upon Thy servant," contain the basis of the prayer. God cannot do otherwise than manifest Himself as gracious to His servant.

Ver. 17. *Lord, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon Thee: may the wicked be put to shame, and be silent in sheol.* "For I call upon Thee," corresponds to "in Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust," at the beginning of the Psalm. The "calling" is noticed merely so far as it is an act of "trust." Jo. Arnd: "The beloved prophet puts God in remembrance of His promise, that He will hear and help those who call upon Him with heartfelt confidence. 'I call upon Thee,' he says, 'therefore let me not be put to shame.' Whoever can hold fast by this hope, cannot be put to shame by God: His promises, and even He Himself, must sooner be put to shame." The contrast between the *Psalmist*, who calls upon God, and the *wicked*, shows, on the one hand, that *not* to call upon God is an infallible mark of the wicked; and, on the other hand, that calling upon God thrives only on the soil of a pure heart. The *wicked* are not the enemies of the Psalmist, the enemies only belong to the wicked; they are not wicked because they are enemies, but enemies because they are wicked:—let me not be ashamed (and in me all the righteous); may those rather, who deserve it, be ashamed, even the wicked, and among them, my enemies. The following verse renders it evident that "may they be silent," is equivalent to "may they be struck dumb," and that the expression forms the contrast to the blustering noise of the wicked. Jo. Arnd: "May death and sheol stop their mouth, so that they may not have it in their power to revile and slander any more." The שָׁמָּה, properly "to sheol," indicates that their silence belongs to sheol, that it originates from their abode in it—the noiseless kingdom of the dead.

Ver. 18. *May the lying lips be put to silence, which speak recklessly against the righteous man, in pride and contempt.* Compare ver. 13. The lying lips are brought to silence by the destruction of the wicked slanderers.

There follows now the *third part*, the *hearing of the prayer* (vers. 19–21).

Ver. 19. *How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them who fear Thee, which Thou manifestest to them that trust in Thee, before the sons of men.* The sufferer, after he had obtained inwardly the assurance of being *heard*, first praises in general (vers. 19, 20) the goodness of God towards His own people, and next sets forth (ver. 21) the personal experience which *had given him occasion* thus to praise God. In the first

clause, the goodness of God, which had been enjoyed by the Psalmist *in rich abundance* on behalf of the Lord's people, appears under the emblem of a *treasure* which He has laid up for them. Those interpreters who cannot see their way through the abbreviated comparison, the force of which is, "which in rich fulness, like a hoarded treasure, is present for those who are Thine," are inclined to substitute "possessions" instead of "goodness." But טוב יהוה means always *the goodness* of the Lord (compare at Ps. xxvii. 13); and that this signification is to be retained here, is obvious from the expression, Ps. xxxvi. 7, "How precious is Thy love!" חסרך. Jo. Arnd: "Oh! whoever heartily trusts in God with lively stedfast hope, possesses God, with all His treasures of grace, with all His goodness, and love, and friendship. God gives Himself to those as their own, who give themselves to Him and trust in Him. Whoever gives to God his whole heart, receives in return from God His whole heart, with all its goodness and felicity."—Arnd expounds correctly, "before the sons of men:" "so that every one, friend and foe, must say that it is a work of God. Thus were the faith and prayer of Hezekiah made known to the whole world, when the sun went back: thus was it also with the faith and prayer of Daniel and the three men in the fiery furnace. Who would have thought that God would have had such goodness among His secret treasures to manifest to His people! Such goodness has He laid up in His treasures for you and for me, if we trust in Him." Luther and others, in violation of the accents, translate: "who trust in Thee before the people." But, in opposition to this view, there must be urged the reference, as noticed by Arnd, in which "before the sons of men" stands to צַנִּיּוֹת. Besides, the expression, "to trust in God before the sons of men," never occurs, and indeed *can* scarcely occur; whereas repeated and emphatic mention is made of the fact, that the grace which God manifests towards His own people is visible to the whole world, and specially to their enemies: comp. Ps. xxiii. 5.

Ver. 20. *Thou hidest them in the secret of Thy presence from every man's league: Thou concealest them in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.* In the first clause, the regard of God for His people, His favour appears as a place of resort, which He provides for them: compare "make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant," ver. 16. The term רֶכֶּם, which occurs in no other



passage, is from רכס, "to bind," and signifies "a bond," "a confederation:" compare, "while they took counsel together against me," ver. 13. "The slander of many," in that verse, corresponds to "the strife of tongues," in the verse before us. The "pavilion," in which God conceals His people, is a *spiritual one*, and there is no need for supplying the כ. Arnd: "This our beloved God does secretly, so that no human eyes may or can see; and the ungodly do not know that a believer is, in God, and in the presence of God, so well protected, that no reproach or contempt, and no quarrelsome tongues can do him any harm." Ps. xxvii. 5 is parallel.

Ver. 21. *Praised be God, for He hath showed me wonderful goodness in a strong city.* Arnd is short and good: "The strong city is God Himself, and His powerful and gracious protection, in which we are even more secure than in a strong city:" Ps. xlv. The Psalmist had already prayed (ver. 2) that God would be to him a stronghold on a high mountain. He now sees this prayer *fulfilled*. Ver. 22 corresponds to ver. 1, in the same way as the verse before us corresponds to ver. 2,—the last of the second decade to the first of the first.

There follows in ver. 22 the *conclusion*, which shortly recapitulates the whole. *And I said in my rapid flight, "I am torn away from Thine eyes;" but Thou heardest the voice of my prayer when I cried to Thee.* חפו always means *to hasten from fear*: compare especially 1 Sam. xxiii. 26. Here it is used *figuratively*: the dejected man, who looks upon his case as lost, appears like one in a trembling haste. The word shows us how much of anxiety and despondency lies concealed under the apparently strong and unwavering faith which met us at the beginning of the Psalm. נגור, with which נגר evidently agrees in signification (compare Ps. lxxxviii. 8), always signifies *to be cut off, to be rooted out, and never to be shut out*. נגרחי denotes *irremediable destruction, death*,—compare, "they think to take my life," ver. 13, and נגור מארץ חיים "he was rooted out of the land of the living," Isa. liii. 8. There can be no reason drawn from the appended words, "from Thine eyes," for forcing on נגר a meaning foreign to the term. The man who is rooted out, who has descended to the kingdom of the dead, is at the same time removed from the *eye of God*, that is, is no longer the object of the delivering grace of God: compare Isa. xxxviii. 11, where Hezekiah says, "I said, I shall not see the

Lord in the land of the living." The *voice of supplication* is not "the supplicating voice;" but תַּחֲנוּנִים are the proper objects of *answer*, and the "voice" is added only because it is the object of the *bodily hearing*: the sound, the call of my supplicatory complaint.

After the Psalmist had ended matters with God, he turns round to *his brethren in the faith*, for the purpose of setting before them the lesson to be drawn from the great drama which had been acted before their eyes.

Ver. 23. *Love ye the Lord, all ye His saints: the Lord keepeth faith, and plentifully rewardeth him who acteth with haughtiness.* The exhortation to love the Lord is followed by the basis on which it is made to rest, "for the Lord keepeth faith." After "the Lord keepeth faith," we must supply, "towards His saints;" and this supplied clause finds its opposite in "acteth with haughtiness." There is no reason for translating, "the Lord preserveth the faithful,"—נָצַר does occur in the sense of "to hold," "to observe," as, for example, Ex. xxxiv. 7, and Isa. xxvi. 3,—and, on the other side, there is no clear proof of אֱמוּנִים being used as an adjective. Compare at Ps. xii. 1. עַל יְהוָה is, properly, "superabundantly," "plentifully."

Ver. 24. *Be ye strong, and may He strengthen the heart of all of you who trust in the Lord.* Compare at Ps. xxvii. 14.

## PSALM XXXII.

David celebrates in this Psalm the happiness of a sinner who has obtained mercy from God, the preciousness of the forgiveness of sins, and the blessing of purity and uprightness before God, which alone lead to the obtaining of forgiveness. In the *introduction*, vers. 1 and 2, he indicates his subject in general, by pronouncing the man to be blessed who has obtained the forgiveness of sin, and has not excluded himself from it by inward impurity. In the *main body* of the Psalm, he depicts, first (vers. 3 and 4), the *misery* which he endured, so long as the sin of which he was conscious stood like a partition wall between him and God, and he, stained with impurity, had neither repented before God, nor asked from Him the grace of forgiveness. Then he tells us that *forgiveness* immediately followed upon *confession*, ver. 5. In vers. 6 and 7, he represents,

in opposition to vers. 3 and 4, the blessed consequences of forgiveness obtained through uprightness: he is now sheltered from those judgments which hang over sinners; he has God again for his friend; and in Him he has protection against every danger, and the joyful assurance of deliverance. In vers. 8 and 9, he grounds *doctrine* upon *history*: the righteous man who has fallen may seek the forgiveness of sin through the free return to God, alone worthy of him. In the *conclusion*, vers. 10 and 11, the Psalmist, proceeding from what is particular to what is general, pronounces the man to be happy who has placed his confidence in God: all things, even his *sins*, must *in the end* work together for good, while the ungodly is visited with severe punishment.

The formal arrangement of this Psalm is very obvious. The whole is broken up into strophes of two verses, with the exception that the fifth verse, which may be considered as the heart of the Psalm, representing, as it does, the inseparable connection between *free confession* and *forgiveness*, forms a strophe by itself, and thus stands apart from the general train of the Psalm—a circumstance which is evidently pointed out by its disproportionate *length*. The *introduction* consists of two verses, and there is a corresponding *conclusion* of an equal number. The *main body* is complete in the number seven. The three chief divisions in the historical part are indicated by the thrice repeated *selah*.

Most commentators suppose that David composed this Psalm when he obtained forgiveness from God after his adultery with Bathsheba, and the death of Uriah, to which that sin led. The correctness of this view can scarcely be called in question. That the case represented in ver. 3 is no *fiction*, but a *reality*, is clear as day. The Psalmist speaks in language far too definite of himself and of a particular case, to allow us to regard the matter as a fiction. Now, if the matter be a reality, no other circumstances can be referred to, except those above mentioned. All the characteristic features agree exactly. Here, as there, it is none of the common *sins of infirmity* that are spoken of, but a *dreadful transgression*, yea, an assemblage of dreadful transgressions: compare the expression in the 5th verse, "I will confess *my crimes* to the Lord," in which respect, the transgression of David with Bathsheba, and the accompanying circumstances, are said to hold a peculiar place in the history of David, 1 Kings xv. 5. Here, as there, we have a long continuance of impenitence: according to ver. 3, "the bones of the Psalmist

waxed old *continually*;" according to ver. 4; "the hand of the Lord was heavy upon him *day and night*;" and, according to the history, there elapsed nearly a whole year between the sin of David and the repentance. Here, as there, we have a sudden *transition*: confession of sin at once breaking out, and forgiveness immediately following. Compare ver. 5, "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou didst take away the guilt of my sin," with 2 Sam. xii. 13, "And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord forgiveth thy sin, thou shalt not die."—The reasons which have been adduced to show that the historical account given in Samuel is not wholly in accordance with the Psalm, are easily set aside. David, it is said, according to that account, did not confess his sin, but had it brought before him by Nathan. But, even according to Samuel, David *did confess* his sin; and the circumstance, that his confession was called forth by Nathan's address, did not detract from its character as a voluntary act. David must have arrived, within his own mind, even at the very threshold of repentance; otherwise the address of Nathan would not have produced the effect which it did. Nathan did not *originate* the confession, he only *set it loose*. In what other way can we explain the fact, that Nathan postponed the discharge of his duty towards the king for such a length of time after the sin was committed, except by assuming that he waited, according to the direction of God, for the crisis in David's mind? Inasmuch, therefore, as the address of Nathan occupied only a subordinate place, and was not the *ground*, but merely the *occasion* of David's confession, David might very well pass it over in silence in this Psalm, in the same way in which he does in the 51st Psalm, which refers to the same circumstance. Again, stress is laid upon the circumstance, that the writer of this Psalm is joyful at having obtained deliverance from the *punishment* of his sin, with which he had already been visited (vers. 6 and 7); whereas in 2 Sam. xii., David obtained forgiveness previous to the infliction of the punishment. But the punishment, in deliverance from which the Psalmist rejoices, is not one with which he had been already visited, but one which he dreaded, with which he was threatened,—one, present indeed, in the view of conscience, which already saw the angel with the flaming sword approaching, but in

reality yet future. In ver. 6, it is said that "the floods shall *not reach* to the godly who prays at the right time to God for forgiveness of sin," but not that "they shall *turn away from him*;" and in ver. 7, the preceding clause, "Thou preservest me from *trouble*," leads us to consider the "songs of deliverance," as songs called forth by deliverance from *threatened* danger. Now, David had been visited with anxiety in regard to future punishment after his adultery with Bathsheba. Nathan's words, 2 Sam. xii. 10, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house, because thou hast despised Me and taken the wife of Uriah," would not have produced such a dreadful impression on his mind, had not his conscience, before this, distinctly and repeatedly made the same announcement.

It has been frequently maintained that this Psalm stands in opposition to the general point of view of the Old Testament. "It teaches inward reconciliation with God through faith; whereas, according to the theocratic view and practice, reconciliation is outward, and obtained by sacrifice." But there cannot be produced, out of the whole Old Testament, one single passage in which the doctrine that sacrifices of themselves, and apart from the state of mind of the offerers, are well-pleasing to God, is advanced, except for the purpose of vigorously opposing it. The law of Moses disowns this doctrine with complete decision. When, for example, in Lev. xxvi. 31, it is said in reference to the ungodly, "I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours;" and when, in Gen. iv. 4, 5, we find that, along with an outward similarity, the offerings of Cain and Abel met with such different receptions from God, and that this difference is traced back to a difference in the persons; it is all but expressly asserted, that sacrifices are regarded only as expressive of the mind within. Moreover, how could any such importance be attached to sacrifices, considered as such, when the value of all that man does is so repeatedly and so decidedly represented as dependent on his love to God? Compare Beitr. P. iii. p. 611. Now, just as *sacrifices* do not exclude *faith*, but faith is rather the *soul* of sacrifices, so faith does not exclude sacrifices. It is not a matter of any consequence, that David should have made no reference to them in this Psalm, inasmuch as, although generally available in the case before us (compare on this Ps. li.), they occupy in every instance a very subordinate place.

According to Amyraldus and others, the Psalm is irreconcilably at variance with Ps. i. "For whoever receives prosperity as the reward of his virtue and holiness, stands in no need of forgiveness of sin; and, on the other hand, whoever needs forgiveness of sin, cannot hope for prosperity as the reward of his good works." But, that the variance is altogether in appearance, is obvious from the fact, that in many Psalms (as, for example, Ps. xix.), both positions are maintained, that salvation is the reward of righteousness (comp. on Ps. xix. 12), and that salvation is the consequence of forgiveness of sin, and that in many instances both occur in immediate connection with each other. As even the righteousness of the man who is in a state of grace (and it is only with such a man that both these Psalms have to do), is in every instance but a righteousness of *aim*, so the reward which is promised to diligence in good works, and to which Ps. i. refers, can be obtained only when forgiveness of manifold transgressions has been sought and obtained from the compassion of God.

The Psalm is termed in the title, a Maskil of David. The most obvious explanation of this term, which occurs in the titles of thirteen Psalms, is that of *Instruction—a Didactic Poem*: compare מַשְׁכִּיל, in the sense of "to make intelligent, prudent," in Prov. xvi. 23, xxi. 11. A very decisive circumstance in favour of this interpretation, is the occurrence of אִשְׁכִּיל in ver. 8, where there is as good as an express explanation of the title; and this circumstance is to be regarded as all the more important, from the fact, that the word is made use of in the *very first* Psalm which bears the title. Further, it may be urged in favour of this interpretation, that the Psalm has so decided a didactic character, that the author seems as if he had resolved beforehand to lose sight of all regard to everything of an individual character, for the purpose of influencing the whole Church. To this it may be added, that in Ps. liii. this interpretation is clearly demanded by the reference to the title contained in ver. 2. That Poem was designed to *bring to reason* the *unreasonable* men there spoken of. Compare page 211. The current objection against this interpretation, that all the Psalms so designated do not bear a didactic character, is not to be set aside by the remark of Stier, that it is of the nature of such names that they are on these occasions used also in a vague manner. It may rather be observed, that every expres-

sion of holy feeling is subservient to the purpose of instruction in righteousness; that in the Psalms which were called forth by *individual* occasions, the Psalmists express their feelings on behalf of the whole Church; that in the very many Psalms in which the *Righteous man* is the speaker, the hortatory character is obvious to all except the most superficial readers. The designation is indeed applicable, properly, to *all* the Psalms, inasmuch as they all have been reckoned worthy to be made use of in the services of the sanctuary, and to be admitted as part of the sacred Scriptures: compare 2 Tim. iii. 16, where as much is said of the whole Scriptures of the Old Testament. For this reason, after a Psalm had been placed at the head, the very *form* of which at once shows it to be a didactic Psalm, might this designation be prefixed especially to those Psalms in which this character is least apparent. The didactic Psalms, properly so called, did not need this N.B.—The common interpretations of מְשִׁיבִי have been refuted in the Christology, I. 1, p. 113. The exposition there adopted, “a pious poem,” cannot be maintained against the positive grounds on which the exposition, “Instruction,” rests.—The relation of מְשִׁיבִי to אֲשִׁיבִיךָ in ver. 8, leaves little room for doubt as to David’s having composed the title, and affords a pretty strong presumption in favour of the titles generally.

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Ver. 1. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* Ver. 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* The reasons why the Psalmist pronounces the man to be *blessed* who has obtained forgiveness of sin, are apparent in the following verses: compare Rom. iv. 6. He, whose sins have not been forgiven, and who has the hand of God lying heavy upon him, and is in fearful expectation of the judgment with which, at its own time, he will infallibly be visited. In this declaration of blessedness belonging to the man whose sin has been forgiven, there lies an indirect *exhortation* not to shut ourselves out from this benefit by our own fault. Compare 1 John i. 8, 9. Hence is explained the stringing on of the last clause, in which mention is made of that which brings this exclusion infallibly in its train. The words are directed against the error of those who seek to come to terms with their sin, by expiating

it themselves, by concealing, or by not charging themselves with it. The Berleb. Bib. : "As children imagine that they are not seen when they put their hands upon their eyes, and cover them so that they themselves see no one, in like manner, men act with equal folly, in supposing that their sins and crimes, when concealed from themselves, are also concealed from the all-seeing eye of God." The three expressions applied to sin (compare on פִּשְׁעֵי at Psalm xix. 14), are borrowed from the fundamental passage on the forgiveness of sin, Ex. xxxiv. 7 : "Keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." The form נָטַי, instead of נָשָׂא, is adopted on account of its similarity in form to נָשָׂא חַטָּאת with חַטָּאת occurs, as it does here, in 2 Sam. xix. 19, where Shimei addresses David, apparently in allusion to common religious expressions, and particularly, perhaps, to this very Psalm: "Let not my lord impute iniquity to me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely." The king, who could extol so gloriously the forgiving grace of God, would not turn away the man who had fled to *his* forgiving grace. Compare Matt. xviii. 23, etc.—The succeeding context contains an explanation, as to where it is that the *guile* lies. As an outflow thereof, we find mention made of "keeping silence," of "not making known," of "hiding iniquity," and of "not confessing transgressions." The *guile*, the want of inward truth, which denies, extenuates, excuses, or seeks for apologies, is the cause why so few attain to the blessedness of forgiveness, here praised by David, which is bestowed only for sin *acknowledged* and *confessed*. The roots of this *guile*, which made its appearance immediately after the fall, are *pride*, *want of confidence in God*, and *love of sin*. Many are hereby prevented altogether from confessing sin : with Pelagian self-delusion, they take pleasure in their misery, and consider themselves as altogether excellent. Others, again, exhibit the *first beginnings* of true confession of sin, but they do not reach the proper point, because *this guile* will not allow them to recognise the whole magnitude of their guilt. But even those also who have really attained to the state of grace, embitter, in many ways, by means of this *guile*, the blessing of forgiveness, which they have obtained through uprightness and sincerity. What exposes them particularly to this temptation is, their stern views of sin, and of their condemnation before God, and the consciousness of the favour



obtained from God, and of their state. Nature struggles hard against that thorough humiliation of soul which brings with it for them conviction and acknowledgment of sin. Hence it is necessary for them to lay to heart the words of this verse, dictated for their use by David, as the result of his own peculiarly painful experience of the misery which flows from sin unforgiven, because of the prevalence of guile. In the case of David, although his transgressions were so enormous, *guile* found, as it generally does, when the heart is so inclined, many points on which to lay hold. The first sin was not one which he had sought for; it was one, the temptation to which presented itself before him: and a *monarch*, especially an Eastern one, in a case of this kind, would feel quite disposed to adopt a standard of his own. And after the first sin was committed, it is easy to see how he might look upon after circumstances, rather as the result of a sad *necessity*, than as involving heinous guilt.

In the *main body* of the Psalm, the Psalmist unfolds the *grounds* which led him to pronounce the man to be blessed whose sin had been forgiven, and in whose spirit there was no guile. These grounds, as manifested in his own experience, were the sufferings which he had endured when, through guile, he continued shut out from the forgiveness of sin, and the peace which he enjoyed when he had unreservedly acknowledged his guilt. Upon this he founds an *exhortation*, addressed to the fallen, to follow him in the way of sincerity and repentance.

Ver. 3. *For I kept silence, then my bones wasted away, through my howling continually.* The particle *כִּי*, which is rendered by some expositors, “when,” and by others, “because,” is, as the *part. rat.*, altogether in the right place, whether we refer it merely to the verse before us—the suffering induced by the silence, the guile with which the holding fast of sin is inseparably connected, *lays the basis* of the declaration of blessedness belonging to the man whose sin has been forgiven, because in his spirit there is *no* guile—or to the whole following exposition in reference to the two introductory verses. The object of the silence is defined by the context: I was silent in regard to my *sin*. “I made known to Thee my sin,” in ver. 5, is the opposite clause. The expression, “I was silent,” does not imply that David *altogether refrained* from prayer, but intimates that he had never once brought forward in prayer the matter in question. Even although he had spoken of it to God as a small

weakness, and asked forgiveness for it as such, he might still be said to have *kept silence*. In all probability, however, he carefully avoided the mention of it in prayer altogether: his conscience must have spoken with too loud a voice to permit him to attempt even to extenuate such a matter either before himself or before God. But in very proportion to the depth of his silence, would be the loudness of his sighs and his groans. He who resists the confession of his sin, and gives way to guile, lays himself open to the torments of conscience, which it is beyond the reach of human power to calm. בָּלָה is "to grow old," "to pine away." The *bones* are named as the seat of strength in the human frame. When they become, as it were, corroded, the whole body is weak and powerless. Jo. Arnd: "Melancholy arising from sin consumes away the body, reduces it to a wretched condition, and gives rise to a secret weeping at heart, so that there is constantly a *rugitus*, a howling. This inward pain and melancholy continues to increase, so that even the bones, says David, waste away, when a man is determined to hide his sins from God, and will not confess them from the bottom of his heart, with supplication and humble prayer. As soon, however, as a man turns with his whole heart to God, confesses to Him his sins, complains of his melancholy and sorrow, and humbly deprecates the offence which he has given Him, the pain diminishes, and conscience becomes tranquil and happy. For, previous to humble supplication, there is always fear and anxiety at heart, so that the man takes God for his enemy; as we see Adam did, who was afraid of God, and hid himself among the trees, where he was in perpetual fear, regarding God as his enemy. Wherefore, the best plan to obtain a quiet conscience is to mourn over sin before God, and humbly to deprecate His wrath."

Ver. 4. *For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my heart was changed through the heat of summer. Selah.* The "for" gives the reason why the bones of the Psalmist were wasted perpetually. How should a man not howl, upon whom the *hand of God* (Job xiii. 21) is laid! We learn from vers. 6 and 7, in what the Divine inflictions consisted; for there we find David rejoicing that, in consequence of his having received the forgiveness of his sins, he had obtained security against the judgments of God, protection against trouble, and the full assurance of deliverance. Conscience, according to Luther's expression, pictures the wrath of God standing as with a club over us. He

thought of the terrible threatenings of Divine judgments against sinners as they occur in the law; for example, in Deut. xxviii. 15, etc. He looked back upon the fate of Saul and of his family as prophetic of his own.—לֶשֶׁר is generally translated by “animal spirits.” This translation is derived from the Arabic, where the verb signifies “to suck.” But in the only other passage where the word occurs (Num. xi. 8), this meaning is unsuitable. There לֶשֶׁר signifies a “compact mass.” According to that passage, and Ps. cii. 4, “My heart is smitten and withered like grass,” it appears that it ought to be considered as a poetical expression for “the heart.” The heart was *changed*; instead of being a strong, beating, lively heart, it had become faint and dead. The “heat of summer” is a poetical expression for the torments of conscience, anxiety in regard to threatened judgments—identical with “the hand of God” in the preceding clause. This is to the heart what the heat of summer is to the plants: compare Ps. cii. 4.

Ver. 5. *I made known to Thee my sin, and mine iniquity I did not cover: I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* What is expressed here as a personal experience, is announced in Prov. xxviii. 13 as *doctrine*: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy.” The Psalmist designedly repeats the three terms applied to sin in vers. 1 and 2, for the purpose of intimating that his experience had amply confirmed the general truth there expressed. The expression, “*I make known my sin to Thee,*” on which many expositors have refined much, is to be explained by the simple consideration, that the strength of the Psalmist’s feelings made him speak of what was past as actually present: compare the corresponding term חִבֵּר (ver. 4), properly, “*is heavy.*” It is obvious that the Psalmist is not speaking of “a making known” by the mouth, but “of an inward confession, such as is accompanied with painful repentance and sorrow, with begging of pardon for sin, and for the offence rendered to the Divine majesty. Mary Magdalene did not utter one word; she wept and spoke with the heart.” Arnd. The confession which is here spoken of, as the subjective condition of forgiveness, is distinguished from the confession of a Cain and of a Judas, by its being the fruit of faith, which opens the heart and the mouth. The Psalmist confesses his sins freely to God, because he has

the conviction, that God both can and will help him ; while the forced confession of the ungodly is connected with despair and murmuring against God. It must have been infinitely more difficult, under the Old Testament dispensation, to rise to this confidence than it now is, under the New, where we behold the compassion of God in Christ, and are taught to regard Christ's merits as the cause of our justification. If we hesitate to take refuge in the forgiving grace of God, we shall be much more guilty than David was.—The expression, "I covered not," forms a tacit contrast to the conduct of hypocrites, in which the Psalmist hitherto had participated. They endeavour, as far as they possibly can, to conceal and to gloss over their sins. The words bear reference, also, to the expression, "whose sin is covered," in ver. 1. He only has his sins covered, who does not himself cover them. Forgiveness of sin is in exact proportion to confession of sin. ירה in Hiph., with the accusative, is, "to confess;" with על, "to lay confession over."

Ver. 6. *For this reason let every pious man pray to Thee at the time when Thou mayest be found: truly, when great waters come, they shall not reach him.* Already, even in this verse, the Psalmist makes an attempt to pass from the representation of his own personal experience, to the teaching and exhortation founded upon it. Still, even in this attempt, there remains (and, indeed, substantially this strophe contains) a representation of personal experience. This is clear from the contents of the 7th verse, and from the circumstance, that, for the first time, in the 8th verse, the Psalmist makes known his resolution, in accordance with the title מִשְׁכִּיל, to base doctrine on history. It is as if he had said : "Because in my case forgiveness immediately followed confession, therefore may every pious man pray for the same at the right time. For my experience has rendered it obvious that this is the sure means of avoiding Divine judgments: I have obtained, as the sequel of forgiveness, a joyful assurance of deliverance, and a sure refuge in God." The main idea of the strophe is contained in ver 7, which cannot be understood by those who look upon the whole strophe as having an *applicatory* character. על זאת is "therefore," "for this reason,"—"on account of the close connection, proved in my case, between confession and forgiveness,"—the effect resting upon the cause, the consequence upon its basis : it corresponds to the ordinary expression על כן. After the ex-

ample of the Vulgate (*pro hac*), many expositors give, "for this thing," viz. "for the forgiveness of sin." But לחפול never occurs with ל of the object. The object of the prayer, viz. the forgiveness of sin, is not specified, because the context renders it apparent. The "time of finding" is equivalent to "so long as Thou mayest be found:" compare Isa. lv. 6, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found." The object of the finding, God, is also to be supplied from the context. The fundamental passage, Dent. iv. 29, directs us here: "And ye seek from thence the Lord thy God, and thou findest." The "finding," there, as here, stands without any object. The "seek," there, corresponds to the "pray," here. Compare also the passage, Jer. xxix. 12-14, which is based upon the one in Deuteronomy. The "finding of the Lord," is there also the opposite of "the seeking," and corresponds to the "being found," in ver. 14. The expositions, "at the time of obtaining," and "at the time of befalling, i.e. when misfortune overtakes men," are to be rejected. The last is altogether contrary to the sense; for the exhortation of the Psalmist implies, that men may be reconciled to God *before* misery comes.—The time when God, according to the sure promise in the fundamental passage, may be found, is the time previous to the *infliction* of that punishment which invariably follows sin, unless averted by forgiveness. The expression, "at the time of finding," corresponds exactly to "ere the decree is executed," "ere the day of the wrath of the Lord comes upon you." "The time of finding," is the space between the sin and the punishment, the day of Grace, which is designed to lead the sinner to repentance. ק stands here in its usual sense of "only." The simplest view to take of the word, and one in entire accordance with its position, is to consider it as implying the assurance that *only* this, and no other, will be the consequence: in reality, it is equivalent to "assuredly." That the ל in לשנת is to be regarded as a note of time (*at the floods of many waters*, coup. Ps. xxix. 10), is evident from the reference, which it is impossible not to notice, to the preceding לע: "whoever at the time of finding, during the season of grace, flies to God for forgiveness, shall at the time of judgment be exempted from it." The expression, *water-flood*, indicates some great Divine judgment, spreading over everything. Perhaps the Psalmist refers to the *deluge*, at which, though it overspread the whole earth, the pious Noah

was delivered as one who had obtained the forgiveness of sin. This reference is the more obvious, from the circumstance, that there is also a reference in Ps. xxix. 10 to the deluge.

Ver. 7. *Thou art my hiding-place, Thou preservest me from trouble, Thou surroundest me with songs of deliverance.* "For" might have stood at the beginning of the verse. For it confirms, by the experience of the Psalmist, the assertion contained in the preceding verse, that whoever has obtained from the Lord forgiveness of sin, is at the same time delivered from danger and judgment. Many expositors regard this verse, very inaptly, as containing the prayer to be addressed by the pious man to God. The object of this prayer can be nothing else than forgiveness of sin. It is, however, only of the blessed consequences of forgiveness, and not at all of forgiveness itself, that this verse speaks. Between *צִרְתִּי* and *הַצֵּרִי*, and also between *הַצֵּרִי* and *רִנִּי*, there is a significant alliteration. The plural form *רִנִּי* occurs nowhere else. According to rule, the singular ought to be written *רִן*; and this form also occurs really as the infinitive of *רָן* in Job xxxviii. 7: compare the infinitives of *פָּלַט* and *הִבֵּן* used as nouns. Some, and among others, Hitzig, are inclined to elide *רִנִּי*. Against this, however, we have the alliteration, the reference to a fulness and a crowd in "Thou surroundest me," *הִרְנִינוּ* in ver. 11, and the baldness of *פָּלַט*, if it stands by itself. The words point to a whole host of dangers and troubles, by which the Psalmist formerly, when he had God for his enemy, saw himself in spirit surrounded. He now sees around him joyful, instead of sorrowful prospects.

The Psalmist had hitherto spoken to God: now, when it is his purpose to base doctrine on history, he turns to his brethren. The circumstance, that it is here, for the first time, that such a transition occurs, is sufficient to show, that it is here for the first time that we enter the domain of application. The Psalmist informs us, first, of his determination to give good advice to his brethren, ver. 8; and then, in ver. 9, he gives them that advice.

Ver. 8. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee the way which thou shouldst go; I will counsel thee with my eye.* It is the pious man, laden with the guilt of sin, that is here addressed. The singular is used for the purpose of giving more impressiveness to the exhortation. We can speak to men most impressively when we are alone with them. In ver. 9, the plural is made

use of instead of the singular ; but at the end of the Psalm the singular again occurs, for the purpose of showing that the same persons are addressed. According to several expositors, it is *God* that speaks in this verse, expressing approval of the trust of David, the returning sinner, and promising him further help. But against this idea, which is not only without foundation, but which entirely destroys the connection and train of thought, there may be urged, in addition to many other reasons, the manifest reference which the clause, "I will instruct thee," bears, on the one hand, to the title, in which David announces his purpose to deliver *instruction*, and, on the other, to the "*without understanding*," ver. 9: the instruction given is designed to remove the want of *understanding*. Then, there is the parallel passage, Ps. li. 13, where David promises to the Lord, that he will teach sinners *His ways*, when he shall have obtained forgiveness. This promise he here fulfils.—On the words, "the way which thou shalt go," Jo. Arnd remarks, "This way means repentance and the forgiveness of sins." יי, properly, "according to my eye," is the accusative, which is often used in this way, when, besides the whole, any particular part is added, which is more especially brought into action : compare on Ps. iii. 4. The tender care of the counsellor is expressed by the construction of יי with ל,—properly, "to take counsel on any one." The *eye*, besides, is the organ by which tender care is expressed. Hence tender forbearance is expressed by "Mine eye pities:" compare Gen. xlv. 21, where Joseph says, "Bring him down, and I will set mine eye upon him;" Jer. xxiv. 6. Many expositors render, "I will counsel, mine eye shall be upon thee." But in this way, words evidently connected are torn asunder: after *counsel*, the person who receives the counsel ought to be named.—At the end of this verse, we should supply marks of quotation. For the counsel of tender and thoughtful love follows in the 9th verse.

Ver. 9. *Be not like the horses and the mules, without understanding, whose ornaments are bridle and bit, for restraint, because they do not come near thee.* David compares impenitent sinners to irrational beasts, which must be kept under by strong instruments of restraint. By this comparison he directs attention to the disgracefulness of such obstinacy—(to man, especially in a pious man—and it is with such alone that David has to do—a free, willing, and joyful obedience is becoming; for such a

one it is particularly humbling to be subjected to compulsion)—and also to the *fruitlessness* of it, since God knows as well how to subdue it, as man knows how to break the obstinacy of brutes. The Berleb. Bib.: “If we do not consent to serve God *willingly*, we *must* serve Him in the long run whether we will or not. He, who runs away from God’s willing service, falls into His compulsory service. On this account the conscientious Stoic prayed, ‘Lead me, O God, the way which Thou hast chosen: and if I *will* not, nothing is better than that I be *compelled*.’ Recourse is not had to bit and bridle, unless we will not become wise by gentler means. God employs these for the purpose of delivering us from destroying ourselves. Let us then rather follow with good-will, than be dragged along by compulsion. . . . The ungodly will make a cross of everything that has been sent them by God in punishment of their sins. But that is not worth the name. It is nothing more than a rod of punishment for an ass.” Jo. Arnd: “You have received from God a reasonable soul, yea, you hear the friendly, pleasing voice of your Father and His dear Son. But, if you will be as stupid as the horse or the mule, God, in that case, will act well in putting upon your neck a bridle, and a bit in your mouth, for the purpose of compelling and restraining you like a senseless brute. God, for example, put a bridle and bit into Nebuchadnezzar’s mouth, and tamed the proud beast. God also put a bridle and bit into Manasseh’s mouth: when he lay bound in iron chains, he would gladly have bowed the knee before God, if his iron fetters would have permitted him. God brought down the proud Pharaoh by means of contemptible creatures—frogs, lice, and grasshoppers, and put a wonderful bridle into the mouth of the proud horse.”—עֲרִי has always the sense of “ornament:” and this is to be retained here, and by no means to be exchanged for the arbitrary one, “harness” (on which Gesenius remarks, *frigidius hoc est et otiosum*), nor for “jaw” (Luther’s: “into the mouth”). They answer very well as ornaments for their obstinacy, says the Psalmist: men put upon them bridle and bit, and know how to restrain them by these. ב indicates that in which the ornament consists. The infinitive בָּלוֹם occupies the place of the noun, and therefore the suffix is unnecessary. David speaks here in part out of his own painful experience: bit and bridle were, if not put upon him, yet threatened to be put upon him: compare vers. 3d and 4th.



—The last clause, lit.: *not to come near thee*, is abrupt, and implies, “because they do not come near thee, for the purpose of rendering a willing obedience.” The “to thee,” refers “to every one here addressed, who is exhorted not to render it necessary for God to use the same violence with him which he himself uses with his beast.” Stier.

There follows, in vers. 10 and 11, the *Conclusion*, in which David, in contrast to the miserable condition of the *wicked*, praises the happy state of the *righteous*, who put their confidence in God, in language called forth by the deliverance which, when he had fallen very deeply, had been vouchsafed to him by God, out of apparently irremediable destruction. The verses lead from the particular to the general; and several expositors have in vain attempted to find in them a more precise reference to the case on which the Psalm is grounded.

Ver. 10. *The wicked has many sorrows; but he who trusts in the Lord, He encompasseth him with mercy.* We may either translate, “mercy surrounds him,” or, “He surrounds him with mercy.” In favour of the latter translation we have the 7th verse, where, in like manner, סֹבֵב is construed with a double accusative. “He who trusts in the Lord,” is the *pious man*. The contrast shows that the language does not refer to a single act, but to an *abiding relation*. Inasmuch as David stood related to God, in general, as one who trusted in Him, though God visited him with fatherly chastisement, this chastisement tended to his good. Jo. Arnd: “The cross of believers is a fatherly rod applied for the best of purposes, for correction and instruction, and it has a joyful termination. But the punishment of the ungodly is a plague and a pain by which their pride and impudence are put to shame.

Ver. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye upright.* It is very obvious here that the **RIGHTEOUS MEN** of the Psalms are not absolutely righteous.

### PSALM XXXIII.

The design of this Psalm is to fill the little flock of Israel with comfort and courage and joy, in view of the infinitely superior might of the world: its key-note is, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, thou little nation Israel.” The weapon which the

Psalmist proposes that the Church should use against all the assaults and attacks that are made against her on the part of the whole world, is the *Praise of God*: if you know Him as He is, you may despise all trouble and all danger, and say, in the language of the 20th verse (which may be considered as the heart of the Psalm, containing a very clear exposition of its design by the author himself), "Our soul waiteth for the Lord. He is our help and shield."

The Psalm begins (vers. 1 and 2) with an exhortation, addressed to the Church of God, *to praise Him*. In laying down a basis for this exhortation, the Psalmist first directs attention to the glorious attributes of God. This he does in two main divisions. First (vers. 4-11), the Lord is true and faithful, righteous and gracious (vers. 4, 5), and almighty (vers. 6-11). Second, (vers. 12-19), all things on earth are subject to His government and infinite influence. Hence the people whom He chooses for an inheritance are happy; for, as sure as He is *Lord over all*, all things must work together for their good. Nothing depends upon earthly power; hence the want of it is no reason why the Lord's people should despair: His omnipotent love and His loving omnipotence afford them the full assurance of deliverance. In the conclusion (vers. 20-22), the Church gives utterance to that full confidence which had been called forth by this contemplation of the glory of God, and prays that she may receive according to her faith.

The *Introduction* and the *Conclusion*, each of three verses, correspond to one another; and, in like manner, the two main divisions are of equal length, namely, eight verses. The number of the verses of the whole Psalm corresponds to that of the letters of the alphabet. The main division occurs exactly in the middle.

The Psalm, along with the one before it, forms one pair. The chief reason for adopting this view is, that the Psalm *begins* in the same strain as that with which the preceding one *concludes*, namely, an exhortation to rejoice in the Lord: there, *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart*: here, *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright*. It is impossible to explain this circumstance by the supposition, that the collector of the Psalms placed the two together on account of the accidental resemblance between the concluding verse of the one,

and the opening verse of the other. For the transition from the particular to the general in Ps. xxxii. takes place in such a striking and sudden manner, as to suggest the idea, that it was intended to prepare the way for passing on to a Psalm of a general character. Another reason is, the want of a title in our Psalm, though standing in the middle of an assemblage of Psalms which are all designated Psalms of David. This appearance met us in Ps. x., where we found strong reasons for regarding it and Ps. ix. as forming one pair. A *third reason* is to be found in the relation which the *numbers of the verses* of both Psalms bear to each other. In the 33d Psalm, the number of the verses corresponds to the number of the letters of the alphabet,—a circumstance which we have the less reason for considering as accidental, as the following Psalm is truly an alphabetical one. And in the 32d Psalm the number is equal to one half of the letters of the alphabet. It is at the same time to be observed, that even in the 33d Psalm, the main body is divided into two equal parts; and that the one signature of completion, namely, the twenty-two, is as frequently divided into two eevens, as the other, viz. the ten, is divided into two fives. This relation of the verses would therefore lead us to regard the 32d Psalm as *introductory* to the 33d.

From these remarks, our view of the relation of the two Psalms to each other, will be as follows. David, inwardly and deeply moved by the proof of the glory of God, which he had obtained in the forgiveness of his dreadful offence, begins with praising it, in its present special manifestation. But his heart is so full, that he cannot be confined to this, but must take a wider range. He must unfold to Israel all that he has *generally* in God, especially God's protection and help against a hostile world.

Amyraldus has very correctly characterized the style of the Psalm. "The style is pleasing, flowing, measured, without any poetical digressions, or figures, at least of such a kind as to occasion any difficulty." These characteristics are to be explained from the fact, that the Psalm has no individual reference whatever, and that, both in its introduction and contents, it is in the most proper sense a Psalm for the public worship of God.

Ver. 1. *Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord; praise is comely for the upright.* Ver. 2. *Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto Him with the psaltery of ten strings.* Ver. 3. *Sing unto Him a new song; play skilfully, with shouts of joy.* The "righteous" and the "upright" are the Israelites: compare "righteous," used of the people as such, in Num. xxiii. 10, and ver. 12 of this Psalm; as also vers. 10 and 11, vers. 16 and 17, from which it is evident that the Psalm has a national character. Inasmuch as Israel is here designated the righteous and the upright, it is clear that the address is directed towards the true Israelites only, to the exclusion of those who are Israelites *in appearance*—the souls who are rooted out from their people. Compare at Ps. xv., xxxiv. The reason why the righteous and the upright should praise the Lord, is contained in the conclusion of the preceding Psalm,—*"He encompasseth them with mercy,"*—and in the 18th verse, where *"the eye of the Lord,"* it is said, *"is upon them that fear Him."* To the unrighteous, the glory of God is not the object of joy and praise, but of terror and aversion: the highest wish of their hearts is, that He may not be true, righteous, full of mercy towards His own people, or almighty. To rejoice *in the Lord*, is not exactly to rejoice at the Lord, but to rejoice in finding the inclination of the heart towards God, who gives so many causes for such joy. Compare *יָשָׁר*, *upright*, at Ps. xxv. 8. The word denotes a condition which is conformable to the rule and the idea, as these are represented in reference to the members of the Church in the law of God. *נְאוֹתָהּ* is the feminine of *נָאוֹת*, *beautiful, becoming*. As it is comely for God to help, so it is comely for the righteous to praise.—*עֲשֶׂה* belongs here, not as in Ps. xcii. 3, to *נָבֵל*. The two words stand either in the stat. construct., *the lute of ten*, or they stand unconnected, *the lute ten, the ten-lute*. The *ten-stringed lute* would assuredly not have been mentioned specially by the Psalmist, had the number of the strings not been full of *significance* to him. In all probability he does not himself invent this significance, but the instrument had with reference to it been strung with ten strings. The exhortation to join musical instruments with the voice in the praise of God, is indicative of the infinite glory of God, which cannot be sufficiently praised by the voice alone.—A *new song* (compare Ps. xi. 3, xvi. 1, xviii. 1; Rev. v. 9), is a song which springs up new from the heart. The glory of God is new every morning:

we know it not only by hearsay and from the history of ancient times; and therefore we ought not merely to repeat the old song. It is a melancholy proof of the decline of the Church, when the exhortation to sing a new song is no longer attended to; in such a case, the greater care ought to be taken to preserve the old ones. 1 Sam. xvi. 17 agrees remarkably with the expression, "make good to play," i.e. "play beautifully." Possibly these words of Saul made a deep impression on David's mind. On בְּתוֹרָה, from which some, without any foundation, would conclude that the Psalm was intended to be sung at the offering of sacrifices, compare at Ps. xxvii. 5.

In vers. 4–11, the exhortation to praise God, is grounded upon His glory. First, in ver. 4, the Psalmist speaks of His truth and faithfulness. This is placed in the foreground, because the books of Moses abound with most glorious promises given by God to His Church, for the fulfilment of which, the truth and the faithfulness of God are the security.

Ver. 4. *For upright is the word of the Lord, and all His work is faithfulness.* Luther's translation is rather free, but perfectly correct as to the sense, which is more than can be said of most of the recent translators. "For the word of the Lord is true; and what He promises, He certainly performs." Stier has very unwarrantably objected to it, that it is "a precipitate effort at specializing." According to the parallelism, "the word of the Lord" is not in general His revelation, or even "His will as made known in the creation and government of the world," but the word which He has spoken in reference to His own people. What the Psalmist here predicates in general of the word of God (comp. Ps. xix. 9), is, according to the parallelism, to be considered as having special reference to the *word of promise*. This word is said to "be upright," inasmuch as it is in exact accordance with the idea: the speaker has promised what He is both *able* and *willing* to perform. Compare Num. xxiii. 19: "God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" Ps. cv. 42. —In the second clause, *the work* of God stands opposed to His *word*: He promises nothing which He does not perform, and He does all which He has promised. בְּאֵמֶנָה can only be translated, *in faithfulness*. אֱמֶנָה never signifies *truth*.

After considering the Divine truth and faithfulness, the

Psalmist leads the Church to contemplate the Divine *righteousness*, which must set limits to unrighteous oppression, and the Divine *Love*, which must above all be manifested in the deliverance of the Lord's people.

Ver. 5. *He loveth righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.* The consideration of the Divine *righteousness* can be a source of comfort only to the *righteous*. For, as such, they must have right upon their side in their contests with their enemies. From the injustice which they suffer on earth, they lift their eyes towards heaven, and in this way attain to the confidence that justice will get justice at last. Compare Hab. i. 13, where the Church addresses God: "Wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?"—On the second clause the Berleb. Bib. remarks: "The earth is a good mother, which nourishes us daily, and gives us all things richly to enjoy." *If natural blessings* thus manifest the love of God, how gloriously will that love be developed towards His own people!

The faithfulness, the-righteousness, and the love of God, on which the Psalmist has hitherto dwelt, and which are exhibited as linked together in the same way in Hos. ii. 21, 22, afford security to His people, when in danger, that He is *willing* to help them. But that the consolation may be complete, it is necessary to contemplate also the *omnipotence* of God, which secures His *ability*. In reference to the love of God, the Psalmist had pointed to the earth as the main seat of its manifestation; and in reference to His omnipotence, he points, as in Ps. viii., xix., xxiv., to the heavens with their stars, and to the sea with its waves. Has not He, who called the heavens into being by His word, and who restrains the fury of the waves, so that they do not overflow the earth, enough of power to protect you, O ye of little faith? If He is for you, who can be against you?

Ver. 6. *Through the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all their hosts by the breath of His mouth.* The host of the heavens is the sun, moon, and stars. That the idea of the *angels* being referred to is out of the question, is evident from the verbal references to Gen. ii. 1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host"—(in the preceding context nothing had been said of the creation of angels, but merely of the creation of the heavenly bodies),—and when we

reflect that it is some *tangible* proof of the omnipotence of God that must be here adverted to. Moreover, the heavenly bodies are throughout predominantly designated the host of God: compare at Ps. xxiv. 10. That *רוח* is not *spirit*, but *breath*, is evident from the words, "of His mouth" (compare Isa. xi. 4), and from the parallelism with "word:" a mere word corresponds to mere breath; both together form a contrast to the exercise of strength, to labour, to the use of means and instruments, without which feeble *man* can accomplish nothing. Then there are the parallel passages, Job xxvii. 3, "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils;" xxxiii. 4, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life;" Ps. civ. 29, 30, "Thou takest away their breath, and they die and return to their dust: Thou sendest forth Thy *breath*, They are created." But, on the other hand, the exposition which would interpret *רוח פיו* without reference to the *Spirit* of God, cannot be correct. In the history of the creation, to which the verse before us, as well as vers. 7 and 9, contain verbal allusions, the creation is described as the work of the *SPRIT* of God, and His *WORD*. First, the *Spirit of God* moved upon the face of the waters, then God *said*. We may thus suppose that the Spirit and the power of God are here represented by the *figure* of breath, because that in man is the first sign of life.

Ver. 7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap; He lays up the floods in store-houses.* The Psalmist brings it forward as a proof of the omnipotence of God, that the great fluid mass is brought together by the Lord like a heap of firm materials, so that it does not spread over the earth, as it did at first. The *כנס* is not "He gathered," but "He gathers." The wonder of Divine omnipotence here depicted is still of daily occurrence: if God did not keep back the waters, they would overflow the earth. The expression, "as a heap," stands concisely for, "in the way that a heap is gathered." There is assuredly no reference here to the elevated appearance which the sea presents at a distance. To collect the *waves*, as if they were firm materials, must be a work of Omnipotence. Allusion is made here, as also in Ps. lxxviii. 13, and in Jos. iii. 13, 16, to Ex. xv. 8, where, in reference to the waters of the *Red Sea*, it is said in the song of Moses, "The waters stood as an heap, *כמו נר*." The expression which is there employed to describe

the *miraculous* effect produced by the power of God, is here applied to the ordinary course of nature, for the purpose of teaching that this, when deeply considered, bears as clear a testimony to the omnipotence of God. The old expositors, whom Luther follows ("He holds the waters in the sea together as in a bag"), have confounded נָרַךְ with נָאָר.—The second clause is perfectly parallel to the first. הַהוֹמֹת are, as usually, "the floods of the sea." These are deposited by God within the bounds set to the sea, like treasures in a place of security. The point of resemblance is the sure keeping. Several expositors refer here, as at Ps. xxiv. 2, to the *subterraneous* waters. But the reasons which were there adduced against this view, hold good, partly, in the present instance; viz., the obvious reference to Gen. i., where nothing whatever is said of subterraneous waters, the necessity of some palpable proof of Divine omnipotence, etc.—Jo. Arnd quite correctly apprehended the practical tendency of this verse: "The prophet comes down from heaven, and leads us to the sea, where we may observe the omnipotence of God, and the power of His word. The great sea is shut up by the commandment of God: how then can He not tame men upon the earth, and put a bridle in their mouth?"

Ver. 8. *Let all the world fear the Lord; let everything that dwells on the earth stand in awe of Him.* Ver. 9. *For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.* That the Lord deserves holy fear and reverence, that therefore the terror of those men who have Him on their side is foolish, is here proved from His omnipotence as seen in the creation of the world. Jo. Arnd: "Lo! the God who has made by His word the great incomprehensible heavens, and upholds and manages them by His word, shall also be able to uphold and manage thee, a poor little worm." There is no reason for translating: "He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands." The use of the Pret. and the Fut. conv., the reference to Genesis, in which יִצְאֵר and יִהְיֶה alternate, and the comparison of the 6th verse, show that the creation of the world is here spoken of as a fact accompli. Ps. cxix. 90 shows that עָמַד has here its usual sense, "to stand:" compare with ver. 91. In reality, "to stand" is "to exist:" what does not exist, "lies."

Ver. 10. *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.* Ver.



11. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.* To the Lord, who has manifested His omnipotence so gloriously in creation, it is an easy matter to bring to nothing the proud plans of the nations; while His *own* plans are eternal, and cannot be frustrated, or their execution hindered by any one. How could it be possible, then, that Israel should quail in the presence of the heathen? If their thoughts towards them are for evil, they are only thoughts of *powerlessness*; while, on the other hand, the thoughts of *Omnipotence* towards them are thoughts of *peace*.

There follows the *second main division*, vers. 12-19. The proposition with which it is headed, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," the Psalmist proves from the fact, that everything on earth stands under the unlimited control of God, vers. 13-15, who abundantly compensates, by His, the Almighty's loving providence, for what His people want in worldly power, vers. 16-19.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He chooses for an inheritance.* The whole is grouped around this position. On the one side, it is a deduction from what goes before, and, on the other, it is a thesis which is proved in what follows. The Psalmist alludes, it is true, to Israel; still he expresses himself in general terms: Mich.: *beatam igitur gentem, quæcunque sit.*

Ver. 13. *The Lord looketh from heaven, He sees all the children of men.* Ver. 14. *From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all who dwell on the earth.* Ver. 15. *He who fashioneth for them all, their heart, who marketh all their works.* The looking of the Lord from heaven is not an *idle* act; it is the act of a king and judge. The 15th verse manifestly shows this. In it, the *heart* and the *works* stand in contrast to each other. The heart comes into notice as the workshop of the thoughts: compare ver. 11. The *thoughts* are wholly under God's control, "for He fashioneth the heart:" so are the *works*, "for He observes them." Who then need be *afraid* on account of the plans and works of men, if he only have God for his friend? God is mentioned here, as the use of the participle shows, as the Creator of the human spirit, in reference not only to His original act of creation, but also to His constant creating influence: compare Zech. xii. 1, and the Christology on the passage, P. II. p. 274. God, as the God of the spirits of all

flesh, Num. xvi. 22, xxvii. 16, has all emotions and thoughts in His hands: compare Prov. xxi. 1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will." Ver. 16. *To the king his great power affords no help; a warrior is not saved by his great strength.* Ver. 17. *The horse is a vain thing for safety, neither does he deliver any by his great strength.* The inference from the position, "that everything on the earth is done by God," is, that nothing is done with our own strength. This inference was in the highest degree *consolatory* to Israel. If the issue of events depended on human strength, they must *go down*. The article in הַיָּסוּד is generic—the horse is the species: compare Prov. xxi. 31, "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord."

Ver. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord looks upon those who fear Him, who hope in His mercy.* Ver. 19. *To deliver their soul, and to keep them alive in famine.* What cannot be effected by what Israel *has not*, worldly power, is accomplished by the loving care of his almighty God, in which he rejoices.

There follows in vers. 20–22, the *conclusion*, in which the Church gives expression to the *faith* which has been produced in her by contemplating the glory of God, and prays that she may receive according to this her faith.

Ver. 20. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord; He is our help and shield.* The first clause contains an allusion to the words of dying Jacob, in Gen. xlix. 18: "I wait for Thy salvation, O Lord;" and the second to Deut. xxxiii. 26. Ver. 21. *For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name.* The holiness of God is, in this place also, His glory: compare at Ps. xxii. 3. The holy name of God is the product of the long series of the manifestations of His holiness. Whoever trusts in this, and not in his own strength, may rejoice in the Lord, sure of safety. Ver. 22. *Let Thy mercy come upon us, O Lord, as we trust in Thee.* When faith, the *condition* of deliverance, is present, deliverance also must therefore soon appear.

## PSALM XXXIV.

The Psalmist renders thanks to the Lord for a deliverance vouchsafed to him; and exhorts all the pious to *join* with him in

the praise of the Lord, inasmuch as the Lord *always* manifests Himself as equally ready to help His people as He had been *on the present occasion*, vers. 1–10. “In the second part, he turns to believers, addresses them, and says, that it is his design to teach them the art of leading a quiet life, and of being secure against enemies. This art consists in the fear of God, in keeping watch over the lips, in doing no evil, and in following after peace: the consequences of these are prayer heard, deliverance out of all danger, the gracious presence of God, communion with Him, consolation from Him, and the protection of person and life.” Jo. Arnd.

Both parts of this alphabetical Psalm contain an equal number of verses—a circumstance which must have been designed, as that number is exactly ten. Ver. 11 is as little to be considered as forming part of the second division, as the title of the Psalm is of the first: it has altogether the character of an *introduction*. And ver. 22 is evidently the *conclusion* of the whole, summing up its contents, and not more specially belonging to the second than to the first division. Like the concluding verse of the 25th Psalm, which resembles still further the Psalm before us in having no verse allotted to Vau, it begins with *z*, stands out of the alphabetical series, which terminates at ver. 21 with the final letter of the alphabet. The first decade is divided, as it often is, into a three and a seven: vers. 1–3 contain the determination of the Psalmist to praise God, and the exhortation to the pious to take part in that praise: vers. 4–10, the basis of this determination and exhortation.

The occasion on which the Psalm was written is announced in the title: *Of David, when he concealed his intellect, i. e. feigned himself mad* (Luther, after the example of the Septuagint and the Vulgate, has erroneously given, “his behaviour”), *before Abimelech; whereupon he drove him from his presence, and he went away*. The history is related in 1 Sam. xxi. Being persecuted by Saul, he betook himself to the land of the Philistines. There, he who had on former occasions injured the Philistines so grievously, was recognised, and brought into the presence of king Achish. For the purpose of saving his life, which at the time was in very imminent danger, he feigned himself mad; and God blessed this expedient, which, considered by itself, was one of a very doubtful character. The 56th Psalm also refers to the same occasion: there we have the prayer which David ad-

dressed to God in his extremity; and here, his thanksgivings for deliverance.

It is not, however, to be imagined that David composed the Psalm when immediately threatened by danger. In opposition to any such idea, we have the *quiet* tone by which it is pervaded; whereas all the Psalms which were *immediately* called forth by a particular occasion, are of a much more stirring character. Besides this, we have the decided predominance of effort to draw consolation and instruction for the Church from his own personal experience. Finally, we have the alphabetical arrangement, which never occurs in those Psalms which express feelings immediately called forth by a particular object, but always in those, in which the prevailing design is to edify others. The fact is, that David—when, on some occasion in the subsequent part of his history, his mind became filled with lively emotions arising from the recollection of this wonderful escape, in reference to which he even here says, “I will praise the Lord *at all times*, His praise shall be continually in my lips,”—made it the groundwork of a treasure of edification for the use of the godly in all ages.

After thus limiting the sense in which to understand the title, it becomes an easy matter to defend it against the attacks of modern criticism. It has been said: 1st, “That it cannot be David’s, because the *Achish* of the book of Samuel is confounded with the *Abimelech* of the patriarchal times.” But this apparent contradiction disappears, when we observe that Abimelech among the Philistines was the title of rank given to all their kings, just as the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh—of Jerusalem, Adonizedeck or Melchisedeck—of the Amalekites, Agag—of Habor, Jabin—of Jemen, Toba, etc.: compare Beitr. p. III. p. 306, on Balaam, p. 149. In favour of this idea we have three reasons: the first is drawn from Gen. xx. as compared with Gen. xxvi., where both Abraham and Isaac have to do with Abimelech, king of the Philistines; the second, from comparing the title of our Psalm with 1 Sam. xxi.; and the third, from the nature of the name itself. Abimelech means “father of a king;” and refers to the *hereditary* descent of the crown among the Philistines, in opposition to the practice of *electing* the sovereign, which obtained in the neighbouring nation of the Edomites. It is altogether natural that the *proper name* should be made use of in the books of Samuel, which bear the character throughout of very exact historical treatises; and that the *generic*

*designation* should occur in the title of a poem, which, to a certain extent, must wear a poetical aspect. 2. "The title," it is maintained, "is literally copied from 1 Sam. xxi. 14; and therefore cannot have been composed by David, or by any of his contemporaries." But the title agrees with the passage referred to only in the single expression, "he feigned himself mad." And if it will not be granted that this may have been accidental, it may at once be urged, that the author of the books of Samuel may have borrowed that expression from the title before us, as it undoubtedly has more of a poetical than a prosaic character. 3. "In vers. 4 and 6, a deliverance from *many* dangers," it is said, "is referred to, and in ver. 10 the Psalmist speaks of *want* and *privation*." But that one trouble consisted of many parts; danger threatened David in many forms; and vers. 9 and 10 do not refer merely to the particular occasion, but contain a general affirmation, which points not merely to want of the necessities of life, but also to want of whatever is good, to want of salvation. 4. "The language and the style," it is maintained, "are different from the real Davidic Psalms." We reply, they differ certainly from those which modern criticism has marked out as exclusively the Psalms of David, but not at all from a great number, which, from their titles, and from internal evidence, were likewise composed by him. The difference is perfectly accounted for by the difference as to occasion, tone, and object. We may here advert particularly to the expression, "Come to me, ye sons, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of God." David had hence to do with the poor simple people, and directed his voice to them in love, and spoke so simply, that even a child might understand and participate in the blessing which God had given him.

*In favour* of the originality of the title, we have to urge, in addition to the general ground, that there is nothing in the contents of the Psalm to contradict it,—the more general the historical references in the Psalms are, the less likely is the title to be the result of combination,—first, that the manner in which personal experiences are applied for the benefit of the entire community of the righteous, is thoroughly characteristic of David; and second, that a title referring to the occasion in question, is what might have been expected, as David appears to have aimed at perpetuating in the titles of the Psalms, the remembrance of all the most remarkable incidents of his life.

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First, Vers. 1-3. The Psalmist intimates his intention of praising God, and exhorts all the godly to join with him in the praise.

Ver. 1. *I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall ever be in my mouth.* The assurance of ever-during praise exalts the greatness of the benefit, and places it in contrast to the lesser protections of God which we daily experience. Ver. 2. *My soul shall make her boast of the Lord: may the meek hear thereof, and be glad.* הלהל with ב is "to boast of anything." The meek (Luther, erroneously: *the miserable*) boast of what the Lord has done for the Psalmist, because it is prophetic of *their own* deliverance. Ver. 3. *Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.* As the ל cannot be the sign of the accusative, and as יהוה גל never occurs, but only "to make great the name of the Lord," Ps. lxi. 30, and as גל is never generally, "to praise," but always, "to make great," it is necessary to supply שמו in the first clause, from the second.

In vers. 4-10, we have the *basis* of the determination, and of the exhortation to praise God. Ver. 4. *I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me out of all my fear.* פנור is the object of the fear, the thing that is feared: comp. Isa. lxvi. 4. Ver. 5. *They look at Him and are brightened, and their countenance is not ashamed.* The Psalmist considers himself throughout as the representative of the meek. The transition, therefore, is easy from the singular of the preceding verse, to the plural here. He lays down a general position, which is anew confirmed by his own experience. Besides, the somewhat undefined description of the subject has been caused by the alphabetical character of the Psalm, which sufficiently explains the somewhat loose connection with what goes before and follows. On, "they look to Him," Jo. Arnd remarks: "Just as, in great extremity, we look around for help, to see if any one will deliver us, or as a child in severe sickness looks mournfully upon its parents, and they are unable to help, so our heart in faith looks mournfully to God." Of the two significations of גל, "to flow together," and "to brighten," or "to be bright," we cannot, with Luther, take the first, but must prefer the second: compare Isa. lx. 5, where "the being bright," is in like manner used of the restoration of serenity to the countenance. The הפך is "to be red," viz. with shame at the refusal of the prayer, and is the opposite of "the brightening." אל, the subjective

negative, is stronger than *לֹא*. The Psalmist is horrified at the idea of being ashamed, as something altogether abnormal. Ver. 6. *This miserable man cried, and the Lord heard, and helped him out of all his troubles.* As the Psalmist had made a transition from the particular to the general, as brought to view in his own case, he now returns to the particular, which was the pledge of the reality of the general. שָׁמַע is the Præterite. Ver. 7. *The Angel of the Lord encamps round about those who fear Him, and delivers them.* As the word *Jehovah* is a proper noun, and thus a definite one, we can translate, "the angel of the Lord." Considered by itself, "the angel of the Lord" might be taken in a collective sense; as, for example, "the horse," in Ps. xxxiii. 17. But yet there occurs no single passage in which מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה is demonstrably used in that sense; and it appears that this designation of the angels is designedly refrained from, because מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה was the common designation of the Angel of the Lord κατ. εἰ., the Angel in whom is the name of God, according to the Pentateuch, the Angel of the presence, Isa. lxiii. 9: compare on this the treatise on the Divinity of Christ in the Old Testament, the Christology, I. 1. The reasons for excluding this sense here,—viz. the expression, "encamps round," and the parallel passages, such as Ps. xci. 11, 12; 2 Kings xvi. 17, where angels are spoken of in a similar connection,—disappear when narrowly examined. The ANGEL OF THE LORD, as the Captain of the Lord's hosts (Jos. v. 14; 1 Kings xxii. 19), is to be thought of as attended by armies of inferior ministering angels. And חֲנָה is applied not only to an army, but also to the commander; for example, 2 Sam. xii. 28. Allusion is made to Gen. xxxii. 2, 3, where Jacob, on returning from Mesopotamia, and when afraid of his brother Esau, saw with the eye of the spirit a double encampment of angels, at the head of which, from comparing ch. xxviii. 13, and xxxii. 25, we are to suppose the Angel of the Lord to have been, and between which his own encampment would lie. These circumstances, the memory of which was perpetuated by the name Mahanaim, given to the place, contained a prophecy embodied in action for the benefit of all who fear the Lord. Ver. 8. *Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.* The "taste and see" invite, as it were, to a sumptuous feast, which has long been ready,—to a rich sight openly exposed to view. The imperatives are in reality not hortatory, but promissory: compare, "they have no

want," ver. 10. Ver. 9. *Fear the Lord, ye His holy ones; for they have no want who fear Him.* The emphasis lies, according to the connection, more on the *consequence* than on the condition: "only fear," or, "if you only fear." A true and lively fear of God, which proves itself to be such by obedience to His commandments (compare vers. 13, 14), need never be afraid of losing its reward. On קרבים, as designating the true Israelites, compare at Ps. xvi. 3. Ver. 10. *The lions are reduced to poverty, and are hungry; but they that seek the Lord have want of no one good thing.* That by "the lions" here, as at Ps. lvii. 5; Neh. ii. 12-14; Ezek. xxxviii. 13, xix. 2, 3, we are to understand powerful and violent men, is evident, not only from the context, and from the "being reduced to poverty," but also from the parallel passage, Job iv. 10, 11. Luther, after the Septuagint, gives, rather indefinitely, "the rich." We have here no special Old Testament truth before us. This is evident from the petition dictated to us by our Lord Himself, and from the promise which that petition necessarily implies, regarding our daily bread. It is also evident from Matt. vi. 32, 33. The 19th verse gives the necessary limitation, the reference to the manifold *sufferings* by which in this life the righteous are exercised.

There follows the *second* strophe, in which the Psalmist invites all to come to the enjoyment of safety through the sincere fear of God, which is intended for those only who thus come, but also *assuredly* for those.

Ver. 11. *Come, ye sons; listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* In "ye sons," we find one experienced in the ways of God addressing the *young*: compare Prov. i. 8, x. 15. On, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord," the Berleb. Bib. remarks: "And I will not only show you what it is, but will also, after that, give you the strongest reasons which will move you, and incite you." As the author, in what follows, manifestly directs his attention exclusively to the second point, it is obvious that the first is to be kept out of view, although it alone has occupied the attention of most commentators.

Ver. 12. *Who is the man that desires life, that loves days when he may see good?* The Psalmist asks the question, Who desires to be happy? To him who desires this—and where is the man who does not?—he prescribes, in what follows, the only and unfailing means by which it may be obtained. The "life," according to the explanation given in the second clause,



is not mere life, which frequently may be rather called death, but a *happy life*. Days in which we see good, are happy days.

Ver. 13. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak not guile.* Ver. 14. *Turn from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.* In giving the details of the fear of God, the duties toward our neighbour are, according to David's usual way, dwelt upon with particular care, because there hypocrisy, which is so ready to appropriate to itself promises with which it has nothing to do, finds least scope for its exercise. Ver. 13 refers to words, and ver. 14 to deeds. It is self-evident, that by "peace" here, we are not to understand "virtue," or "goodness." Jo. Arnd: "Hence must every man who desires to have a good life, take care not to cause disagreement. The devil and the world give many occasions of dispeace. But be thou wary, be silent rather, suffer somewhat, be patient, be gentle, be not easily provoked, be not revengeful. That thou destroy not noble peace, and God, with His blessing, depart from thee." Compare Rom. xii. 18; 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Ver. 15. *The eyes of the Lord look upon the righteous, and His ears upon their cry.* Ver. 16. *The face of the Lord is against those that do evil, that He may root out their remembrance from the earth.* Properly, it is, "the face of the Lord is in the evil-doers:" compare on 2 used in the hostile sense, Ewald's Kl. Gr. p. 521.

Ver. 17. *They cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their trouble.* The subject, the righteous, is to be supplied from ver. 15. This is less harsh than might be supposed: as the author, according to the announcement in ver. 11, has to do only with those who fear God, what concerns the *ungodly* comes into notice only as the shade which is intended to relieve the light. Thus in the 15th and 16th verses: "The eyes of the Lord, etc.; while His face, etc."

Ver. 18. *The Lord is near to those who are of a broken heart, and helps them who have a contrite spirit.* Brokenness of heart, and contrition of spirit, designate the deep, yet soft and mild, sadness which is to be found only in the godly. Compare Isa. lvii. 15, and the introduction to Ps. vi.

Ver. 19. *The righteous man must suffer much, but the Lord helps him out of it all.* The fact, that the righteous man must suffer much, shows how imperfect human righteousness is: for where there is still *suffering*, there is still *sin*; and where there is

much suffering, there is much sin. That the Lord will deliver him out of it all, shows the greatness of the Divine compassion.

Ver. 20. *He keeps all His bones, so that not one of them is broken*, viz. without His will and gracious permission. Compare Matt. x. 30, where we are told that the hairs on the head of the godly are all numbered.

Ver. 21. *Misfortune slays the wicked, and the haters of the righteous become guilty*. The relation in which this verse stands to the 19th, does not permit us to render רָעָה by "wickedness," the term for which, in the Psalms, is always רָע. There, the godly man is delivered out of all misfortune; here, misfortune is fatal to the wicked. To "become guilty," is to be represented, or to appear guilty.

Ver. 22. *The Lord delivereth the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him become guilty*. This is the sum of the whole Psalm. The soul is mentioned, because, as is obvious from the opposition to ver. 21, and from the personal experience of David (compare ver. 1), the subject of which the author is treating, is danger to life.