

There is, in all the glorious acts of Jehovah's will in Christ, and which hath been transacted on Christ, matter for perpetual praise. He doubtless praises the divine Father for the same in the high and holy place. He does so in his church below, in and by all his spiritual worshippers. The tongue is the glory of the human frame, as by it the Lord is acknowledged, blessed, praised, and glorified. The Messiah closes the Psalm with his profession of his faith in Jehovah as his God, and his determination to give thanks unto him for ever. *O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.* May it be given us, to take in the subject of this scripture into our minds. It will most assuredly give us some glorious ideas of our divine Lord. What is written are only items of the great truths contained in the Psalm. May the Holy Ghost, if it please him, convey to our minds such spiritual conceptions of our Lord in his resurrection from the dead, of his resurrection state, and of his giving continual thanks to Jehovah for it, as may fill us with holy wonder and admiration. Amen.

PSALM THE THIRTY-FIRST.

This Psalm is thus entitled, *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.* That is, *To the conqueror, to the victory, to the Eternity of Israel.*

The subject before us is a prayer of the Mediator, offered up to the divine Father, in which he expresses his trust in him, entreats help and succour from him, and prays for his name's sake to be led and guided by him. We have the faith of Christ, with which he committed his soul, in the very article of its separation from the body, expressed. Some account of the griefs of Christ, together with what he suffered from his enemies, neighbours, and acquaintance, is signified. His trust in God, his submission to his most holy will under all this, his prayer on his own behalf, and against his persecutors, is given. His praise offered up for the divine goodness is set forth. And the whole ends with calling on all the saints to love Jehovah, and to be of good courage, as he will strengthen their hearts.

V. 1. *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never (be put to confusion, or) be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.*

As prayer is an opening the heart, and expressing it freely and fully to the Lord; and when under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a greater discovery of a real saint's inward mind, and affection towards the Lord is

fully manifested; so it is here. The prayers of Christ, recorded in the Psalms, and in this now before us, open the very heart of Christ to our view, and discovers the very secrets of it to us. Never one so trusted in the Lord as Christ. None ever so prayed as he. His knowledge of the everlasting covenant was the foundation of all his prayers and supplications. The promises of it made to him as the Mediator, were his supports in prayer. His faith, in all its acts and exercises, were sustained by them. His hope and expectations for support and deliverances, were all from them. It is real blessedness to have a clear and spiritual apprehension of this; and much of the glory contained in the Psalms is lost upon us, by reason of our non-attention to this. Christ the Mediator here prays. He begins with a declaration of his trust in God. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.* He speaks in the present tense. He offers up his request; *let me never be ashamed.* He had grievous sorrows, sufferings, mockings, and revilings, from various causes and quarters, to endure. His request is therefore suitable to his case. He adds, *deliver me in thy righteousness.* By which we are to understand, *faithfulness.* Jehovah the Father drew the plan of salvation. He engaged the God-man to execute it. He must sustain severe sufferings as he proceeded in the performance of it. The Father had given him promises equal to all, and his faithfulness was engaged to fulfil them to Christ. He therefore founds his plea in this his prayer thereon.

V. 2. *Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.*

Here is an increasing importunity. The ear, or attention of Jehovah, is sought. Speedy deliverance is implored. Christ prays the Father he would be his strong rock, or a rock of strength. An house of defence, to save him. Whilst Jehovah had engaged to be all this to him, yet it does not prevent Christ from praying he would be all this. He had promised all this to him, in the council and covenant of peace; and by repeating this, the heart of the blessed Immanuel was drawn out, his faith exercised, and also increased and strengthened. This is very fully evidenced by the next words.

V. 3. *For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.*

Thus the Messiah expresses his strong confidence in Jehovah. He was to him all he needed. He had prayed, *Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me;* and he acknowledges Jehovah was all this to him. Thus he opens to our view his own faith, and the exercise of it. I

pray unto thee to save me. Thou wilt not deny thyself, thou canst not, for thou art my rock. Thou art my fortress. Thou art my strength. Thou art my shield. Thou art my deliverer. Thou wilt save me. Therefore for thy name's sake, according to all that passed between thee and me, in the transactions of eternity, now I am in my incarnate state, doing and accomplishing thy will, *lead me, and guide me.* Direct me, O Jehovah; lead and guide me every step. Be unto me all thou hast promised.

V. 4. *Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.*

It should be noticed how Christ renounces all dependence on himself. How he rests all upon the Lord. This very fully expresses the humanity of Christ, which had no subsistence of itself, but was altogether sustained by its union with the person of the Son of the living God. All these expressions concerning prayer, faith, hope, and deliverance, here predicated of Christ, are most exactly suited to his state of humiliation, and to his office as the Father's servant, who was to perform the whole work of righteousness and reconciliation in our nature, even with all the sinless infirmities belonging unto it, whilst he was to render the same, by the dignity and worth of his person, of everlasting acceptance before the Lord. Our Lord knew the secret snares his enemies plotted, and the nets they laid to catch and get him into their hands. All which were without effect, until his time was fully come. He here prays to be pulled out of the net, which they had laid privily for him. We read in John x. 39. *The Jews sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hands.* And again, *Then they sought to take him, but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.* John vii. 30. So that, as Christ could not pray in vain, the cited scriptures may serve as proofs of it. Yet even here, he makes use of this as his argument, why Jehovah should pull his feet out of the net, which his enemies had laid secretly for him, because he was his strength.

V. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*

Surely these words are sufficient to confirm us, that the prophet, all through this psalm, is speaking of Christ. There is but one person speaks throughout it. These words were the consummation words which Christ uttered upon the cross. Luke expressly tells us, *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.* ch. xxiii. 46. And Stephen saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,* seems to

be a quotation from them. I will admit as they stand in this Psalm, in connection with what went before, and which follows after, they may be considered as Christ's giving himself, his whole soul, in perfect submission to the whole will of Jehovah. His reason for it is, *Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* He here styles Jehovah the Father his redeemer. *Thou hast redeemed me.* Which is to be understood agreeable with the economy of reconciliation. As we trust all in Christ for our redemption, so Christ trusted wholly in Jehovah the Father, agreeable with covenant acts and promises, for his own redemption and complete deliverance out of the hands of all his enemies. He speaks of it as completed, which expresses the confidence of his mind that thus it would be. He entitles Jehovah, *God of truth*, as his truth would be herein realized. It must be truly blessed to commit ourselves, with the same words, to the care of Christ, every night, before we fall asleep. And it must be most truly blessed to express these words, when we leave our bodies in the article of death. May they be mine, Lord Jesus, as they were thine, in that most solemn moment. Amen.

V. 6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.*

The people of the Jews, and their rulers, were all regarders of lying vanities; or, they had not contemned the Lord Messiah. They, and all sinners who live and die in their sins, may most truly be said to be such as trust in a lie. Every thing is vanity out of Christ. Religion itself is a vain thing, and all religious persons are very vanity, if Christ be left out, either in part or in the whole. He is *the true God and eternal life. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* Christ hated every thing which was contrary to his Father's will. He could truly say, *I trust in the Lord.* This makes way for him to declare his goodness and joy in the mercy of Jehovah towards him.

V. 7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.*

The mercies of Jehovah, which were set before Christ in the everlasting covenant, and which were to be displayed, revealed, and exercised in him, and through his mediation, on himself as the surety of the covenant, and on the elect in him, and through the channel of his blood and righteousness, was matter of gladness and rejoicing to Christ. He knew what trouble was. None ever were in such as he felt, and had the experience of. He knew what adversities were.

He had no comfort, he had no support out of God himself. Jehovah had refreshed his soul with views and apprehensions of his mercy. He had considered him in trouble. He had considered his case. He had been gracious at the voice of his cry; therefore Messiah says to Jehovah, *I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy*: and he gives this reason for it: *For thou hast considered my trouble*. Thou hast taken a full and comprehensive view of it into thy vast mind. *Thou hast known my soul in adversities*. The fruit of which, with the benefit connected with it, is next expressed.

V. 8. *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my foot in a large room.*

No. Christ again, and again, escaped out of the hands of his enemies. His feet were again and again in a large room. Which were as so many pledges to his faith, of the complete deliverances he would in the issue obtain, out of the hands, and from the rage and cruelty of all his foes.

V. 9. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.*

These words are very pathetic. An account of some part of Christ's sufferings here begins; and many particulars which befel our Lord, when he was entered on his passion, is here enumerated to the close of the thirteenth verse. Whilst all this was spoken by way of prophecy, yet it is evident all this received its accomplishment in our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor do the New Testament writers open this part of the subject so clearly as it is here expressed. They wrote the history of Christ's sorrows and sufferings. But here Christ speaks on this subject himself. *I am troubled*. Compare this with these words, *Now is my soul troubled*. John xii. ver. 27. *Mine eye is consumed with grief*. How does this express how his very senses were affected and oppressed with what he saw, felt, and was exercised with! Yea, my soul and my belly, or vital parts, are greatly impressed with unspeakable grief. He calls on Jehovah as the subject of all this, saying, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am troubled: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly*. None ever needed Jehovah's mercy more than Christ. He was the surety of the elect. He was their representative. He bore all the griefs, and sustained all the sorrows due to their sins. His sufferings of soul and body were to equalize all the evils contained in God's curse and wrath due to each and every sin, and sinfulness, which the election of grace were the subjects of. Here Christ expresses himself upon the subject of his griefs. He makes use of it as an argument with Jehovah to have mercy on him, and be

his strong rock, his fortress, his house of defence, to save him from sinking. To exercise his mercy on him, as his suffering case required. There is no one particular trouble, sorrow, grief, and pain, our Lord was the subject of, but it is enumerated in the Psalms. And what was in his mind, under every particular part of his sufferings, and how it was sensibly impressed under each, and during all, is most particularly noticed in them. He here says, *I am troubled*. In his passion he said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*. Here he says, *Mine eye is consumed with grief*. Intense grief dries up the eye, and consumes it, so far as to weaken it, and sometimes to the very loss of it. What Christ saw with his eyes on the night of his passion, and the usage and mockery he met with from his most cruel foes, reached his very soul, and touched it to the very quick. It entered into his very mind. It reached his very vitals. *Mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly, or bowels*. He proceeds with this subject, saying;

V. 10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.*

Christ was the surety of his people. Their sins all meet on him, and were imputed to him. He was constituted by the will of the Three in Jehovah, in covenant, to be the sinner representatively; and also to be the sinner imputatively. He became all this in the fulness of time; on which account it is, he calls their sins his own. In his incarnate state, his life was spent with grief at the sins and iniquities of the age in which he lived. His years were on such accounts spent with sighing. He was a man of sorrows. He was most truly acquainted with all sorts and kinds of grief. Sin being imputed to him, he suffered throughout his whole frame for it. In consequence of which, his strength failed him. His very bones were consumed, by reason of the terrible blows given him in the high-priest's hall. Also when he was scourged by the command of Pilate. And as he was crucified, lifted up on the cross, and endured the six hours he was suspended thereon. Let us here recapitulate this. Christ says, *I am troubled*. He says, *Mine eye is consumed with grief*. It must then be exquisite. He says, *My soul is troubled*, and filled with grief. Yea, says he, it affects my very inward parts. *My bowels, my heart, my liver, my gall, it is all poured forth*. It is all in a state of agitation. *My reins are poured out within me*. My whole life hath been made up with grief. My years have been exhausted with sighing. My strength faileth me. My very bones are consumed. Here, in these

two verses, the sorrows of Christ, on account of the iniquity of his people, is most expressly declared, with what he felt in soul, in body, in his senses, frame, apprehension, and feeling. From this he proceeds, in verses 11, 12, 13, to express what insults and sorrows he received, in addition to the former, from his foes and enemies.

V. 11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.*

We have here the prophecy of what was to be the case of Christ, in the season and time of his passion. The sacred evangelists give evidence of the accomplishment of it in our Lord Jesus Christ. He was the reproach and scorn of his enemies. Not only the Roman soldiers, but even the Jewish people, who might be called his neighbours, he being a Jew by birth and nation, and born among them, and brought up with them. Yet none delighted to despise and mock him beyond them. No. They reproached him, and blasphemed him. He their Messiah! No indeed. They abhor the thought. They reproached him for his pretensions to Messiahship, even on the cross. His very acquaintance are afraid to own him. All his disciples forsook him. One betrayed him. Another denies him. They, the eleven, when they saw him seized and bound in the garden of Gethsemane, all of these forsook him and fled. He complains of this, and other things which came on him at that season.

V. 12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel.*

Notwithstanding all his miraculous acts, the cures he had wrought amongst the people, and the most heavenly instructions he had in his ministry diffused, yet it is so far lost, that no one comes forward to speak on his behalf. He is as a dead man. He is, in all his great acts, wholly forgotten. He is as a vessel broken in shivers. The remembrance of which is nothing worth. He perceives this. He feels this. He is deeply apprehensive of it, and impressed with the conception of his mind hereon. He therefore mentions it; and then proceeds with what is connected with it, saying,

V. 13. *For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.*

By reading what the evangelists relate, concerning the mock trial the Jewish rulers held, and brought Christ before, we see this most punctually fulfilled. All on it, with all the witnesses they caused to be brought in to accuse our Lord, we see how full of slander they were against him.

Even the court were full of fear they should not be able to fix any charge; neither could they. Yet they took counsel together against Christ. Die he must, guilty or not guilty. They wished to cover over their hellish designs, yet they could not. The innocency of Christ was such, that nothing with any shadow of truth could be made out against him. Yet they devised to take away his life. All which could not but increase the sorrows of our Lord's most holy mind. It shews that our Lord had a clear and intuitive knowledge of all that was to come on him. And also, that our Lord had a clear and proper perception of the whole. He was not insensible to the shame and cruelty, with the rage and villany of his enemies against him, although he was meekness and patience in its uttermost perfection under the whole.

V. 14. *But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.*

Which may be considered as referring to Christ's declaration, when before Pilate and Caiaphas, concerning his Messiahship. Christ trusted in Jehovah, to be carried through his sufferings. He knew he should emerge out of them. His faith never failed him, whether in the garden, before his enemies, or on the cross. *I said, thou, Jehovah, art my God.* Yet this was cast by his enemies in his teeth.

V. 15. *My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them which persecute me.*

By which I understand the Messiah leaving himself entirely with Jehovah, to fulfil in him the whole good pleasure of his will. As every season and period of his sufferings were all fixed in the counsels of the Eternal Three, he most cheerfully acquiesces in the same. So that in my views, these words are the same with our Lord's in the garden, when he said, *Not my will, but thine be done.* This seems to be confirmed by this part of his prayer, *Deliver me from the hands of mine enemies, and from them which persecute me.* He then prays for a shine of divine favour on him. Yet it could not be granted at this time. His suffering work must all precede this. When it is finished, it would be granted.

V. 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies sake.*

Christ was the Father's servant, according to covenant stipulation, and acted as such through the whole of his life and sufferings; which, when he completed, the Father ~~made~~ with the utmost of his pleasure, favour, and complacency on him: and saved him. And it was for his mercies sake, most exactly suited with covenant settlements.

V. 17. *Let me not be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.*

I consider this as prophetic. Christ would, and was exposed to all sorts of shame. He bore the shame, as he did the sin of his people. Yet I conceive he here foreshadows what would come on the unbelieving Jews. His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, would make way for the acceptance and spread of his gospel. As the malice of his enemies against him would bring down wrath from Jehovah on them, they would be ashamed. They would be silent in their graves. All which was the fruit of shedding Christ's most precious blood. The words are, as I apprehend, I shall not be ashamed. They shall be ashamed, &c. Declaring what would come on them.

V. 18. *Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*

Christ himself was the holy, just, and righteous one, of whom and to whom they had spoken grievous things. They had done it proudly and contemptuously. Yea, they had caused others to do so likewise. Surely nothing could be more just and equitable, that they should be visited by the Lord for it, and have their lying lips put to silence for it. Thus our Lord's prayer or prophecy, call it which you please, concerning his Jewish enemies ends.

V. 19. *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them which put their trust in thee before the sons of men!*

Our Lord is here expressing himself to the divine Father in a way of admiration, at a view of his goodness to the beloved ones, whom the Father gave him from everlasting; for whom he gave himself; to save whom out of the hands of law and justice, he came down from heaven, became incarnate, and was made man. He had lived, and was their righteousness. He had been made sin and a curse, and thus redeemed them out of the hands of law and justice, and brought them nigh unto God. All the blessings of everlasting love were to flow into their minds through his glorious work. He knew what a treasury of goodness was contained herein. It was all treasured up in his inexhaustible fulness. He was to have the imparting of it. He here praises God for it. A part of it was to be openly displayed to saints on earth, another part of it to saints in heaven. Hence it is thus expressed: *O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.* Many of these are in Jeho-

val's presence-chamber in glory. Many of these are on earth. Some of them were in the land of Judea at the time these words may be considered as spoken. *Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.* These, notwithstanding the crucifixion and death of their Lord, and the rage and persecution of the Jewish rulers against them, were to be greatly enriched with the goodness of the Lord, by being made partakers of the same. Great grace was to rest upon them. The name of the Lord Jesus was to be magnified in them, and by them.

V. 20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

Thus the Messiah expresses how Jehovah would deal with his disciples in Judea, at and after his death. And you may read the accomplishment of this in the care and goodness of the Lord to the church at Jerusalem, notwithstanding the several persecutions which broke out against it, soon after the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. These witnesses of Christ were often delivered out of prison in a miraculous manner. They had the Lord for their strength. They charged the Jewish rulers with being the murderers of the Messiah, saying, *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* Acts v. 30, 31, 32. And they were delivered again and again from the strife of tongues. I apply this scripture thus, that its true connection may appear. Let it not offend any, seeing I am not sermonizing, but commenting on what is before me.

V. 21. *Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.*

This is our Lord's expression of thankfulness to Jehovah, for leading him, guiding him, and working deliverance for him. He had supported his human frame under sufferings. He had heard and answered his prayer, he had been his strong rock, his fortress, his house of defence. He had saved him. He had pulled him out of the net. He had been his strength. He had known his soul in adversities. He had exercised his mercy on him. He had remembered him, and those he died for. He had filled his soul with views of his great goodness, laid up in the everlasting covenant for such as were heirs of life. He had kept many of them from the

strife of tongues. The Messiah's heart, as deeply impressed with all contained in these subjects, blesseth Jehovah for the same; acknowledging, in the expressions made use of, how strongly he was beset and surrounded with evils and enemies, yet Jehovah had delivered him; and in, and by his deliverance, shewed his marvellous loving-kindness unto him.

V. 22. *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.*

This is expressive of the state Christ was in, when the Lord laid iniquity upon him. He was then sore amazed. He was then exceeding sorrowful. He was then heavy unto death. Then was his soul troubled. Then his eye was consumed with grief. Then his mind and inward parts were all full of sorrow. Yet he emerged out of all this: so he did out of the hands of all his enemies, at his resurrection, for which he blessed Jehovah. To increase his praise, he expresseth how it was with him in the garden, and on the cross. He was then cut off from all sensible enjoyment of his heavenly Father's love. All manifestation of the divine presence and consolations were suspended. He was led then to say, *I am cut off from before thine eyes.* My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? It was not so for any long season. This extremity lasted but a few hours. Jehovah heard him. He gave him a gracious answer. The whole debt being paid, and the atonement being completed, the Father shone on him, and gave good evidence to his soul that all was completely satisfactory to his holy mind. On this Christ bowed his head, and said, *It is finished.*

V. 23. *O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*

This is Christ's address to his people, to his saints. He exhorts them to love Jehovah. There is abundant reason for it, on account of all he hath been unto Christ; and for all which he did for him. For all his love to us in him; and for his faithfulness unto Christ, manifested and set before us in the scriptures, as the record thereof. The reason is given for this exhortation. It is this. *The Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* This was realized in Christ, and on the Jews his enemies.

V. 24. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your hearts, all ye that hope in the Lord.*

Thus our Lord speaks to all his saints. He speaks all this from his own experience. He speaks it to inspire the minds of his people with courage. He speaks thus, that their hearts might be strengthened. He speaks it to all such as hope in

the Lord. May the Lord the Spirit make the word of Christ effectual. Amen.

PSALM THE THIRTY-SECOND.

Of David, Maschil. This is the title of it. In the margin it is varied thus: *A Psalm of David giving instruction.* This is the meaning of the word Maschil. It is instruction.

I conceive the subject of this Psalm contains an account of the blessed fruits and effects of Christ's passion. How transgression is forgiven, and sin covered upon the footing of it. Some consider it as sung in worship at the solemnity of the yearly expiation. It gives an account of what true blessedness consists in. That the conscience, oppressed with guilt, can get no relief until a confession of it is made, and the sinner looks to the sacrifice of Christ for absolution from it. Some consider it as written by David, before the prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to him; and that he expresseth the state of his mind whilst he kept his sin to himself, and restrained prayer before God. That on his confession of it, and pleading Christ's mediation before Jehovah, he was acquitted in his own mind. He having had this in his own case and experience, recommends the same to others. On this a confession is made of what the Lord was to him, as his hiding-place, preserver, and deliverer. Then the Lord gives a most blessed promise, that he will instruct, teach, and guide his people. A solemn caution is given, with an account of what shall befall the wicked, and a declaration of the Lord's mercy to such as trust in him. Then the Psalm closes with an exhortation to the righteous, to be glad and rejoice in the Lord, and to shout for joy in the subject set before them. This is the substance and outline of it.

Whilst I conceive the antitypical David may be considered in many parts of it, yet I shall not treat it as belonging to him, but to his whole church. It will be my endeavour to show, how it suited the case of the whole church, on the great day of atonement. This I shall explain in the beginning of my comment on it, as the Lord may be pleased to enable me.

V. 1. *Of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

All true blessedness consists in the forgiveness of sin. No man can enjoy this blessedness until he knows his transgressions are forgiven. He cannot know this but from the word, and by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Such, whose

sins are covered, are here pronounced *blessed*. Yet another scripture says, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*. How is this to be reconciled with the words before? It is an everlasting truth, no one scripture can contradict another. The subjects are quite distinct. Our Psalm refers to an ordinance of the Lord, in which the sins of the people were represented as hid and covered. Sacrificial offerings and services were of the Lord's own appointment. The daily burnt-offering prefigured Christ the surety of the church, as him who was to sustain the fire of divine wrath for his people. The sin-offering typified him, who was to be made sin for them. The meat-offering shewed forth it would be his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him. The drink-offering shewed how all the mediatorial acts and offices of Christ flowed from his own love, to his divine Father and his beloved people. All the sacrifices united were not sufficient to express the everlasting perfection and worth of Christ's oblation. It pleased the Lord to appoint one day in every year, which was to be a solemn fast, and all the congregation of Israel were to keep it, and by the sacrifices and services performed, their sins, iniquities, and transgressions, were to be removed from them. The high-priest was to lay his hands on the head of the scape-goat. He was to confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. Thus in a figure Christ was set before them. He is the true antitypical scape-goat. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He bore them in his own body on the tree. He hath removed them from us, as far as the east is from the west. When the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the people were laid on the scape-goat, they could not remain on them. They must be taken off them, that they might be transferred to the scape-goat. A man appointed for the purpose was to lead the goat into the wilderness. It is added, *And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited*. The Old Testament church well knew this was a figure of Christ. They apprehended hereby how they were acquitted in the sight of God. It was by substitution and transfer. The goat was a substitute for them. Their sins, iniquities, and transgressions, were removed from them, and transferred to it. Hereby it was an atonement was made for them. And by the services of that day, they were made clean from all their sins before the Lord. I do not quote, but would refer you to the whole sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Now all the spiritual worshippers looked on

this as a most solemn memorial of Christ. They saw in this type how Christ was to put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself. It led them to centre in his offering, which perfecteth for ever the putting-away of sin. It is conceived by Grotius, this Psalm before us was sung on this occasion. It most certainly was most admirably suited to the solemnity. They having seen the scape-goat removed out of the court of worship, and knowing all their sins, iniquities, and transgressions were on it, and that the goat was no more to return, might well say, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* The blood of the sacrifices were typical of Christ's propitiation, which hides all the transgressions of his church from view. So as God himself sees no sin in them, so as to charge it on them. All true blessedness springs from this. Pardon of sin is the fruit of Christ's propitiatory blood. It is the effect of his one everlastingly efficacious sacrifice. It is proclaimed in the everlasting gospel. The Lord speaks it out in such scriptures as these. *I will forgive your iniquity, and I will remember your sin no more.* Jer. xxxi. 34. *I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.* Chap. xxxiii. 8. *In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.* Chap. i. 20. All this is founded upon the one offering of Christ, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Of which all the sacrifices were typical, and the scape-goat and services on the day of atonement very expressive.

V. 2. *Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

Christ is the one alone antitypical Scape-goat. Jehovah made him sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. On this foundation, no iniquity is imputed by him unto us. And in this we are blessed beyond our utmost conception. And when we understand the doctrine of the non-imputation of sin, truly, from the word, and by the Spirit, we receive with it the knowledge of the pardon of sin, and seeing it is the fruit of Christ's death, and flows forth from an act of God's sovereign grace, we see it suits us. We make no objection against it, and in believing the revelation given of it in the word, we actually enjoy a sense of it, and have the witness of the Spirit that our sins are pardoned. It were well, if we attended carefully to these words,

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. It is not, Blessed is the man who never sinned; nor Blessed is the man that sinneth not. Nor is it, Blessed is the man who hath no sin in him. Were it so, we should have cause for everlasting despair. But it is, *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* The apostle, animadverting on this, says, *David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.* Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. As the people had seen all their sins laid on the scape-goat, they might well cry out, sing, and say, as it may be said they do here, *Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* The apostle omits these last words in his quotation, as they did not suit his subject, which was the justification of the ungodly which believe in Jesus. They are the fruits of believing on Christ. Such are as truly sanctified as they are justified, yet it is salvation in Christ as the subject of faith. Sanctification is the subject of spiritual sense.

V. 3. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

Nothing sinks the mind so much as sin. When the guilt of it is on the conscience, the heart cannot but feel it an intolerable burthen. The very body, as well as mind, is deeply affected with it. As nothing causes the frame to sink and wax old, as grief doth, so the prophet speaks of what, on account of it, he had been the subject of. He had committed sin. He had kept it to himself. He was unwilling to confess it. He did not apply to Christ for the pardon of it; yet he felt, in consequence of all this, what no tongue could express. His very moisture was decreased. His very bones feeble and enervated. His sighs were deep. He roared all the day long, on account of what he was in himself. By reason of sin, which was in him. An awful proof of which he had by the out-breaking of corruption. It was not singularly the prophet's case. It hath been, it is, it may be the case again and again, of many of the Lord's people. It was the Lord's will the effects of sin should be felt. Without it, the saint had not made a confession of his crime at the throne of grace. Some apprehend David is to be understood in all this, the Lord is jealous of his glory. He will pursue sin on the conscience to drive the sinner to Christ. It was so here. This is acknowledged in the next words.

V. 4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*

This is a continuation of the subject contained in the former case. The Lord's displeasure against sin was discovered. Some bodily disease, by way of chastisement, was sent. It was a very heavy one. It was seen it came from the Lord. It was constant. There was for a season no intermission. It was day and night on body and mind. It was as though the solids were wasting, and the radical moisture drying up. It brought a fever on the frame. Yet it turned out beneficial through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. For these words are spoken to the Lord. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.*

The Psalmist would have this noticed. When the Holy Spirit works effectually in convincing us of sin at first, it is to make way for our hearing, and receiving Christ. So it is to promote the same blessed end, he works on us after we have received Christ, and are in any case, or have in any circumstance backslidden from him. Now I should like to connect the subject before us thus : The speaker in the Psalm had been in the circumstances described. The Holy Spirit had brought Christ and salvation afresh to his remembrance. It might be had joined with the church, in the yearly ordinance of expiation. This led him to think over in his mind the nature of that holy institution. It leads him to say, *Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*

The Holy Spirit working with the subject, he apprehends afresh from whence his relief must come. It must be from Christ's being his sin-offering. This puts new life into his soul. He freely speaks out what his case had been. He desires that it might be noticed, that others might receive instruction from it. He then relates how he acted, when he was relieved with some blessed views of Christ. And this he does prayer-wise to the Lord.

V. 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

A true knowledge of Christ opens the heart, let its feelings be what they may. A true knowledge of Christ, as exactly suited to our personal case, encourages us to come with boldness unto Him. He is at all times accessible.

Yet we do not fully believe this. Especially when we are fallen through the strength of corruption, and have sinned against him. Yet even then we are encouraged by John. He says, *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.* 1 Epis. ii. v. 1. It is good to discharge the mind, and get rid of all our burthens, and more especially of our sinful ones, by speaking all out before the Lord at his throne. I acknowledged my sin unto thee. He came before the Lord and confessed his sin. This was peculiarly suited to the great day of atonement. It was the act of the high priest in the service appointed him by the Lord on that day, to confess all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the people of Israel over the head of the scape-goat. This went before the typical laying them on the head of it. As it was in the name and for all the people of Israel, so it was a proper season for each, and every one of them to confess their own personal and particular guilt before the Lord. As it made way in a spiritual apprehension of the subject to rest upon the great atonement made by the priest typically and representatively for them, it made way to look afresh to the sacrifice, intercession, and advocacy of the Lord Jesus. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.* All this was right. It may be considered as individually spoken. Or, it may be looked on as one for all others. Yea, I should see no impropriety if considered as spoken by Christ, as expressing thereby the heart and case, the feeling and frame of his people when they are brought to know the plague of their own hearts. *I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.* This is the second time the word *Selah* is used in this Psalm. It was used in the past verse, where the prophet expressed himself thus: *For day and night thy hand is heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.* This is worthy, says the prophet, to be noticed. He then says, *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.* This is also to be particularly noticed. Here are sin, iniquity, and transgressions mentioned, which comprehend the whole sum total contained in the transgression of God's law. It had been thus enumerated by the high-priest in his confession over the head of the scape-goat. And it was laid on it, and carried by the animal out of the land. The prophet speaks in allusion to it, and would have it noticed.

He obtained his suit. He received his pardon. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord. I did so. I found it was but to ask and have. I mention it, O Jehovah, to thy praise. *Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* I put this nota-bene here. Selah. Mark this well. May we receive instruction from it. The apostle says, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John i. 8, 9.

V. 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*

As none of them are without sin, so they all need the benefit of Christ's advocacy. As the services on the day of atonement were for them all, so they well knew, according to God's own appointment, that on that day the priest was to make an atonement to cleanse them, that they might be clean from all their sins before the Lord. Lev. xvi. 30. So they also knew, that in these sacrifices and services, there was a remembrance of sins. That they might be fitted to receive the benefit of the same into their minds, it became them to confess their sins to the Lord. More especially if they were oppressed with the guilt and demerit of them, as hath been described in opening the prophet's case. Jesus Christ is the true propitiatory sacrifice. He is the throne of grace. He is always accessible. He is nigh to all who call upon him. When oppressed in mind with the guilt of sin, when affected with the remembrance of it, every one that is godly, every one taught by the Spirit of Christ, will pray for the pardon of his sins. He will present himself before the Lord. He will entreat him to behold him in the face of his anointed. He will plead the everlasting completeness, virtue, and efficacy of the Mediator's Sacrifice. He will claim the benefit of Christ's advocacy. All which Jehovah the Father will attend unto, and make it evident by the inward and particular teaching of the Holy Spirit to the mind. This may be depended on. Such an one is safe. No evil can come upon him. Let the Lord's dispensations with sinners, and Christless persons be what they may. *Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.* There cannot but be perfect peace and safety to those whose sins are pardoned. Whose iniquities are forgiven. Whose sins are covered with the blood of Christ. Who are discharged by the transfer which hath taken place, concerning their having been laid on Him, and his righteous-

ness laid on them. No storm of divine wrath can ever arise against them. They may rest perfectly satisfied with their state in Christ. With their salvation completed by Christ. No floods of great waters, no kinds of sorrows, troubles, or calamities can ever do them any injury. In consequence of which the Psalmist triumphs:

V. 7. *Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.*

Christ is the hiding place. The sanctuary of his church. In him is their protection and defence. It is he who preserves them from trouble. It is he who compasseth them about with songs of deliverance. Here again the word *Selah* is affixed. Some say it is the same as *Amen*. As such the propriety of it most easily appears here. It is also conceived to signify the elevation of the voice in music. Then it comes in here very properly. Surely on pronouncing *Jehovah* in his persons and perfections, in his covenant and revelation made of the same in the word, was all this, it well became the worshipper to lift up his heart and voice to the Lord with peculiar elevation. The whole church, as the church of the living God, may use these words. So may every believer in Christ, individually for himself. It is here the prophet sets the crown on the head of Jesus Christ. And here he stops, and hears the voice of God speaking to him words of grace indeed.

V. 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

Thus the Lord utters forth a most gracious and important promise. It is very comprehensive. Christ being received afresh, in consequence of viewing Him in the ordinances, which represented Him, in his removing all the sins of his church, by the sacrifice of himself, the Father here engages to instruct the believer. To teach him in the way, Christ, in which he should go. To guide him with his eye. All which is matter of grace. As we add the marginal words, it adds lustre to the promise. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will counsel thee: mine eye shall be upon thee, I will guide thee with mine eye.* When the Lord the Spirit enables us to receive it into our minds, and seals it on our hearts, we receive fresh life and salvation, out of the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

V. 9. *Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*

These words are very expressive of the natural dulness

and stupidity of the minds of the Lord's people when left to themselves. It is a divine caution that they lean not to their own understandings. It includes the necessity they are under, to attend to the Lord's promise, concerning his instruction, and teaching them, of which he had spoken in the words before. This is followed with an account of what would be the case of the wicked, and of the blessing which would be the case and enjoyment of the righteous.

V. 10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.*

Every sin brings its own misery with it. As the wicked increase in wickedness, so their sorrows multiply with it. And from a variety of quarters, their sorrows are many. There is a vast contrast between the ungodly and godly. It is here made in the words before us. Here is a *but* of distinction. *But he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.* He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation, is, and shall be, all through life, and in the very article of death, compassed about with mercy.

V. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*

These words seem to be spoken by the Psalmist. They are equal with the words he began with. The sins of the people being removed from them, by the scape-goat; and their transgressions forgiven, and sins covered, by the typical sacrifices, and memorials of Messiah's bloodshedding and death, and they made righteous by his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, had reason to be glad. They might well obey the instruction. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous.* It becomes such indeed to shout for joy. The upright in heart could not but do so. All who depend on Christ's sacrifice and righteousness, may well be noted upright in heart. Because they hereby bring glory to God. As they acknowledge him to be worthy of their trust and confidence. May the Lord enable all his believing ones to be glad and rejoice in him. May they all shout for joy, in the full belief that the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin. May the Lord set his seal to this. Amen.

PSALM THE THIRTY-THIRD.

The subject of this Psalm is rejoicing in the Lord, and praising him, for his goodness in a variety of dispensations,

in creation, providence, and grace. I consider this to be a solemn commemoration of the power and providence of the Eternal Three in the one incomprehensible Jehovah, in the creation of the heaven and the earth. For the goodness of the Lord to the creatures on it. A very devout address is given to the inhabitants of the world, to stand in awe of Jehovah, on account of his omnipotence displayed in the creation of it, and settling all things in it. His bringing the counsel of the heathen to nought, with the immutability of his own counsel and thoughts, are mentioned, as subjects proper to excite the minds of saints to admire him. His omniscience and omnipresence, manifested in his providence, is very particularly enumerated. How his eye is upon his people for good is also very particularly expressed. And the Psalm closes with an account of the faith of the church in Christ, and her prayer to him. Or, if you please, to the essential Three in Him. For one of them cannot be acknowledged, but the others are included. If we address the Father personally, it includes the acknowledgement of the Son and Spirit. If we address Christ only as mediator, it concludes and involves the Father and the Spirit. If we address the Holy Spirit personally, it likewise, of necessity, involves the Father and the Son. It would be well to have a clear conception of this, as it would give us great enlargement at the throne of grace. To which we are exhorted, by the apostle *Paul*, to come with boldness.

V. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.*

There are none righteous, no not one, except those to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed. Such are. For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many are made righteous. Christ, the righteousness of his people, the righteous one, in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall for ever glory, stands related to his church. He is united to his people as their Head, Lord, Husband, Saviour. As such he wears in heaven the name of *Jehovah our Righteousness*. The church met together in worship, are called upon to rejoice in him. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.* Our Jesus is Jehovah. We are made *the righteousness of God in him*. He is the object of our joy and rejoicing. His person, his love, his finished work, contain sufficient matter and cause for our spiritual rejoicing. His union to us, his relation to our persons, his interest in us, afford grounds for our rejoicing in him. He is ours, and we are his. This should endear him to us, and be a motive for

our joy and rejoicing in him. We are here called upon to exercise our minds in this most holy exercise. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.* The term *upright*, is added, to denote the Lord's called people, brought by the word and spirit to believe in the person, blood and righteousness of Christ, are so. They are justified from all things. It is very comely for them to praise the Lord. It sounds well, and is comely: yea, it is well pleasing to the Lord himself they should thus express themselves before him.

V. 2. *Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.*

The instruments of music here mentioned, were such as were used in the temple service. It was then the case for vocal and instrumental music to be employed, in their expressing the praises of the Lord. We have nothing to do with this in our present New Testament worship. We have no command, nor example for it. And we are much better without it. The melody of the heart far exceeds it. This, as also the former verse, is introductory to the subject-matter of praise.

V. 3. *Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.*

It is expressive of this song, that it was on a new subject. Or that all former ones were not sufficient on this occasion. Or that were it possible, they would contract all former songs, and offer up all the praises contained in them, and offer them up in this. It is proposed to play skilfully and exercise their wisdom, in setting the tune, and playing it well, it being an act of worship; and it being accompanied with the vocal sounds of the singing choristers, it would make a loud noise, and be heard afar off. This is addressed to the priests and Levites who were to perform this part of the service. It is also to be noticed, the worshippers are called on, to consider their relation to the Messiah, to remember they were righteous in him, and this to come before him, and rejoice in him. This reminds me of what a poor woman once said to me, I observe in reading the Psalms, said she, *David considers himself as one with Christ, as clothed with his righteousness and washed in his blood, and thus comes before him, and thus worships him.* We cannot, we do not come before the Lord aright but as we do likewise. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him*

a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise. The reason for which is given.

V. 4. *For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.*

Here the subject of the Psalm begins. It consists in celebrating the word of Jehovah. His truth. His works. His goodness. His creating power. His all-commanding fiat. What he hath done in our world. He made it. He fills it with his goodness. He upholds it. He governs it. For all which he is to be feared, admired, and praised. There is great and good reason why the inhabitants of the earth should stand in awe of him. For the display of his eternal power and Godhead in creation; and for its continual exertion in the support and continuation of it. These are the subjects begun here, and carried on to the close of the ninth verse. By the word of the Lord, I understand here the essential word. It seems it must be so, as personal acts are ascribed to him. He is to be rejoiced in, and praised for, on account of his works. *For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth.* By which I understand, the excellency and perfection of creation expressed. There is no one thing in and throughout the whole creation but is right. All is good as it came out of his hands. It was pronounced by him, on a full sight and inspection into the whole of it, to be very good. All his works are done in truth. Every part of the creation is so linked together, it so depends each on the other, that the wisdom of the Creator is most evidently manifested thereby. The wisdom of the word of the Lord, his omnipotency, his sovereignty, his goodness, shines forth in all. As it also doth in his ends and designs in all, on all, and by all. These words, *For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in truth,* are as a preface to what is further to be said on the subject; and the providence of Christ, the Essential Word, the Creator of the world, and the upholder of it. The Psalmist therefore adds,

V. 5. *He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*

Jehovah is the fountain of wisdom and judgment. He hath evidenced it in the formation of this our earth, in making it an habitable globe. In furnishing it with a variety of creatures. In filling it with all good. In regulating its seasons. In creating man on it. In the whole of his will expressed and exercised on him, and towards him. His own account which he gives of it is this: *For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be*

inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else. Isaiah xlv. 18. Let it be remembered, the word Jehovah is expressive of the self-existing Essence, in which the Essential Three exist, distinct in personality, yet one and the same Incomprehensible God, whose will and power is one and the same in every act of creation and providence. Jehovah loveth righteousness and judgment. All his will, the thoughts of his mind, his vast ends and designs upon all his creatures, and every part of his creation, is agreeable to the perfections of his essential nature, and worthy of himself. If he would create an habitable globe, he would have rational creatures on it, that they might praise him, for giving them being and existence. He would also have irrational ones, to serve the former. He so provides for each, every sort and kind of good suited to their natures, that his care of them is fully manifested. It is an immutable truth, that *the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* And for this, the Psalmist calls on the saints of the most high God to celebrate his praise.

V. 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

Here we have the whole creation ascribed to Jehovah, Father, Word, and Spirit. These words are a comment on the three first verses of the first chapter in Genesis. There we read, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.* Here is God, the Spirit of God, and God said, the Three in the one Incomprehensible Essence, declared by Moses to be the creators of the heavens and the earth. And in the words before us, this is confirmed. Here is the Lord, the Word of the Lord, and the Spirit, or Breath of the Lord, to whom the whole creation is ascribed. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.* It was by the word of Jehovah, the heavens and the earth were formed. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* John i. 1, 2, 3. Job, speaking of God, says, *By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent,* i. e. one of the constellations. This is ascribing the furnishing the heavens with sun, moon, stars, planets, satellites, comets, &c. to Jehovah the Spirit, which is perfectly agreeable with Moses and David. The Father, the Word, and the Spirit, are the one Incom-

prehensible Jehovah. They expressed it to be their will before the world was, in a covenant which obtained between them, to save an innumerable company of sinners from the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell, by the person, incarnation, obedience, and bloodshedding of the holy and immaculate Lamb. It is a means of encouraging the faith of the Lord's people, to consider, that he who made the heavens and the earth is the author of their eternal salvation; and that the Three in Jehovah, who were jointly concerned in creation, and in every act of providence, are equally and jointly engaged in their complete and eternal salvation. And one reason why the subject of creation is introduced here as matter for praise, is to remind the church the eye and heart of the Three in Jehovah, were upon her, and she was beheld in Christ the Lamb who was to be slain, before the heavens and the earth had being by creation. And this is a very comfortable reflection. Indeed, it may be safely said, had it not been so in the divine mind, the Lord God would not have created it; and without the creation of it, Christ could not have been brought forth, to enter on it by his incarnation, and save us by his passion.

V. 7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*

This is an effect of Jehovah's power, and a most wonderful display of it. The earth is surrounded by the sea. It is the very foundation of it. Some conceive it to be higher than the earth. Job, speaking of God in his infinite and unsearchable works, says, *He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until day and night come to an end* (xxvi. 10.) There is a vast abyss of waters in the very centre of the globe. From it all the seas, fountains, and rivers are supplied. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in store-houses.* He once brought it forth, and drowned the whole earth with it. As the creation of it, and its continuance as a part of the creation of God, is a most solemn proof of the greatness of his majesty and omnipotency, so he speaks to Job out of the whirlwind on it, thus: *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.* Chap. xxxviii. 8, 9, 10, 11. So he addresses the sinners in Judea, in Jeremiah's time, thus: *Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea,*

by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? Our earth is as an arch or bridge thrown out over it, which shews the greatness and immensity of his acts, in our world, and in that part of the visible creation which belongs to us, and lies open to our view. The prophet, from the consideration of the creation, *that by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;* as also from Jehovah's continued act on the waters, which he speaks of thus: *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap; he layeth up the depth in store-houses*—would have this use made of it by all the inhabitants of the earth.

V. 8. *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.*

A proper knowledge, view, and spiritual view and consideration of these subjects, would produce this. None can attend to these important subjects, but they must be filled with solemn awe and reverence. The heavens above us, the earth on which we dwell, the sea, the waters, the springs, the rain, the dew, all express the greatness, the majesty, the power, the sovereignty of Jehovah unto us. *Let all the earth fear the Lord.* Let them acknowledge him. Let them submit unto, and worship his Christ. Let all the inhabitants of the world, universally, collectively, and individually, stand in awe of him.

V. 9. *For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.*

Jehovah spake all into being by the word of his power. He continues all things to the present moment, by the same word of his power. Providence is a continual creation. It is equal to the first act of it; therefore the Lord is equally to be praised for it. It may be, hereby was intimated that before the close of the ages of the world, the Lord Christ would be acknowledged, and all would know the Lord. Thus the first part of the subject ends. The word of the Lord is to be rejoiced in by the righteous. He is to be praised, and it is comely for them to express it concerning him, because of his excellency and perfection expressed in, and throughout every part of his works, and for his equity or wisdom, which shines forth in and throughout them. For his love of righteousness and judgment, in all his providential acts. For his goodness with which he hath filled creation. He is to be praised, as one essentially and personally in Godhead with the Father and Spirit, for his concern with them in the creation of the heavens. For his creation of the earth, which is

included in his being the Creator of the heavens, it being at one and the same instant. For his amazing power displayed in, and over the vast ocean, and abyss. For the energy of his word. He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast; all things in creation, and providence, in most exact obedience to his will. All which is sufficient to fill all the earth with awe, and all the inhabitants of the world with solemnity; and will be the case before time is closed. At the season when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord; then they will adore and worship him; and he shall reign as King of saints, and King of nations, for ever and ever.

Now, as I conceive, a new subject begins, and is continued in the three following verses.

V. 10. *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the counsel of the people, (or devices of the people) of none effect.*

Which is a proof of his ruling in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou. It seems here to be brought in to support the church of Christ, his righteous ones, whowere so, they being clothed in him, and with him, as the Lord their righteousness, to rejoice and triumph in him, over all their enemies, and over all their devices against them. He is the supreme Ruler of the world. He knows every individual in it. He searches all hearts. He understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. He bringeth down every high look, in his own time and way. He hath, he doth, he will frustrate and bring to nothing every device of the heathen, of all sorts of enemies against him and his. He will lay them low even in the dust. He will confound all their devices, so that they shall prove to be ineffectual.

V. 11. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

There can be no alteration in him. He is Jehovah. The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. His love is everlasting. His will immutable. His covenant from generation to generation. His mercy is eternal. His counsel, which is the gospel, standeth for ever. He says, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. The thoughts of his heart are invariably the same. This is ground for strong support and consolation to his church. It is brought in here for that very purpose. They need fear no evil, no enemy, no counsel and devices of the heathen against them, because the counsel of the Lord, his good will and pleasure towards them, is always one

and the same. Let his church therefore in every age consider this. The thoughts of Jehovah are, throughout all generations, thoughts of love, mercy, peace, and good-will to them.

V. 12. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

The people of the Jews were formed into a nation by the Lord. He was their God. They were his people. He chose them for his own inheritance. They are here referred to. They were a typical people. Amongst them the Lord had a multitude of his elect, who from time to time come out of their loins. They were a beloved people. A redeemed people. A numbered people. A people brought nigh to God. The Lord entered into covenant with them, and they with him, at mount Sinai. He said unto them by Moses, *Ye have seen what I did unto you; and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar people, or treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* Exod. xix. 4, 5, 6. These words were recited by Moses unto them. They said, *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord; who said, *Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever.* This was declared to them; and three days after, the Lord came down on Mount Sinai, and gave forth the fiery law; after which, the people being retired, he gave forth a body of laws, which were to constitute their commonwealth. The next day, an altar being erected to represent God, and twelve pillars set up to represent the twelve tribes of Israel, burnt-offerings and peace-offerings being offered; *Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins: and half of the blood sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.* Exodus xxiv. 6, 7. Thus they became the nation whose *God is the Lord*. As such, they had various memorials of Christ. In the laws given them. In the worship prescribed them. In the promise of Christ who was to be born unto them. In the typical persons amongst them. In the priests, in the high-priest. In the

Nazarites, prophets, and king. In the cities of refuge, &c. It might, therefore, on these accounts, be most truly predicated of them, *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord*, and the nation, or people, whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance; especially as some among them were, in the highest sense, the Lord's holy nation, his peculiar people, his treasure, and inheritance. This, as applicable to the saints of the most high God, who are renewed in the Spirit of their mind, and formed for Jehovah's praise, sets forth this blessing in a very high point of view. They may most truly say, *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance*. There are times and seasons in their cases, frames, and experiences, when they enjoy the reality of this in their own mind, through the divine grace and influence of the Lord the Spirit. A new subject follows.

V. 13. *The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.*

Here the providence of the Lord, which he continually exerciseth towards all mankind, is, as I conceive, the subject, which is continued to the 17th verse. The heaven of heavens is the place and habitation of Jehovah, according to the scriptures. Hence the prophet says, in his address to the Lord of heaven and earth, *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory*. Isa. lxiii. 15. And the Psalmist says, *The Lord's throne is in heaven, the Lord is in his holy temple, his eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men*. Psalm xi. 4. His eye, the eyes of the Lord, run to and fro throughout the whole earth. The sons of men are all in his immediate sight and view. Their persons, sinfulness, cases, circumstances, wants, miseries, enemies, and necessities, are looked on, and beheld by him. None of them but are the objects and subjects of his providential care. He looketh down with special attention. He beholdeth all the sons of men.

V. 14. *From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.*

The omnipresence and omniscience of the Lord is a solemn subject, especially to the wicked, seeing God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. He is every where present with his creatures, or they could not be sustained. He knows every motion of their wills, or he would not be God. The workers of iniquity cannot escape his eye. He proposes these questions. *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret, that I shall not*

see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. Jer. xxxiii. 23, 24. Yet I conceive, the passage in the Psalm before us, more especially intends the goodness which the Lord, from a view of the cases of his creatures, is pleased out of his royal bounty to exercise towards them. I look on it as suited to what the apostle says to his son Timothy. *For therefore we both hunger and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe;* (chap. iv. 10) He is speaking of divine providence, of Jehovah the Father exercising it towards all men. He entitles him the Saviour of all men; that is, the preserver of all men: for Christ is not in the context. God is the Preserver of all men, especially of those that believe in the name of his only begotten Son, for life and salvation. He maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. So says our Lord Jesus Christ himself, Mat. v. 45. I conceive the omniscience and omnipresence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our high-priest, is made use of by the apostle as a great encouragement for our approach to him in prayer. He says, *For the word of God,* (i. e. the Essential Word. It is a person, not a verbal word he is speaking of) *is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.* Heb. iv. 12, 13. It is the mercy of Christ to all his saints, and they may well rejoice therein, that he knows the whole and uttermost of them. He is therefore well suited to their every sinful case and grief. Blessings on him for it.

V. 15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike, he considereth all their works.*

All of them proceeded from one man. God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth. He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. Their hearts are all before him. They are all fashioned alike by him. They are now all equally and alike corrupt, by reason of the loss of the image of God, in which they were created, in Adam's fall. It may here be conceived these words are expressive of the authority and influence which the Lord exercises over the wills of men. In which sense, *he fashioneth their hearts alike*, so as to govern the world, and accomplish his vast and deep designs in this our world, by suffering men to exercise

their own wills, by which he accomplishes his own. *He considereth all their works.* They are all before him. He pays the most immediate attention to the same. As we all came from one man, so we are almost exactly like that one man. We are born in his image and likeness. It is the Lord's act to fashion us in the womb; and, as the effect of one and the same cause, so we are each and every one of us alike in conception, nature, and birth. All the difference one from the other is by the providence and grace of God. Yet such is the attention of Jehovah to the whole human race, that Solomon says, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* We have the omniscience and omnipresence of God, thus set before us, in the exercise of his all-wise providence towards the inhabitants of the earth, in overruling their wills and affections, in considering their works, and in exerting his power, without which there can be no deliverance from present evil. No. None of the creatures can afford man help and succour. He must sink, if he be assisted by them, except the Lord uphold him. There is no salvation, temporal, spiritual, or eternal, out of him.

V. 16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host : a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.*

The people of Israel had abundant proofs of this. You may read an account of the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horses, and people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude; yet they were smitten by *Jonathan and his armour-bearer*, which brought such a divine terror on them, that they fell upon themselves. 1 Sam. chap. 13 and 14. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was not delivered by the multitude of an host. No. He, and all with him, when they pursued the Israelites into the sea, the Lord brought the waters upon them, and covered them. There is no might, nor strength, nor counsel, against the Lord. This was evidenced indeed, when Abijah, king of Judah, and Rehoboam, king of Israel, engaged in battle. One of them had an army of four hundred thousand chosen men; the other engaged with an army of eight hundred thousand chosen men. Yet God smote *Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.* *And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand.* *And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter, so there fell down slain of Judah five hundred thousand chosen men.* *The children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers.* 2 Chron. xiii. 5, 16, 17, 18. All victory, deliverance, and strength, is in the Lord alone. It is one of the peculiar

excellencies of the sacred scriptures to ascribe all this to Jehovah, and give him glorious praise for the same.

V. 17. *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*

Thus the Psalmist goes on, viewing and reviewing the providence and power of God. He rules his creatures. He governs the world. He overrules the sins and affections of sinful men. He gives strength, and withdraws it. Creatures are only what he wills they should be. There is no safety in battle, but as he protects. Absalom's mule ran away from him, leaving his hair so implicated in the thick boughs of an oak, as exposed him to be killed by Joab and his men, as he most justly deserved. Even the war horse cannot deliver any by his great strength. Thus the prophet delivers himself, on the general and particular exercise of God's providence towards the inhabitants of the earth. It respects his view of them. His attention of them. How he disposeth of them. That such as are engaged in war, cannot be secured one moment from the dangers they are exposed unto, but by him alone. That any host of men cannot save a king. That a mighty man cannot deliver himself out of danger by his great strength. That a horse is a vain thing for safety. That an horse shall not deliver any by his great strength. This being settled, we are called upon to view the very peculiar exercise of his holy mind on his saints, who are vessels of mercy, whom he hath afore prepared unto glory.

V. 18. *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.*

It is a subject for faith to be exercised on. To contemplate how the Lord's eye is upon his church. His people are his treasure. His jewels. His portion. His peculiar care. They know him, in and by the revelation he has given them of himself in Christ, in the word. They believe on him by it. They fear before him, so as to walk as becomes their relation unto him. The Lord preserves them. He saves them. He protects them. He surrounds them. He defends them. They are the objects and subjects of his mercy. They hope in him for the further displays of it on them. *Behold, the eyes of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.* These words afford real encouragement to the church of the living God, both as collectively and personally considered. The Lord's eye is upon them. They are inscribed on the heart of Christ. He hath graven them on the palms of his hands. All his dispensations towards them

are for their good. One very special blessing which follows on his eye being on them, is expressed; and what it consists in is declared:

V. 19. *To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*

The Lord Jesus Christ fixes his eye on his people. He never withdraws it. He knows their every case and circumstance, from what quarter trials may be expected to come on them. He is their constant remembrancer. He keeps his eye on them, to deliver their soul from death. He hath by his own wonderful act abolished death. They shall never die, only fall into his dear arms, by sleeping the sleep of death. By death, in the text, I conceive distress or want may be understood; because with it this sentence is connected, *and to keep them alive in famine*, which is very expressive of the Lord's abundant mercy unto them. His eye is upon them, when the pestilence may rage, when famine is in their borders, *to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.* I consider this in an especial manner to regard temporals. There is in it enough to encourage our hearts and hopes in the Lord. The Old Testament saints found it so, therefore they say,

V. 20. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.*

It may include their expectation of the Messiah. He was their help and shield indeed. He would save and defend them from all evil. He would help them, and be a present help to them in every time of trouble. He would shield them from the whole host of hell. Yea, he would be help and shield unto them manifestively and influentially. The church here expresseth her faith in the name of the whole family and household. *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.* Thus she expresseth her faith and confidence in Jehovah. Let others die immaturely, or be surrounded by ten thousand deaths, and be in deaths oft through famine or other calamities, yet the Lord will deliver us. We stedfastly believe this. We confidently rely on it. The Lord Jesus Christ is our hope. A Saviour in time of trouble. He is our shield, to deliver our soul in death, and keep us alive in famine. We therefore thus express ourselves: *Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.* And his word is our security. It is the ground of our confidence and security.

V. 21. *For our hearts shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.*

Christ is the object and subject of all true joy, and rejoicing. His person is inestimable. His love ineffable. His

mercy immutable. His salvation everlasting. His riches unsearchable. His name above and beyond every name in earth and heaven. We, says the church in the name of all believers, *we have trusted in his holy name.* This is given as a reason why their hearts should rejoice in him. The church having placed all her confidence in Jehovah the Saviour, speaks confidently concerning rejoicing in him. *For our hearts shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.* All this is the language of faith. Let us speak and practise the same.

V. 22. *Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*

This is the conclusion of this sacred poem. Here is an address to Messiah, for his mercy to rest on his whole church. Nothing beyond this could be desired. His mercy includes every good. A deep sense of it on the mind, with a spiritual enjoyment of it in the heart, is really heaven upon earth. The church prays this might be granted equal to her hope and expectation. *Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee. Amen.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

It is entitled, *Of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.*

The title shews the occasion on which it was penned. The account is given in 1 Sam. xxi. 13. The sum of it is this: David flying from Saul to Achish, king of Gath, who is here called Abimelech, for his safety, being discovered by those about the king, and thereby in some danger, he changed his behaviour, intending by this policy to free himself. He feigned a distemper, and acted as if he had been mad before Abimelech, who on this account sent him away. Thus David escaped the danger he feared, and thereupon makes this Psalm of thanksgiving to offer up to the Lord for his deliverance. It deserves to be noticed, the name of the king here called Abimelech, is elsewhere called Achish, king of Gath. This was his proper name. The other was the common name of all the kings of that country, as Pharaoh was to the Egyptians, and Cæsar to the Romans.

The subject of this scripture is thanksgiving. I look on it, as David was a type of Christ, so many circumstances which he was in the course of his life in, made way for his mind to be opened to contemplate the Messiah, and the Holy Ghost inspiring him, led him to write concerning the blessed

Immanuel. I shall not, however, consider Christ in this Psalm, no further than by considering him as the object of this praise, who wrought deliverance for his servant. The manner in which I shall aim to open the Psalm will be thus: 1. You have the prophet's praise to Jehovah the Saviour, for the mercy which he had received from him. 2. He expresses his own case, and declares what the angel Jehovah was as the security and defence of all his beloved ones; and excites others to partake of the blessings of his goodness. He proposeth to give them instruction, and exhorts them to trust in Jehovah. 3. He declares the Lord is nigh unto his people, whom he describes to be of a broken heart, and that he saveth such. 4. He concludes with the perfect deliverance of the righteous, and that none of them shall be desolate. As Christ is the subject of the song, I shall keep him in view, and shall very particularly apply some passages of it unto him.

V. 1. *Of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, or Achish; who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

David was a persecuted man. Saul was his continual enemy. He fled, to avoid his rage, to Gath. Here he was also in danger. He found himself in extreme circumstances. It was absolutely necessary to get off. He acted as though he had been mad. He changed his behaviour before Achish and his nobles, in whose hands he was. He feigned himself mad. He scabbled or made marks on the doors of the gate. He let his spittle fall down upon his beard, 1 Sam. xxi. 13. Whilst all this seems strange in so great and valiant a man as David, yet it shews the Lord's people are the subject of natural fears. When in great and imminent danger, they sometimes are permitted to fall below their dignity. Nor should they be too much censured, but rather pitied. David escaped out of his perilous situation by this means. Being escaped, he thinks on Christ, the glorious Messiah, as his deliverer. He offers up his praise, and writes this Song to perpetuate his goodness for this. As such I consider it. *I will bless the Lord at all times.* It is very expressive of the frame and feelings of his mind. It shews the impressions the Lord's deliverance wrought for him, had produced. He blesses Jehovah the divine Essence, and each of the Three in that incomprehensible and incommunicable Essence for the mercy granted, for the protection exercised, for the benefit bestowed. He proposes what he will be found in the continual practice of. *I will bless the Lord at all times: his*

praise shall continually be in my mouth. No doubt but the prophet might have some views, how his glorious antitype would be completely delivered out of the hands of all his enemies. We must not conceive him ignorant of this. We shall not think amiss if we conceive this was now very particularly in his mind, and served to enhance the value of his personal deliverance, and increase his blessing and praises for it.

V. 2. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.*

He found in the Lord Jesus Christ, his deliverer, matter for blessing, and praising him continually. He knew him as revealed in the gospel. He knew him in personal communion. He knew him as the object and subject of his faith. He knew him as his Saviour, and he had now found him to be his present and great deliverer. He is therefore determined to make his boast of him. *My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.* Blessings on him, he hath appeared on my behalf. I am once more escaped out of the hands of my enemies. I will put this together with his former deliverances of me. He shall have all the praise. It is alone his due. I will set him against all my evils, and enemies, and boast of him, and boast in him alone. I will recite his acts towards me. I will express his grace and goodness in them. I am fully persuaded there is no other way to celebrate his praise, and confess my gratitude to him. There are some who will reap advantage therefrom. *The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.* Such as are humbled under the mighty hand of God, under a true sight and sense of their inherent sin and sinfulness, and are favoured with spiritual perceptions and apprehensions of the person, the love, the mercy, the incarnation, righteousness, sacrifice, and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, would, on hearing what he had done for the Psalmist, rejoice with him, and be partakers of his joy. He therefore speaks to them, and calls upon them to join with him in this most delightful work, of *boasting in the Lord*, and increasing his praise hereby.

V. 3. *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

Thus he excites them to unite with him to magnify the Lord. To exalt his name. All which he and they had the greatest reason for. Jesus, who is Jehovah, God over all, blessed for ever, his love is an everlasting love. It is fixed on the persons of his beloved. It is without the least shadow of a change. The ground of which lies in his being Jeho-

vah. He says, *I am the Lord, I change not.* Out of the immensity of his love, he became the saviour of his people. His salvation of them, contains a subject and matter for perpetual praise. He is a present Saviour, as he is an everlasting one. He hath, doth, and will deliver his people, even in this present time state, as their cases may require. The words before us are great. When the angel Gabriel had announced to the Virgin, that she should conceive, and be the mother of the humanity which the Son of God would take into personal union, and when Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghost pronounced her the mother of the Messiah, she could use no word to express her sense of this most astonishing grace but this: *My soul doth magnify the Lord.* I cannot open it. It is a deep word. It is vastly comprehensive. It is expressive of all which can be done to glorify the Lord, for the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. O magnify the Lord with me. Join in this, all ye who hear me, make my boast in the Lord. All ye humble ones, who hear what I say on this most important subject, and are glad to hear my mind so deeply impressed with his goodness; *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.* There is an inexpressible sweetness contained and expressed in these words. He then speaks of his own case.

V. 4. *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

It deserves our very particular attention, in reading the account given of David in the scriptures, what free access he had to the Lord. A great part of real blessedness consists, in free and frequent accesses to Christ. And this as our particular wants, cases, and circumstances are. He speaks out what his case had been. What he had done. What deliverance the Lord had wrought on his behalf. He had been full of fears. His whole mind had been possessed with them. He knew his situation. That none could deliver him but the Lord. He sought the Lord for deliverance. He had obtained it. He would have it recorded to Jehovah's praise. He would he should be magnified and exalted for the same. His deliverance was completed, even beyond his utmost expectation. He was delivered from all his fears. This was a salvation indeed. Yet this had been what many saints beside himself had experienced.

V. 5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*

All saints before his time, all saints in his time, they all, each, and every one of them, had their crosses, trials, ene-

mies, and fears. They all looked to Christ, for support under them. For a sanctified use of them. For receiving profit by them. For the removal of them. Nor did they look and pray in vain. No. As they looked unto him, they were lightened. As they continued looking unto him, their burthens dropped off their shoulders. They were never disappointed. They were never ashamed of their confidence in the Lord. It should be remembered, as Christ addresses us to look to him for salvation, saying, *Look unto me, and be ye saved.* So we must look alone to him for every grace and blessing. For deliverance from all our fears, and from all our enemies. We must look to him every moment, and for every thing.

David exemplifies the truth he had instanced in the cases of others by his own, in the next words.

V. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

Thus he confirms and sets his seal to the truth and faithfulness of God. The grace which the Lord hath displayed on others, the fulfilment of his promises unto them. His appearances for them, his deliverances wrought for them, and on their behalf, are so many encouragements to us. And what Jehovah the Saviour hath done for us, revealed to us, wrought on our behalf, should be recorded by us, and spoken out to his praise. David styles himself a poor man. None of us, I conceive, can make a true estimate of his sorrows, losses, and afflictions; nor of his fears at Gath, when he was in the hands of his enemies. None could help him but the Lord. None could hinder him from calling on the Lord. He could do this, and his enemies not know it. He could pray in his confinement. He did so. The Lord was gracious unto him. He put it into the heart of Achish to turn him out of doors. By this means he had his liberty; and thus he was delivered out of all his troubles. Not so delivered, but as he lived, and went on the journey of life, he must, it could not be avoided, but fresh ones must take place. Yet every deliverance, and this very particularly, demanded from him a song of praise. He ascribes this to the Lord. He speaks of it, as bestowed on him, in answer to his prayer. And it was to him a great deliverance. Thus all which concerns himself is finished, in the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses. The three first verses were introductory to the subject, which is freely and fully recited in the next three verses; after which follow some important observations and rules, serving to encourage the whole church of Christ to trust in him, with

the most certain expectation of receiving all good from him, especially deliverance and protection.

V. 7. *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

The angel of the Lord, is the same here, who is styled, *the angel of God*, Exodus, xiv. 19. He is Jehovah Jah, the Saviour, who brought Israel out of Egypt. Who went before them by day, in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them by day, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. The word *angel* signifies a messenger, or one sent. The first time we have the word angel in the Bible, is in Genesis xvi. He appeared unto Hagar in the wilderness of Shur. His title is, *The angel of the Lord*, v. 7. *And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou, God, seest me*, ver. 13. The same angel of the Lord, called out of heaven to Abraham, when he was about to cut the throat of his beloved Isaac, and offer him up for a burnt offering. See Gen. xxii. We read of angels in the plural, when Jacob was about to enter the land of Canaan, on his return into Mesopotamia, Gen. xxxii. 1. And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when he saw them he said, *This is God's host*. He gives Christ this title just before his death. *The angel which redeemed me from all evil*, Gen. xlviii. 16. And it was the same angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said, *I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, Exodus iii. 6, whose blessing Moses invokes, Deut. xxxiii. 16. *The good will of him that dwelt in the bush*. He is Jehovah. He is the angel Jehovah. He is the angel of Jehovah's presence. He was sent by Jehovah to guide the Israelites through their journey in the wilderness, and to bring them into the promised land. He is him of whom Jehovah says, *My name is in him*. He appeared to Joshua as he was by Jericho, in the form of a man, with his sword drawn in his hand, and declared himself to be *captain of the host of the Lord*, chap. v. 13, 14. And the psalmist is here speaking of him as such: *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him*. Such as fear him, is Old Testament language for trusting in him. By the fear of the Lord must be meant the worship of the Lord. And true faith in God, is essential to true worship of him. Jesus Christ is the security of his people. He is as a wall of fire round about them. He was this to Elisha at Dothan, 2 Kings, vi. 15, 16, 17. His servant seeing an host of Syrians, with horses and chariots

compassed the city, cried out, Alas, my master! how shall we do? and he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said; Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man: and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha. These were angels sent to protect the man of God. And what could they have done, if their Lord and head had not been with them? David therefore speaks as a military man, and expresses the subject under the idea of Christ as captain of the host of the Lord, as encamping his armies under him, so as to protect, defend, and deliver his church and people. He proceeds with his subject, and describes what the Lord is in his goodness to his beloved.

V. 8. *O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is a fountain of inexhaustible goodness to his people. He is every thing to them. He hath every thing for them. He is every thing unto them which they can possibly desire. He is able to do in them, and for them, exceeding abundantly above all they can ask or think. In their new nature, they are most exactly suited to enjoy him—to receive from him—to receive him, and his good things—to relish and enjoy the same. In their new birth, or inner man, they have eyes to see him—an understanding to receive him—an heart to love him—a palate to taste, feed upon, and be nourished by him. They have affections suited to him. They have hands to handle him—feet to walk in him. They taste and relish the heavenly sweetness contained in him, his word, his work, his promise. Hence the prophet addresses them, saying, *O taste and see that the Lord is good.* It is thought from these words, the apostle Peter gives us the following periphrasis of a believer in Christ: *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,* 1. chap. ii. 30. A Christian is one who hath tasted that the Lord is gracious. It is the Lord Christ who is here spoken of. He is grace—all grace. He is nothing but grace. It is not a distinct thing from him, but he is full of it. Such as are drawn by the cords of everlasting love to him, are really satisfied of this. They have had proof and evidence of it. In his gracious reception of them. In the cure and health he hath imparted unto them. In the free pardon he hath bestowed on them. In the full supplies he grants them. In the communion he holds with them. *O, taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is.* You will then most assuredly cry out

yourselves, *O, how great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!* The psalmist pronounces this to be an immutable truth: Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. It would be well, were we to observe these terms, *He believed in the Lord. Trusted in the Lord. Hoped in the Lord. Saved in the Lord. Rejoiced in the Lord. Boasting in the Lord.* As it would clearly discover the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the object of all these acts, and the subject of our minds, when these acts are put forth, and exercised on him. Whereas, we are too apt to think and speak of these acts, as though they were founded and exercised on something we are the subjects of. The prophet speaks of some instances of the Lord's goodness to such as trust in him, in the two following verses.

V. 9. *O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*

The Psalmist would have the saints to proceed on in their worship of Christ. He styles them saints, reminding them hereby, that they were separated ones. They were consecrated for the worship of the Lord. It is said of Jacob, that *he swore by the fear of his father Isaac.* Gen. xxxi. 53. An act of religious swearing is an act of worship. This act was performed in the name of Jehovah whom Isaac worshipped. Consequently to fear the Lord, must be to worship the Lord. None but saints can worship Jehovah Father, Son, and Spirit, because none but they have the true and saving knowledge of him. Such are abundantly provided for. *There is no want to them that fear him.* He knows them, and all they need. He will never turn away from them from doing them good. They may safely rest their minds on the truth. It having been confirmed age after age; and will onward to the very end of time. Therefore let none of the saints doubt concerning it.

V. 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*

All which is spoken by way of encouraging saints to trust in the Lord for all good, and to expect to receive it from him, out of the infinite fulness of Christ. So it comes to pass in the providence of God, the roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are sometimes broken. The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad. Consequently they must lack. Jehovah asks this question of Job. *Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lion, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?* xxxviii. 39, 40. Surely no. It would be too desperate an attempt. These animals with

all their strength and rapaciousness, sometimes do lack and suffer hunger, whilst they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. They shall have food convenient. Bread shall be given them. Their waters shall be sure. My God, says the apostle, shall supply all your need. The psalmist proposes to give some wholesome instruction to such as fear the Lord. This he does in the four following verses.

V. 11. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*

He would have them draw nigh unto him. He addresses them most affectionately. He calls them children. Which implies he had put on the bowels and tenderness of a father's heart towards them. He would have them receive instruction from him. Hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Or some branches of it, which it were absolutely necessary for them to practise. This he begins by way of question, which when put by a wise man, is a most ready and proper way to convey instruction to the mind, without the least offence or effrontery.

V. 12. *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?*

Life is an addition to being. It is the very excellency of it. All are desirous of the continuation of it. Saints that they may live it to the glory of God. Many of them desire to live many days and years, to the end they may attain a large measure of the knowledge of God, in his persons and perfections. In his will, counsel, and covenant. In his works of nature, providence, and grace. They desire long life, that they may serve their generation, by a communication of useful knowledge and instruction. Many saints would live long, if the Lord please, that they might see, what they esteem good, the spread of Christ's gospel. And some for the good of their families, friends, and relations. Nor is there any sin, or evil in such desires. No. Long life is a blessing. The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness. And Christ bestows this on many of his favourites. It is said of wisdom, *length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honor: her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Yet whoever among the family and household of faith desires life, and loveth many days in this present evil world, needs this advice; which is given in the two following verses, and without the practice of them he cannot be happy.

V. 13. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*

The tongue will ever need a guard. It is the worst member in the body, when improperly used. It sometimes expresses the evil contained in the mind, in a most awful way. Even in saints, it often prevents their real happiness. It must be kept, or it will engender strife and ill-will. More sin is committed by it, than any of the Lord's people seem at times to be aware of. It becomes necessary with all who desire life, to seek to be preserved from too much speaking. From meddling with any subject which does not concern them. To pray against the evils committed by the tongue. To entreat the Lord himself to set a watch before the door of their mouth. To keep the door of their lips. To speak the truth in meekness and sincerity. The apostle Peter quotes these and the following words, and sets them on, as an apostolic exhortation on believers in Christ Jesus united in a church state. No one ever suffered by attending to it. But very many because they have not closely attended unto it.

V. 14. *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

This is a part of that godliness which is profitable for all things, which hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come. Saints are to depart from all evil, both doctrinal and practical. They are to do good. All the good which lieth in their power. They are called by the Lord in his word unto it, and should be careful to be found in the practice of filling up their places and stations, in the world, in the family, in the church of the living God, in their various relations and connections, as become their high rank and dignity, as the called of God in Christ Jesus. They should seek peace. To preserve it. To increase it. To avoid any, and every thing, which might in the least interrupt it. They should pursue it. This is well pleasing in the sight of God. There is none more hateful than a make-bate. A revealer of secrets. A deceitful worker. It should be thus with us, who desire life, and loveth many days, that we may see good, for the following reasons:

V. 15. *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

Such as are in Christ, they are the persons who have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. By which they are made the righteousness of God in him. The Lord's ears are open to their cry. It becomes them therefore, in the belief of this, to practise before given. As hereby they will lift up holy hands in prayer without wrath and doubting. Nothing can be more consolatory to such as fear the

Lord, than this here declared. The eyes of the Lord are upon them. His eyes of love, mercy, and providence. His ears are open, and also always attentive to the voice of their cry. They can never come before him, but he is ready to hear them. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them, says Christ our Lord. The psalmist draws a contrast between the righteous and the evil, against such as are evil, and the doers of it. This is in the succeeding verse.

V. 16. *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

We have had David speaking and recording the goodness of the Lord unto himself. In the deliverance which had been wrought for him. He had encouraged the Lord's saints from it, to rejoice and joy with him. He had expressed how safe they all were, because Jehovah Jesus surrounded them, and was their guard and defender. He had said all he could to encourage their hearts and hope in the Lord. He had given them the best advice he could, for them to attend unto through the journey of life. He now declares the evil state and case of such as were evil persons, and evil doers. He says, *the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* I conceive he here refers to Saul and his courtiers, who by their cruelty towards him, had forced him into a strange land. Saying in effect, *go and serve other gods.* He was well persuaded the Lord would not always spare them. No. He would set his face against them. He would most assuredly visit them. And in so doing would exercise his wrath upon them. He would *cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* He has so done. We have the account of it in the written word. It could not but be so. Jehovah cannot act contrary to the holiness and perfection of his nature. He loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity. This is natural and necessary to his own essential goodness and equity. He cannot behold his people in a state of oppression, and hear their cry under it, but he must exercise his pity towards them, and deliver them sooner or later from their oppression and oppressors.

V. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

Thus the prophet confirms the truths he had been expressing, from his own experience. The Lord Jesus had wrought a great deliverance for him. It was in answer to his prayer. He received and looked on it as such. He enjoyed it the more. It so savoured of God's good-will to him, it was the sweeter and the more acceptable. He had the evidence in his own soul that the Lord had heard him,

He makes his acknowledgements to the divine majesty of it, and declares it before others, to increase his praise. He says the Lord heareth the righteous, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. This is great indeed. In the present state, one sorrow succeeds another. One wave another. One storm another. One trial another. Yet every prayer put up to Christ, which he hears and answers, is a proof deliverance will be granted. And every deliverance wrought for any of us, is a proof and evidence of further deliverances, should we need them. In the issue, at death, all the Lord's saints will have complete deliverance out of all their troubles. It may give us who know the Lord, at this very moment present relief, to know and consider, there is but a step between us and death, and but that step between us and eternal glory.

V. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

It is therefore good for us, at times, to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. It being the means of the Lord's being nigh unto us, in a manifestative and communicative way. It is even good for us at times, to have great sights of our own inward sinfulness, as it breaks our hearts, and makes our spirits contrite. We cannot have any confidence in ourselves, when we truly experience what we are. Let us be favoured with actual communion with the Three in Jehovah, all this is grace. Yet our unholy natures are only kept under by it, they are not made holy through it. If we are favoured with very high and exalted views of our Lord Jesus Christ, and find and enjoy a real heaven in him, yet afterwards we chill, and feel our affections benumbed, our spirits flag, and our hearts depart more or less from him. We cannot experience worse evil, nor be more afflicted than we are, under real views and clear apprehensions of it. We go to Christ, and present ourselves before him, when it is thus with us. And we find he is nigh unto us. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, of a sorrowful spirit. He is nigh unto all the holy mourners in Zion. And such are holy mourners as mourn over their own inward sin and sinfulness, and for their heart departures, and the alienation of their affections from the living God. Yet awful as such cases are, and the troubles of the spiritual mind on such accounts, yet David, who, it may be, was as much and as deeply exercised this way, as ever any of the saints were, says, *The Lord saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. He is an advocate with the Father. He exercises this office in heaven. It is this which encourages us to go to him with

our sinful cases. He being Jesus Christ the righteous. He being the propitiation for our sins. It is he who pleadeth the causes of our souls. Yea, blessings on him, he pleads for us when we cannot for ourselves.

V. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.*

I conceive as the tense is altered from the plural to the singular number, the Messiah is here intended. He was most emphatically *the righteous one*. His afflictions were many. They were all on account of sin. He being the surety of his people, their sins were laid on him. He suffered for them all sorts of pain, grief, torment, agony, every thing contained in the term afflictions, he was the subject of. Yet out of all he was delivered. His deliverer was Jehovah his divine Father. His deliverance is the salvation of all his people. The apostle seems to have his eye on this passage, when reciting his persecutions, &c. he says, *out of them all the Lord delivered me*, 2 Tim. iii. 11, 12. The prophet here, as I conceive, having spoken of the deliverance the Lord had wrought for him, leads all the saints to look at their Lord and Head, as emerging out of all his afflictions, and delivered from them by Jehovah the Father, as full evidence they would one day be effectually delivered out of all theirs. His deliverance out of all his afflictions, being their complete and eternal salvation.

V. 20. *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.*

As it was the Lord's command, that not a bone of the Paschal Lamb should be broken, which was accomplished in Christ the true Paschal Lamb, of which the evangelist John says, that Pilate having given leave that the legs of those who were crucified with Christ should be broken; when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. He adds, the scripture was hereby fulfilled, *a bone of him shall not be broken*; referring to the Paschal Lamb. And in the margin we are directed to this very scripture before us; *he keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken*. Thus it is evident our Lord Jesus Christ is the person spoken of in these words: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivered him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken*. Nor can one of the members of Christ, not an individual saint, be broken off him, or separated from him. It deserves our consideration, how every particular circumstance which befel our Lord in his life and sufferings, and his body, even when a breathless corpse, is noticed in the Psalms. What is omitted in one, is taken notice of, and expressed in the other.

V. 21. *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*

This is a declaration of what would befall Christ's enemies, the Jews. I do not mean Christ had, nor hath none beside. No. All wicked men are enemies to him. But I want to confine myself to the subject before me. He was the *righteous one*, here spoken of, whom the wicked Jews hated. Evil came upon them for it. It was Jehovah's sword drawn out of its scabbard, and with it they were slain. They were as a people and nation, made desolate. It was in the prophet's mouth a prophecy. He therefore speaks in the future tense. It hath been accomplished. Yet the effects remain on the people of the Jews to the present moment.

V. 22. *The Lord redeemeth the souls of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

Jehovah the glorious Christ, the Messiah, hath finished his work. He hath redeemed the souls of his people. In him they have redemption. It is eternal. They being brought by the Word and Spirit, to the knowledge of it, become his servants. And they being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, and having blessed conceptions of their complete redemption in Christ, serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their life. They go on trusting in him. They hope in him. They expect to receive all they want from him. Nor shall they ever be disappointed. *None of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* Which may be looked on as a divine promise which belongs to the whole household, and family of faith. May we add to it, saying each of us, Amen, so be it, O Lord. Thus this Psalm ends. May the Lord bless it, and what is written on it, to us. Amen.

PSALM THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

Of David. This is the title of it.

The subject matter of it is as follows. It contains a prayer, in which Messiah is personated. In which his case is expressed, as exercised with, and persecuted by his enemies. He prays to Jehovah to plead his cause. To confound his enemies; and he gives his reasons for this. He very particularly enumerated their wicked acts, their injurious treatment, and vile abusive carriage towards him, and speaks of the kindness he had exercised and expressed towards them. He then entreats with the greatest importunity for deliverance from their rage and cruelty which they

exercised on him. He sets forth their wickedness. He intreats Jehovah to be near unto him. To plead his cause. To judge him according to the righteousness and equity of the divine mind. To confound his enemies. He prays for his friends, and professeth he will continually utter forth Jehovah's praise, in consequence of Jehovah's hearing, answering, and granting him the requests which he here puts up. This is the substance of this Psalm before us.

V. 1. *Of David. Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; fight against them that fight against me.*

The great and glorious Messiah, in his incarnate state, was more glorious and higher than the heavens. More pure than the light. More bright than the sun. More holy than heaven itself. Yet he suspended all this. He was in the form of a servant. All to be seen in him outwardly and manifestatively was, his holiness, purity, righteousness, and perfection in all his actions. He wrought such works as none ever did. He might have been known by them to be the true Messiah. Yet the Jews would not confess him. He was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, all through the course of his whole life. Whilst all this came upon him, in consequence of his voluntary engagement in the everlasting covenant, to be the mediator between God and man, and the surety of the elect, yet this did not hinder the holy and pure mind of Christ from being conceptive and particularly impressed with all sorts of sufferings he was the subject of in the days of his flesh. He knew his cause was good. He knew what the opposition of his enemies was. He knew full well all the thoughts of their minds. What their malice and hatred against him was. He well knew they were continually opposing him. He had none to plead his part. Jehovah alone knew his case. He therefore prays to him, and presents his cause before him. *Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me; fight against them that fight against me.* This was agreeable to the transactions in the everlasting contract. Christ's requests were always in perfect harmony with the same. And here our Lord prays so as for his own faith to be supported, amid all the rage and malice of his enemies. To this purpose he makes use of the following arguments.

V. 2. *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.*

The request is, that Jehovah would be to him, in grace and truth, what Messiah now needed him. That he would manifest himself. That he would exert his power. That

he would put it forth on his behalf. That he would stand up for his help. By giving him strength equal to all he was to encounter, and be exercised withal. As the humanity was left to feel its own sinless weakness, and impossibility to bear up of itself, and endure the contradiction of sinners, the man Christ Jesus in union with the Son of God, is more importunate in his prayer to Jehovah the Father, for his deliverance from the extreme rage of his enemies.

V. 3. *Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.*

By drawing out the spear, and stopping the way of Christ's persecutors, may be understood, Jehovah's restraining their malice and power on them, so as to withdraw their minds from their cruel devices against himself. It is also expressive of what would absolutely befall them. They were to succeed in all their designs against Messiah. Yet they would rue for this afterwards. So that by these requests, the Jewish nation had prophecies recorded concerning themselves. These words: *draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me*, are in connection with the former, very expressive of the importunity of Christ's mind. It contains an importunate request to be delivered from their utmost rage. To which our Lord subjoins a petition on his own behalf, *Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation*. This would be allsufficient for the support of his vast mind. Jehovah was salvation to him. Yet he prays for a fresh evidence of it, by so carrying him on, and so supporting him, and all the rage and fury of his enemies, as may give full evidence of his being *the Son of man*, the glorious Messiah. He then proceeds to pray for the confusion of his enemies.

V. 4. *Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.*

Our divine Lord could not but pray so. His enemies were Jehovah's enemies. They set themselves against Christ, in direct opposition to the light of revelation, and their own consciences. They resisted the Holy Ghost in his testimony for Christ in what they did. The truth of Christ's Messiahship could not have been fully proved, if wrath had not come on the Jewish nation and people, to the uttermost for it. Some read the words in the future tense thus: *They shall be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: they shall be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt*. Thus making a prophecy of it, which I conceive a very just interpretation.

V. 5. Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.

This is very expressive of sudden and immediate destruction. Chaff before the wind is most easily scattered, dispersed, and removed. When Jehovah sends an agent, or ministering spirit, as he did in David's time, and whom he and the elders of Israel saw, with his hand stretched out over Jerusalem to destroy it. 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. Such as he exercises wrath upon, are most easily chased out of the world. The prayer of Christ, or prophecy, hath received its most solemn accomplishment.

V. 6. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.

It was dark with the Jewish rulers, when they sat on their mock-trial of Christ. They could not by all their devices substantiate one charge against our Lord. For their false accusations then, the Lord hath brought just accusations since. Their way hath been dark and slippery. The angel of the Lord hath persecuted them. Their persecutions have been the most extreme. So tremendously severe, as one cannot read an account of them without shuddering thereat.

V. 7. For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.

This very passage our blessed Lord applies to himself. In John xv. ver. 24, 25, he says to his disciples concerning the Jews, *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they hated me without a cause.*

V. 8. Let destruction come upon him unawares; and let his net which he hath hid catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall.

I conceive this may be considered as a prophetic hint concerning Judas the traitor. He betrayed Christ into the safe custody of the soldiers, who brought him before the Jewish rulers. His destruction came suddenly upon him. He was caught in his own net. He fell by his own transgression. His destruction came suddenly and unawares upon him. His conscience was so tormenting to him, that he brought back to the Jewish rulers the thirty pieces of silver, confessed his sin, and proclaimed Christ's innocency, and went from them and hanged himself.

V. 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

The Messiah had offered up his prayer in the three first

verses. He had foretold by way of prophecy what would befall his Jewish enemies, and his betrayer, in the next three verses. He declared their malice and proceedings against him, were without the least justifiable cause. Then he expressed what would come down of wrath on Judas the apostate, and this subject being finished, he expresses his joyfulness in the Lord, and his rejoicing in his salvation. *And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord.* They are a soliloquy, spoken by the Messiah to himself, in the views he had of being carried by Jehovah through all the malice and opposition of his enemies; of the righteousness of his father's will, in the final subjugation of them, he rejoices in spirit, saying, *And my soul shall be joyful in Jehovah, my mind shall rejoice in his salvation.* His glory is the very uttermost of my will, aim, and end. To express my love to him, to accomplish all his will, to finish the work which he gave me to do, is the joy and rejoicing of my heart. In my views of his faithfulness in supporting me, in sustaining me, and causing me to triumph over all mine enemies, and his becoming my salvation, I rejoice in him.

V. 10. *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*

I have aimed to express myself in going through the subject of the Psalms, to give and convey this idea, that our most adorable Lord, when he was made like unto us, sin only excepted, had his human mind most deeply, and most particularly impressed, by conceiving, apprehending, and understanding all before him, with all he was the subject of, and all the indignities cast on his most precious, adorable person, character, and office. It is absolutely necessary to keep this in our mind here. He being God-man, he could look to the end, as well as the beginning of his sufferings. And whilst as mediator he was wholly dependent on Jehovah the Father, for help and succour, and was to receive this from him moment after moment, as he went on in the performance of his work, yet he found, and well knew he should have a most glorious issue out of his suffering state. Therefore he could rejoice in Jehovah, and rejoice in his salvation, before he had, as the head and surety of his people, the complete enjoyment of it. He therefore expresses himself in these words, in a most exalted way and manner, *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?* It is very expressive how his whole human frame would feel, and be refreshed, with an inward sense of divine favour. He was poor indeed in our world. He was for a season in

the hands of his enemies. They were too strong for him. He could not deliver himself out of their hands. He was poor and needy. He was treated as such. Not an individual come forward on his behalf. He was for a season, forsaken of God, and despised by men. Yet Jehovah delivered him. He is filled with a sense of it. He cannot but express his admiring thoughts of Jehovah's grace for it. He says, *all my bones, (my whole human frame) shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which delivereth the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?* Thus Messiah expresseth himself before, and unto Jehovah. It may lead us to consider, as the divine nature is all life, and life is perpetual activity, so all the acts of the Three in Jehovah in Christ, towards Christ, and upon Christ, were continually expressed and exercised on Christ, in and throughout the whole of Christ's incarnate state, and in the whole of his obedience and sufferings. He knew what he felt. He knew why he was thus treated. He knew it was his Father's will. He knew it was the only remedy for sin. The only cure for sinners. He knew he should emerge out of it. He knew what his joys would then be. He knew Jehovah would be his salvation and deliverer. He therefore anticipates this, and says, *And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which delivereth the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?* And thus ends the first part of this Psalm. The second part commences with the next verse, and ends with the 16th verse. The subject of it is, the evil and most cruel treatment which Messiah was insulted with, when, and whilst he was before the Jewish rulers, preparatory to their giving him up to the Roman governor.

V. 11. *False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not.*

In the margin it is *witnesses of wrong*. Such rose up against the holy child Jesus. *They asked me,* (so it is in the margin) things Christ was a perfect stranger to. Or, they asked questions of Christ in such a way as served to grieve his righteous soul. How very particularly all this belongs to the Messiah, and how fully it was realized in him, we need only to read the history of his passion as recorded by the evangelists, in the New Testament, and we shall have full proof. Matthew informs us, Christ having been apprehended, and led to the palace of Caiaphas the high-priest, the scribes and elders were assembled, that they sought false

witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none. Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. No matter which they could so make use of as to make it plausible he ought to die. At the last, two false witnesses came in, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days, Mark tells us. But neither so did their witness agree together. When it was examined into, nothing could be made out of it. The high-priest styled him a blasphemer, and condemned him as such, because our Lord being interrogated by him, said, *He was the Christ the Son of the blessed.* The whole multitude and rabble of the people, with the *chief priests, elders, and scribes*, accused him before Pilate with perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying that he himself was Christ a king. All which were false and villainous assertions. Our Lord had a foresight and knowledge of all this. He here speaks of it long before its accomplishment. He speaks of it here with grief. It could not but be grievous to his most holy mind. It must wound him. It must have touched him to the very quick. Many and grievous things were laid to his charge. He was upbraided for the same, as though he had been guilty. He was dealt with in the high-priest's hall, as though he had spoken blasphemy. Caiaphas rent his clothes. Others spit in his face. Others blindfolded or covered his face. Others smote him with the palms of their hands. Others buffeted him. Others smote him with rods, or, as we may express it, with their constables staves. Then they mocked him, as professing himself to be the Messiah. And sneer at him for setting himself up as a prophet. *And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.* Yet Christ's innocency was more and more confirmed, by his patient submission to all this.

V. 12. *They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul.* In the margin it is, *depriving*, i. e. To the depriving him of his life.

Christ in their cities, towns, and villages, had gone up and down doing good. He had given eyes to the blind. Feet to the lame. Purity to the lepers in Israel. He had cured all sorts of sickness and disease among the people. He had healed all who stood in need of healing. He had raised the very dead. These wonderful acts proclaimed his royal munificence. He had been of universal benefit to the whole nation. Yet the sacredness of his person, the holiness of his mind, the purity of his life, the exactness of his obedience to the divine law; his being a more correct example

than all who ever were in the world before him, draws out the enmity of their hearts against him. They are enraged at him. They pay no regard to him. His acts of grace and favour manifested in an outward way and manner are all lost on them. They long for nothing so much as for his death. The views and experience of their ingratitude enters Messiah's soul. He says therefore on this subject, *They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul.* Thus the divine Jesus may be said to complain, concerning the ingratitude of these persons towards him. And as what is recorded here, actually took place, it shews what our Lord's work and sufferings were for. It was to fulfil the prophecies which were given forth by the Holy Ghost, were recorded in the scriptures, and went before concerning him.

V. 13. *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*

This, as contrasted with their behaviour to him, proves them most vile. Job, speaking of his case, says, Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor? Yet when his sorrows came in upon him, he says, *He became a song and a by-word, by children of fools, yea, children of base men, who were viler than the earth. They abhor me, they flee far from me, they spare not to spit in my face.* But this will bear no comparison with the indignities cast upon the Messiah. He beheld the malady of the Jewish state. He solemnly gave warning of it. He expressed it with tears. It fetched sighs from his very heart. He said, when he beheld the city Jerusalem, *If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.* Luke xix. 42, 43, 44. He said, when he took his final leave of the temple, these words: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* Matt. xxiii. 37. Surely this is a most pathetic exclamation. I conceive it explanatory of the verse before us. Our Lord in his ministry, by the proofs he gave of his Messiahship, by his pro-

phacies, had expressed himself as the real friend of the Jewish people and nation.

V. 14. *I behaved myself as though he had been my friend, my brother: I bowed down myself heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*

It may be here conceived, the great ingratitude of Judas Iscariot is noticed, with the carriage of our Lord towards him. By which his baseness is the more discovered, and his abomination most fully declared. Our Lord, in the whole of his carriage and conduct in his incarnate state, expressed himself in wisdom, tenderness, and compassion. He behaved himself, as though he had been the brother and friend of the Jews, by the good counsel which he gave them. In his most solemn warnings of the danger they were in on account of their rejection of him. In his severe reproofs and admonitions. In his foretelling them what would be the final issue of things, should they go on, and persist in their unbelief. So that he might, for the substance of it, well say, *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother. I was afflicted. I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.* Yet their conduct to him was quite the reverse. It was therefore the more painful to our Lord's most holy and perceptive mind.

V. 15. *But in mine adversity they rejoiced and gathered themselves together: yea, the objects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not.*

When our Lord Jesus Christ stood before the Jewish rulers, to be examined by them, of his disciples and of his doctrine, it was a season of adversity with him. He had in the open cold air been sweating blood. It was even now on his sacred flesh. All his disciples had forsaken him. He was in the hands of his most cruel and implacable enemies. They most heartily rejoice to see him before them, that they might make sport of him, and laugh him to scorn, and most grievously afflict him. They gathered themselves together, and having passed their sentence of condemnation, the whole multitude of the people arose, and led him unto Pilate. As they passed from one street to another, the mob began to gather, and the basest of them were loud and clamorous. They insult. They hiss. They look on Christ. They stare at him. They look him full in the face. They belch out horri-

rible words. They call him by the most opprobrious name. They utter the very language of hell. They exercise the very uttermost of their scorn, and express the same as fully as they can before him. It was no small part of Messiah's sufferings to be thus treated. To have base men, viler than the earth, the very scum and refuse of the people, thus let loose upon him. *I knew it not*, i. e. it was without his calling. He deserved not this contumelious treatment. They brought him to the Roman governor, who passed the sentence of death on him. Then did the ruffians tear off his clothes. Then they bound him to a pillar. Then they whipped him, and tore his flesh with their instruments of cruelty. They ceased not from so doing. They took real delight in it. Our Lord here speaks of it, as being deeply impressed with their rage against him. If you would have an apprehension how the mind of Christ was affected under his sufferings, you must look here, and at other passages recorded in the Psalms. This seems to be the extremity of cruelty, yet Messiah speaks of their adding to this some more severity.

V. 16. *With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*

It was on the night of the Passover Christ suffered. The great rulers of the nation had been keeping it. Yet what hypocrites must these persons have been! They will not forbear to cut off Messiah. To remove him from the earth by death, is their cursed business. They have their hearts alive to this tremendous business, even whilst engaged in observing a feast of the Lord. As soon as possible they shut it up, to have Jesus of Nazareth brought before them. And not contented with all the indignities they had done him in their court, they must follow him into the open street. They encourage the base rabble in their horrid jeers and contempt of him. They join them, and gnash with their teeth on him. I do not enter on the torments of body and mind our Lord must have endured, because I want it to be understood, it is here most strikingly recorded. And here our Lord in this Psalm ends his enumeration of his sorrows and griefs. And thus ends the second part of this Psalm.

V. 17. *Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling, [or, mine only one,] from the lions.* This begins the third part of this Psalm.

These words are an address to Jehovah. They contain a question put by Messiah to him. It regards the circumstances he was in, the sufferings which he endured, the cruel treatment and indignities offered him. How long is this

to last? How long will it be, ere thou clear up my character, and testify my innocence? How long is it before deliverance will be granted? *Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling, [my only one,] from the lions.* Jehovah was to be Christ's deliverer. His soul was now the subject of inexpressible grief. His body, in every part, inconceivably tormented. His senses most tremendously insulted with the sights before him, and with the blasphemies resounding from every quarter. Christ prays to Jehovah to rescue his soul from their destructions. He prays his darling, his church, may be delivered from these lions of hell. He knew the Father's ear was open to him. He therefore speaks in the next words the voice of praise.

V. 18. *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.*

This he would on his own account. For his personal deliverance out of the hands of his enemies; and also for his whole church, which was to him as his own soul. It was his only one—it was his darling. She, as well as he, was envied by these lions, his persecutors. His deliverance was the deliverance of his church. On obtaining it, he professes he will give thanks to Jehovah for the same. He will praise him for it, in the congregation, and among much people.

V. 19. *Let not them which are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me, neither let them wink with the eye, that hate me without a cause.*

The enemies of Christ were strong. Their hatred against him was implacable. It was altogether without any cause. It sprung from their desperately wicked hearts. It was wholly of themselves they hated him. His purity and innocence, in all his carriage towards them, was the very essence of perfection. He prays not against them, out of hatred and ill-will to their persons, but agreeable to their state and case, that the justice of God, agreeable to the perfections of the divine nature, might be so exercised, as that they may read their guilt in their punishment. *Let not them which are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me.* They did for a season. Yet it was only for a season. Jehovah perfectly delivered him in his own time and way, out of their hands. *Let them not wink with their eye which hate me without a cause.* This most certainly was fulfilled in the traitor. He did not sleep, or wink his eyes, after his perfidious kiss. No; his eyes were never closed, until he killed himself. All the enemies of Christ, were a set of

perfidious villains. They are described as such in the following words:

V. 20. For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.

The accounts given by the evangelists give proof and evidence of this. The rulers, scribes, and Pharisees, were all enemies to Christ and his followers. They were not for admitting him or them to have peace. They devised deceitful matters against them: not because our Lord's disciples were turbulent: no; they were sons of peace—they were the quiet in the land of Judea. It may be they were the only quiet ones in the land at this time. Yet they as well as their Lord, are not thought fit to live. The Acts of the apostles give an account of the rage of the senate of Jerusalem against them, and the persecutions they endured. This is Christ's plea to Jehovah, for his personal deliverance.

V. 21. Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

Thus all was done which could be done, to reproach Christ. They opened their mouths wide against him. Their minds were stretched, and inventions exercised to the very uttermost to abuse Christ—to slander him—to contemn, accuse, and render him odious to the people. They set up a loud laugh—expressed an huzza by way of triumph over him. They repeated it again and again. They said their eye had seen that in him, for which he stood condemned, and for which he should suffer. All which was utterly false.

V. 22. This thou hast seen, O Lord: keep not silence: O Lord be not far from me.

These words contain our Lord's appeal to Jehovah for the truth of his complaints. Jehovah had seen all this—the false charges brought against him—the depriving him of his character and reputation—their rewarding him evil for good—their rejoicing in his adversity—their gathering together, and bringing him into their council chamber—the basest of the people abusing him—the hypocritical mockers, who gnashed on him with their teeth—their rejoicing over him wrongfully—their deceitful devices against his disciples—their opening their mouths wide against him—their rude and loud huzzas, by way of triumph over him. This, says Messiah, thou hast seen, O Jehovah; I have endured all this from them. *Keep not silence.* Let it please thee to appear on my behalf. *O Lord, be not far from me.* Put forth thy mighty power, and be thou my help.

V. 23. *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*

I conceive all this a prayer, uttered by way of prophecy, expressive of what would come on the Jews, for putting Christ to death. Which, whilst the death of Christ contained the greatest good, considered as the one sacrifice for sin, yet the evil committed by the Jews in the crucifixion and murder of the Messiah, exceeds all other sin and guilt which ever was committed. Jehovah the Father gave outward demonstrations of his wrath against the murderers of Christ, by sending the Roman armies, who destroyed these murderers, and burnt up their city of Jerusalem. Thus Christ's prayer was answered. Thus the Father appeared to plead Messiah's cause. Thus he gave evidence of the covenant between him and the glorious mediator. This Messiah knew must be the case. This he pleads as a most powerful motive and argument, the covenant relation he stood in to him. *My God and my Lord.* It was the knowledge the Mediator had of his covenant relation to Jehovah, which kept up his great mind, and carried him on, and brought him through the entire accomplishment of his work. I conceive it may be said, here ends the third part of this most excellent Psalm. The fourth part, which begins with the next words, closes it.

V. 24. *Judge me, O Lord my God, according to my righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.*

The Messiah knew all the will of Jehovah in the everlasting council and covenant. He knew his own most perfect fulfilment of it, in every instance. His obedience and sufferings were commensurate to the immutable will of him that sent him. His patience under sufferings, with the malice of his enemies, he brings before the Lord. He prays him to judge of him, and his enemies, according to his faithfulness. *Judge me, O Lord my God.* Pronounce thy judgment on me. Thou art Jehovah my God. I present my person before thee as having fulfilled all thy will. Let thy judgment of me, and my obedience unto death, be according to thy covenant faithfulness. Raise me up from the grave of death. Give evidence therein of my Messiahship, and let not mine enemies triumph over me, as though I was an impostor. I have said to them, speaking of my body as the antitype of the temple, *destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* It is thy part, O Jehovah the Father, according to covenant stipulation thus to act towards me.

V. 25. *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*

It was their hope it would be, they should so say. They almost expected it. When his dead body was entombed they set a seal on the sepulchre, and a Roman guard to watch it. They did in their hearts rejoice, and say, *Ah, so would we have it.* They thought the grave would surely swallow him up. But it all turned out to their shame and confusion. The request Christ here puts up was granted. *Jehovah raised him up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

V. 26. *Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.*

This is expressive of what would befall them. It hath been the case with them. And these, with the like in the book of Psalms, had they been attended unto, were sufficient to warn them of the danger they would be in, and the wrath they might most reasonably expect to fall on them, and continue for a long season on them, and their unbelieving posterity, for their rejection and death of the Prince of life and Lord of glory.

V. 27. *Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*

Christ as surety is the servant of Jehovah. He fulfilled all his will. He performed a servitude, in his obedience to the law. In his sacrifice and sufferings. In his becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Jehovah hath and will for ever have pleasure in this his righteous servant, who hath magnified the law, and made it everlastingly honourable. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. It is the good pleasure of Jehovah's will, to save sinners by him. Entirely upon the footing of his blood and righteousness. Such as are brought to the knowledge of Christ, have abundant cause for joy and gladness. They cannot but love his cause and interest. They may well say, *Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.* Jehovah's love to Christ, his delight in Christ, his acceptance of Christ, his testimony of him, his record concerning him, his revelation of him in the everlasting gospel, his giving him for salvation to the ends of the earth, is a subject allsufficient to employ the minds of all who know Christ, to shout with joy, and to be glad in him. Our Lord's