

THE  
**BOOK OF PSALMS,**  
AN EPITOME  
OF THE  
**OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE,**  
**OPENED.**

IN WHICH THE PLAN OF EACH PSALM IS GIVEN,  
THE SUBJECT-MATTER EXPRESSLY STATED,  
AND THE WHOLE  
SET FORTH AS PROPHETIC OF CHRIST, AND HIS CHURCH.

They are considered as having a principal respect to the Person of Christ, God-Mah, Mediator—As treating of his Love to his Church:—Of his Covenant Engagements with his Divine Father before all Worlds:—Of his Incarnation in Time:—Of the Perfection of his Human Nature:—Of the Holiness of his Heart, the Graces of his Mind, the Purity of his Affections, the Immutability of his Will, the Perfection of his Righteousness:—Of his Sufferings, Sacrifice, and Death:—Of his Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, Glorification, Coronation, and perpetual Priesthood in Heaven:—Of his Second coming in his Kingdom and Glory, with his passing the final Sentence upon all Flesh.

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*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Rev. xix. 10.*

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THE  
THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS.

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PSALM THE SEVENTY-THIRD.

*A Psalm of Asaph, or for Asaph.*

IT is the same title as the 50th Psalm, to which the reader is referred.

The substance of this Psalm is this: the speaker relates a temptation he had been in, which was occasioned by looking at the prosperity of wicked men. He describes the whole process, and the effects produced in his mind thereby; what nature suggested; what grace urged; the examples of saints; the difficulty of judging concerning God's dispensations; the final issue of things of the last day, and the end of that prosperity which had excited his envy. He, as perfectly satisfied with these considerations, owns his uneasiness to have sprung from ignorance. He closes the Psalm with strong expressions of his full trust and confidence in the Lord's mercy and goodness. This Psalm is a most effectual antidote to prevent falling into and by the same temptation.

In this third book of Psalms, the first and ten following are entitled alike. Asaph was a prophet, and a singer. They consist for the most part of complaints and meditations on, and in consequence of the sorrows, troubles, miseries, and persecutions of the church of Christ, and the members thereof. It appears to me, there is a real and manifest difference between this and the two former books; they more particularly concern Christ, and these more particularly belong to the church and people of Christ. There are but two in it, I shall particularly apply to our most adorable Lord, and that is the 87th, entitled *A Prayer of David*, and the 88th, which sets before us the soul sorrows of Messiah. The 89th, with which this book con-

cludes, is a transcript of the covenant of the Three in Jehovah.

V. 1. *A Psalm of Asaph, or for him. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*

Asaph was one of the precentors of the temple song and music; it is therefore conceived that such Psalms to which his name is prefixed, were committed to him according to his office, to be sung by him, and his posterity. *David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals.* See 1 Chron. chap. xxv. 1. Augustine and others consider the title therefore, *of, or, for Asaph*, to be so called, not because he made it, but because it was committed to him, and his posterity as the singers thereof. It begins with a most true and solemn confession of faith. *Truly, [or verily] God is good to Israel. God is the God of Israel.* He is as the incomprehensible Three in the One incomprehensible Jehovah, hath loved his Israel with an immutable love. He made himself known unto them; he bestowed blessings worthy of him self upon them; he hath wrought wonders for them; the whole body of the Israelites were brought nigh unto God, by a church and national covenant; and in and amongst them the number of God's elect were, as to the bulk and greater number of them, contained. Hence it is we have the real saints and believers in Christ Jesus, in the Jewish church, express their faith, pour out their hearts, and make known their griefs unto the Lord. Those to whom the Lord is good, in and amongst the people of Israel, so as to distinguish them from others, are declared *to be such as are of a clean heart.* It is by the blood of Jesus Christ the son of God, there is purity in his sight and before him. This was fully set forth in all the divine institutions the Lord God enjoined the observation of. It was declared by them, that Christ was the only sacrifice by which the sins of the people could be abolished out of the sight of law and justice.—That his blood alone could cleanse from all sin. This was typified by the laver of pure water placed at, or near the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar of burnt-offering, at which Moses and Aaron were to wash their hands and their feet when they entered on the public worship of the Lord. See Exodus, xl. 30. And also by the ten lavers and brazen sea, in Solomon's temple. Not actually in it: but in the court immediately before it. The true gospel revelation of Christ's most precious bloodshedding, received

into the spiritual mind, and sealed on it, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, cleanseth the heart from the guilt and filth of sin. Therefore such may be said to be of a clean heart; their hearts being purified by faith in the blood of the holy and immaculate Lamb of God, who hath taken away the sin of the world; whose blood now, and evermore, cleanseth his whole church and people from all sin. This his saints enter into the true knowledge of, and with all connected therewith they cannot but acknowledge the goodness of the Three in the one Jehovah to be the fountain of goodness unto them. Yea, even when out of frame, and when sin and corruption prevail, which was the case here, as appears by the following verses, and the subjects contained in them.

*V. 2. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.*

We have the case of the church of Christ, when she is left to her own thoughts, and the nakedness of her own spirit here recorded. This Psalm, and what is in it, does not concern Christ; it concerns his church. It is expressed by an individual; but what is thus confessed belongs to all, in various cases, under a variety of circumstances, and in a variety of frames, and exercises, under many temptations and assaults from Satan. The state of the mind is described under temptation. The temptation itself, and cause of it is expressed. It was the prosperity of the wicked; the wound given to the mind by it. This subject is continued, with what was connected with it, in this and the ten following verses; which shews that there are seasons, when such as are real saints, dwell too much, and too long on what they are the subjects of, and are exposed to in their journey through life. The Psalmist confesses how he was overcome. It was almost, it lacked but very little, he had not been overcome by the present temptation he was under. He was so impressed with it, and he was so inwardly influenced by it, he was within a very little of giving up the cause of God and truth. All which is mentioned to the glory of Christ. For if he had not sustained the faith of this his saint, he would have swerved, slipped, with each of his feet, and every one of his steps, and fallen into the snare of the devil. Every believer may here see himself. We only know our own hearts, when we are exercised with temptations. It is by them we see, feel, and know our total loss of the divine image, and the dreadful apostacy of our own natural minds from God.



*V. 3. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

We may look too much at God's dealings with others, as we may look too much at ourselves, and within ourselves. This saint did so; yet he was a saint; but this was no part of his saintship. He looked at the foolish, at sinners who knew not God; he looked at the wicked, who would have nothing to do with God; he looked at their prosperity, and he was envious; he was filled with jealousy; he had an envious zeal. This was altogether wrong. It produced sad effects in his mind. We are sometimes under the same influences. We exclaim and make sad remarks on the Lord's providential dealings with those who know him not. We conceive ourselves neglected because we are not what we wish to be. At some seasons it produceth very dishonourable conceptions and thoughts in our minds, concerning the dealings of our Lord Jesus Christ with us. We are not all of us who love him in sincerity, honest to him, or ourselves. We do not confess the truth of what really passes in our minds, either to him or ourselves: for he will deal with us, in our persons, cases, circumstances in life, and in the exercises of his holy providences towards us and ours as he pleaseth. It is sometimes an exercise to us, yet it is not without him. Some of his real saints shall have very clear and blessed acquaintance with his truth, his gospel, his worship, his ordinances; all which our Lord Jesus Christ himself is very deeply interested in. Yet such as are most clear, such as have the truth as it is in Jesus, shall be borne down by gainsayers, be persecuted by unbelieving brethren; whilst others, with only the profession of the truths of the gospel, shall increase in numbers, and be extolled. Whilst so it really is, it will not do to look at it. If we do, when we do, and whilst we do, it is a sore trial and temptation. The Lord will have it to be so; and by it he makes a most solemn discrimination, and separates the precious from the vile. It becomes us to say Amen, so be it, O Lord. Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. But to proceed.

*V. 4. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.*

As the prophet viewed the foolish, the wicked, the ungodly, he observed they were strong and firm in their constitutions. They were not the subjects of pains, of sores, of sickness, of disease, till their deaths. They lived long in health, wealth, and pleasure. When they came to die,

they died in ease; they were not troubled for the day of their death. This is what Job says, *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: What is the Almighty that we should serve him? or what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?* chap. xxi. v. 13, 14, 15. This is a very complete account of the wicked, both in life and death.

V. 5. *They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.*

This is the Psalmist's further description of these foolish, wicked, and ungodly men, as it respects their outward state in this present evil world. As men they are freed from many a trouble, which some of the Lord's people groan under. As earthly-minded persons, they have not that labour and wretchedness, many have in this transitory state. They have not many of the miseries, which some other miserable men endure; they do not labour to understand the word of God; they do not spend any part of their strength to worship and serve the Lord. Adam and Enos are the names of all mankind. They are the sons of Adam, to put them in mind of their original and end. They were made of the earth, even of *the dust*, and to dust they shall again return. Enos signifies, says Ainsworth, *doleful, sorry, sorrowful, wretched, and sick incurably*. Yet the wicked do not so apprehend this, as to be sensibly affected herewith. They please themselves with what they enjoy. The effects of which are expressed in the following words:

V. 6. *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.*

They being in the possession and enjoyment of all which they call good, they act as such as have authority over others, be they who they may. They glory in their pride; it is to them as a chain, or collar that is hanged for an ornament about the neck. They are blustering persons; they are full of self; they will exercise their power to the utmost of their capacity. So that violence is exercised also, where there are fit objects and subjects for them to display it on. In some it is so much their constitution, tempers, acts, and the chief exercise of their whole lives, that they may be said to be covered with it as a garment covereth the body.

V. 7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*

This is very descriptive of the riches, fulness of blood and flesh, and abundance of worldly prosperity many of the rich.

ones of the earth, of those persons before spoken of, possess, inherit, and enjoy.

V. 8. *They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression : they speak loftily.*

Here the personal and particular sins of these persons are set forth. Their hearts are corrupt; their mouths are corrupt; and they corrupt others by their wicked, filthy, and blasphemous speeches. They sometimes consume and waste others by oppression; they are lofty; they are unaliciously disposed and inclined; they shew it on all occasions; they speak in a high tone of voice; sometimes so, as to fill the house and air with it; they speak to those who are under them, and whom they are disposed to oppress, very haughtily. A further account is given of their highness, pride, and haughtiness.

V. 9. *They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*

They blaspheme God himself; his truth, his worship, his saints, his providence. Their language is, who is Lord over us? reason and sense are their God; they will not know nor acknowledge any other. This is the prophet's account of the state and circumstances, of the wickedness, pride, haughtiness, malice, power, authority, and oppression of wicked and ungodly men. And we cannot but conceive he is speaking of such as distinguished themselves as the enemies of God and his church. It follows as the consequence of all this;

V. 10. *Therefore his people return hither : and waters of a full cup are wrung out unto them.*

God's own people are here spoken of. They are distinguished by being styled *his* people. It is they who are by these ungodly men before spoken of, afflicted. It may be it was a time of sore persecution when this Psalm was written; or, it may be considered as prophetic of what the saints of the most high God, would suffer from the great ones, the governors, the kings, the priests, the pope, and lords of the earth. The Lord's people when sorely oppressed, and the church of Christ when tremendously persecuted, are apt to return hither, to these thoughts and temptations, which follow in the next verses. So says the learned Ainsworth. It is the Lord's people who are said to *return hither, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.* The abundance of their afflictions, temptations, and tears are here compared to a full cup. As waters from a full cup, so these flow from them. How greatly then must they be brought under, and into subjection, by these men, these

oppressors before spoken of! No wonder therefore, considering the weakness of the flesh, these oppressed ones should say what follows, as well as the prophet express his thoughts on the same subject in the four following verses.

V. 11. *And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?*

It is because the ungodly have not God in all their thoughts, that they think, speak, and act as they do. It is because they do not believe his infinite greatness, his omniscience, and omnipresence, they at any time oppress and persecute the dear people and saints of the Most High. The prophet and saints are, as I conceive, expressing from whence all the proceedings of their enemies, and their oppressions of them, proceeded. It was from the atheism of their own minds. They never expected any notice would be taken of them, or their actions. They were beyond law. They were beyond government. Their own will was a law unto themselves. They neither feared God nor regarded man, much less the church of Christ, the children and saints of the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth; yet their state, their power, and continuation in life, were so great and flourishing, as seemed to be puzzling and perplexing to the mind of the prophet, and to the saints he personified. So it follows in the next words:

V. 12. *Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*

Here the temptation begins to work. Here the wound is given, and the mind feels it. Here are nature and grace, in their distinct operations, working in the prophet's mind. How can these things be so? The ungodly prosper. They increase in riches, even when they are oppressing the righteous; they are in perfect tranquillity, whilst saints are in a state of sorrows and suffering; they are quiet whilst saints are afflicted; they are safe at a time when they are persecuting saints; they are rich and great, yea, increasing in power, whilst the godly are most grievously oppressed by them. This was to the prophet, and is at times to real saints, what neither he nor they know how to reconcile.

V. 13. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*

A very awful and rash conclusion; yet it was expressed by a saint, and it is sometimes ours also. Thus, how the prophet's mind was operated on, under the prevailing temptation, is freely and fully declared. What the temptation was, is shewed. It was the great prosperity of the wicked, and their oppression of God's people; the view of the infidelity

and hardness of heart in these ungodly ones, and the vast disparity in outward circumstances between them, and such as were the Lord's, stopt for a moment the growth of faith, and gave place to unbelief. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.* I have been labouring after renewed acts of faith on the person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that from hence all the fruits of sanctification alone can follow; yet, when I view the wicked and ungodly, their prosperity in the world, notwithstanding all their contempt, oppression, and persecution of the righteous, then I cry out, *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency.* Here the whole force of the temptation is disclosed.

V. 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

Though a saint, a believer in Christ, a child of God in profession and reality, yet he was plagued with the indwelling of sin. He felt it; he breathed it. His soul was inwardly grieved for it. Every morning he confessed it, and lamented it before the Lord. It was to him as a plague sore. He was afflicted in his own mind. He was touched inwardly and affectingly with the knowledge and experience of what he was in himself. He was at times afflicted in body and circumstances, whilst those he had been viewing and looking on and at, were not; which drew out the unbelief and impatience of his own mind, which he here honestly confesses.

V. 15. *If I say, I will speak thus; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children.*

It is good to stop, and not to say all out, when we are under the influence of temptation. We shall do ourselves an injury, and it may be others also. This saint perceives this; he fears the consequence for others. He would by no means offend against the generation of God's children. The Lord forbid it! "If I go on, and under the prevailing of the present temptation, declare for truth these my carnal thoughts, by publishing and preaching the same to others, I should, unfaithful, wrong, or faithlessly transgress against the generation of thy sons, O God; that is, of thy people, called the sons of God." *Ainsworth.* I will therefore here stop, and set forth how I emerged out, and from under this temptation.

V. 16. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.*

The prophet's victory over his present temptation here begins. It consisted in his being led into a true and spiri-

tual understanding of God's purpose, to destroy the wicked, and sustain the righteous. This being a deep and interesting subject, was too much beyond him. It was laborious and painful to the mind, as it required the proper exercise of every faculty to receive and properly digest it. When this was properly stated in the mind, the subject was awful and solemn: it was deep, grand, and majestic. The righteous judgments of God, which would fall in wrath on the wicked, filled the mind with awe; yet, as nothing could be a present antidote for his deliverance from his present temptation, he sets himself to consider this subject; and as he could not obtain this but by entering into the sanctuary of God, he does so. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.

V. 17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.*

In the house of God, by the word of God, and to the saints of the living God, the mysterious conduct of his providences, as well as the dispensations of his grace, are opened and explained. It is sometimes the case in the preaching the Lord's word, that it is let into the mind of such as sit in darkness concerning many things they are exercised with, and dispensations they are under, that they were opened and made clear unto them. Christ, the antitype of the tabernacle and temple, is the sanctuary of God. He is the sanctuary of his people. He is the Holy One in whom all God's purposes begin and end. He is the Disposer of every event. He carried every purpose into execution. He only can open our minds, and give us any true apprehensions of his vast designs towards his enemies, as well as towards his church and people. God's providential acts contain a depth which is by us incomprehensible. We may be let into some parts of it, but not into the whole. The whole creation, and every creature in it, is the subject for the display of God's will. The whole human race are all the subjects of his high decrees: they receive their existence, to the very end the Lord may prove what his will and pleasure concerning them are. *Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created,* Rev. iv. 11. The prophet went into the sanctuary of God for instruction. It is very expressive of God's speaking out his whole mind to us by his Son, who is the great Prophet over the house of God. He there, by divine intuition, which was agreeable to the written word, understood God's end and design in, upon, and towards these foolish ungodly worldlings, who prospered in all their undertakings; who had more than heart could wish; whose eyes stood out with fatness; who were strong, proud,

and lofty; whose wealth was great; whose power and authority very extensive; who had no sort or kind of fear; who were oppressors of God's children; who had no cross either in life or death. And he addressed the Lord on it, and concludes the whole subject with prayer; in which he confesses how it had been with him, and that he would trust in Jehovah as the Lord his God. All which is to be considered as spoken in the name of the whole church of God.

V. 18. *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castest them down into destruction.*

Their high temporalities, their worldly advancement, their riches, honour, power, and authority as worldly earthly men, were of the Lord. They were placed by him to fill up the offices they did; yet these are styled slippery places. This was such a truth, that the prophet ascribing it to God, uses a very significant word, *Surely*, or *verily*, thou didst set them in slippery places. So that it was very easy for them to slide or fall from the same. As God set them up, so he casteth them down. This is into destruction. None ever hardened themselves against him, and prospered; none ever yet persecuted, oppressed, and did injury to his church and people, but he visited them for it sooner or later. The prophet, in the two following verses, speaks by way of holy surprise and admiration concerning the judgments of God executed on his, and his people's enemies.

V. 19. *How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*

This is one way in which the Lord breaks forth towards the enemies of his church and people. He brings desolation suddenly and unexpectedly upon them. He fills their minds with terrors, which so terrify them, they know not what to do, to think, or say; which judgments, and most righteous displays of the Lord's wrath sometimes fill the minds of saints with holy and awful surprise.

V. 20. *As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image.*

The ideas concerning the destruction of the oppressors of God's children, are very expressive and very important. They are set in slippery places; they are cast down from them; they are cast into destruction. This is done in a moment. They are thus unexpectedly consumed. This is with terrors. It is as a dream when one awaketh: it is over and past. No vestige of it remains. It is the Lord's own act towards them. He blots them out of remembrance; he despises their image, and causeth the remembrance of them insensibly to steal out of the minds of men, which the pro-

phet, as the remembrancer of the church, recites. And having received this knowledge, by going into the sanctuary of God, and being hereby lifted up above and beyond the prevalency of the temptation he had been under, he confesses before the Lord his sin, whilst he was under the musings of his own mind.

V. 21. *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.*

The prophet here refers to all contained in the former part of the Psalm, from the 2d to the end of the 12th verse; and also to his very sad conclusion he had drawn from the subject, which he thus expressed: *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* These were bad words. None but himself could tell what, and how his heart felt when he uttered them. He opens and confesses it unto and before the Lord. His heart was grieved at God's forbearance with the wicked, as he looked at the prosperity of the ungodly, and his mind was soured. *Calvin* expresses it by the figure of leaven, which ferments the meal, and causes it to diffuse itself throughout the whole. He was displeas'd with the Lord. His heart was hurt, and rose so high, as to fill him with shame at the recollection of it. I have awfully experienced the truth of what I represent of the prophet's case; not about the prosperity of any, but about the oppressions and oppositions I have met with from various causes, and a variety of quarters. When the Lord blesses us, any of us, with his own light and teaching into the mysterious exercise of his providential dispensations towards others, and ourselves also, it makes us most truly ashamed of our hard thoughts concerning him, and we most freely and fully confess the same before his divine Majesty. This was the case of the prophet.

V. 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.*

This confession is suited to the sin and sinfulness confessed; and fully so. What but foolishness and ignorance could put a poor dependent creature upon speaking as he had done? He does well to confess his folly and ignorance. He does it with shame and confusion of face. *I was* (says he) *as a beast before thee.* His being vexed, and grieved, that his mind was sour as leaven with grief and pain, that he felt sharp pains, with his fretting thoughts and desires; in all this he was as a beast before the Lord. What had he, what have we to do with God's government of the world? We are but creatures in it, wholly dependent for being and well-



being on him. What have we to do with the Lord's dealing with others, except it be to admire and adore him for the same? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

V. 23. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right-hand.*

The saint being recovered from the power and influence of temptation, and having confessed his sin and folly, repeats before the Lord his faith in him. He stands astonished at it; that notwithstanding the rebellion of his will, the apostacy of his mind, and the awful thoughts which had passed in it, he was not wholly swallowed up by them, and that he was now delivered out of the state of the temptation he had been in; this revives his faith. He acknowledges the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ towards him; whose eye was continually upon him; who had given his hand, and took his right-hand into it, and held him fast thereby. Nevertheless I am continually with thee in thy sight. Thine eye and heart are upon me continually. I have reason for saying, *thou art continually with me*; I have this evidence of it, *thou hast holden me by my right-hand*. This was the case under the late temptation, and thy bringing me out of it is a very clear proof of it.

V. 24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me unto glory.*

Here is faith founded on the Word. It is a most glorious promise, which belongs to the children of the Most High, and it belongs individually unto each of them. It runs thus: *The Lord shall guide thee continually*, Isaiah lviii. 11. The Psalmist builds his faith on it. He says, Amen, so be it; and thus he seals it. He is positive in his assertion, and expresses his confidence in the truth of it. He gives himself up to God, saying, *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel*. I will no more lean to mine own understanding. I will give up my whole person, soul and body, into thy hands. I am perfectly persuaded that thy will and counsel concerning me, are most truly good. Thou wilt perform the counsel of thy will in me, and concerning me; and when it is fully accomplished, then thou wilt change my countenance by death, *and afterward receive me to glory*. There is this paraphrase of these words quoted by Mr. Ainsworth in his Annotations: *Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel in this world; and after that the glory is accomplished, which thou hast said thou wilt bring upon me, thou wilt bring me to glory*.

V. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.*

The question is asked of God, and it is a part of the pro-

phet's prayer : Who, says he, O Lord, is for me, but thee alone? Whom have I to look unto, to call upon, to trust in upon all occasions, but thee alone? Whose arm could have sustained me, when I was so tempted, and under the power and influence of temptation, so as that my heart fretted against the Lord, but thine? And there is none upon earth that I delight in, and desire, but thee. When my mind is right, and I am in the proper use of my spiritual faculties and senses, it is really thus. None in heaven, none upon earth, is the object of my delight and desire, but thou, O Jehovah-Jesus. There is enough in thee to fill my every spiritual faculty with holy satiety, and all my spiritual sense with holy, immortal, unceasing, and eternal joy and content.

V. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

These words contain a fresh expression of faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, and stand in such close connexion with the former words, that they should never be severed from them. I will therefore put them altogether thus : *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth : but God is the strength [rock] of my heart, and my portion for ever.* As they are read and viewed in this joint connexion, so Christ was the prophet's all; and he is in us, and to us, who believe on him to life everlasting, both in life and death, *our all in all*. He is the counsellor of his church; He is the guide of his people; He is their glory; He is their heaven; He is their rock; He is their strength; He is their God; He is their portion. It is as truly blessed in life, as it must also be in the article of death, to say in the true views of Jesus, and in the faith of him, *My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the rock, the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* As these words are viewed in connexion with the former, they prove the truth of the prophet's assertion, when he said, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.* His flesh and his heart failing, could not therefore shake his faith, because *God was the rock, the strength of his heart and his portion for ever.* He was going to lose nothing by dissolution, Christ being his portion and everlasting inheritance.

V. 27. *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish : thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.*

All who trust for life and salvation in any person or thing

but the Lord Jesus Christ alone, are idolaters. Let their worship be what it may, it is idolatry. They are wicked ones; they are far from God. Such have been destroyed by the Lord; such will be finally destroyed. Many instances and examples of the truth of this are upon record in the sacred page. The deists, the Socinians, the atheists, are all of them idolaters. They have had a great hand in bringing down the curse of God upon this nation. So have the universalists also.

V. 28. *But it is good for me to draw near unto God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.*

It is in communion with God the real blessedness of grace and glory is enjoyed. The greatest evidence the Lord Jesus Christ can give us of his love, now that he is in heaven as the Lamb that hath been slain, is to hold fellowship with us. It is therefore good for us to draw nigh unto him, in his instituted worship. The prophet found it so. He declares what he had done. *I have put my trust in the Lord God.* This was to worship God indeed. He could go no further this side heaven. Thus he closes, adding this as the fruit of it: *That I may declare all thy works.* Such as have communion with the Lord, who draw nigh unto him, and put their whole trust and confidence in the person and salvation of Christ, will be engaged in speaking out, in declaring all his works, and more, and most especially what he hath been to them, what he is to them, and what he hath done for them. What hath been delivered may the Lord bless, so far as seemeth good in his sight. Amen.

## PSALM THE SEVENTY-FOURTH.

This Psalm is entitled *Maschil of Asaph.*

It is either a prophecy, or it is intended for the use and instruction of the church in times of persecution. In it we hear the church speaking to the Lord in prayer, expressing herself as deserted by him. He is entreated to return, because he had been the redeemer of his people. A recital is made of the ravages of the enemy, and his reproaches of the church. The Lord is reminded of the wonderful works which he had wrought in times past for his people; of his power and goodness, which he had manifested in the course of nature. He is called upon to consider the relation the church stands in to him; of his covenant. The pleas founded on these, and the honour of his name are all made

use of in this prayer before us, in a very importunate manner. The increasing fury of the enemy, who were just ready to swallow her up, is declared as an argument to obtain audience, and help with, and from the Lord, as she was just ready to be swallowed up by her adversaries.

I would here observe, what I did before on the former Psalm, which began this third book of Psalms, which contains in number seventeen, that they do not particularly belong to Christ, as the former ones did; but chiefly to the church of Christ, and this under a variety of circumstances; as under temptation and oppression; as having received special deliverance from the Lord; as having a severe combat between flesh and spirit. One of these contains matter of instruction; another an account of the desolation of Jerusalem. One contains a prayer on account of the low estate of the church; another is a solemn exhortation to an observance of the yearly festivals; one is an exhortation to the grand senate of the Jewish nation; another is a prayer against the enemies of the church; one contains holy breathings after the Lord's house, worship, and communion with him; another celebrates the Lord's mercies, and contains a request for the continuation of them; one is a prayer of David. This belongs to Christ. So does the 98th, which is expressive of Christ's soul travail. The last in this book, which is the 99th, sets before us the covenant between the Father and the Son, as recorded by the Holy Ghost in it.

The title has been noticed. What gave occasion for the writing of it is not said. Had it been so, we should have greater light into it, and comprehend many expressions. It is by some conceived to relate and refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, or some such similar event. But I conceive we cannot be certain of this. Yet it is not wholly to be rejected.

V. 1. *Maschil of Asaph. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*

I should consider Christ the person here addressed, because the church and people of God are here termed sheep, which is so suited to them, as they are considered in their relation to him, he being their shepherd, that it confirms me in this idea. When the church is at any time under distress, and oppressed by her enemies, especially when it is so for a long season, it seems in appearance as though the Lord had forsaken her. If the Psalm refers to her captivity in Babylon, for the space of seventy years, it is not to be wondered at that she should thus address her Lord; she being

all that time without the public ordinances of the Lord. The prophet personates the whole Jewish church. He prays on her behalf, and in her name. The prayer opens with questions; these are put to God; they are suited to the case of distress the saints were now in. It seemed to them as a church collectively, as if they were cast off for ever. Yet the very question implies it could not be so. It is to be understood in a national sense, so as to include the body of the people of Israel. The questions put, shew the holy familiarity saints have with God. *Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?* Here is great faith. They are the sheep of God's pasture, though the wrath of God was on the nation; and the prophet prays to know the reason of it, and why it was continued; which shews his great concern for the Lord's glory, and his people's good.

V. 2. *Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old: the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed, this mount Sion wherein thou hast dwelt.*

These are the pleas and motives made use of, at the throne of grace, to prevail with the Lord. The church is purchased by the blood of Christ. He proved it by bringing it out of Egypt. He was their redeemer; they were his inheritance. He had dwelt in mount Sion, the seat of church worship. He had shone forth towards them, and on their behalf. The prophet therefore entreats his remembrance of them. They were the Lord's congregation. He had of old loved them. They were now in appearance, and in the apprehension of their enemies, cast off. O God, says the prophet, remember them.

V. 3. *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations: even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*

This request is, that God their redeemer, would be pleased to tread down, and subdue the enemies of his church, the Chaldeans, or be they whom they might, under his feet. That he would bring on them perpetual desolations, and render a just recompense of wrath on them, because they had done wickedly in God's sanctuary. All which is to be understood as the prophet's zeal for God's glory.

V. 4. *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations: they set up their banners for signs.*

This is very expressive of the extreme case the church of God was in at this time, and seem to carry evidence that it must refer to the siege of Jerusalem, by the Babylonians, in the days of Zedekiah king of Judah. This, or whatsoever time it refers to, is most pathetically set forth. The enemies enter into the sanctuary; they interrupt the worshippers;

they roar in the midst of the congregation; they set up their ensigns for signs of victory and triumph over the Lord's people. How afflicting must all this have been. If we read the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, it will cast light on this. It was most awfully so, for the substance of all this, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, and burnt the temple. Read Josephus, and you will see the truth of this.

V. 5. *A man was famous according as he had lifted axes upon the thick trees.*

When the temple was built, it was an honour to be amongst those who helped forward the building. A man was then famous who had an hand in the enfolden wood-work of the temple. Either he who cut it down, or he that carved it was very greatly renowned. But such was the reverse and alteration of the times, that the very enemies of God, his sanctuary, and people, were now renowned, famous, and exalted for their wickedness. So it follows :

V. 6. *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*

This doubtless was the case when the temple was destroyed, first by the Chaldeans, and afterwards by the Romans. It is not to be understood as though they literally did this, but their utter contempt of the temple, as the place where Jehovah was worshipped, amounted to all this. Such was their hatred and contempt of God, and this worship, and the very seat of it, they would not, so far as it might be in their power, leave a vestige of it. The next words prove the truth of it.

V. 7. *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.*

This was the case twice over. Once by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards by Titus the Roman general. The courts and places about the temple, and other places where the people assembled for the worship of the Lord, yea, all the synagogues at Jerusalem, and throughout the whole land of Judea, where prayers and lectures of the law were used, and where the Lord's name was called on, these were all swept away and cast to the ground by the rage and invasion of the common enemy. This must have been most sorely distressing to real saints who were then in existence.

V. 9. *We see not our signs : there is no more any prophet : neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*

During the Babylonish captivity, and whilst the temple and Jerusalem lay in ashes, the testimonies of God's pre-

sence, either extraordinary or ordinary, ceased; yea, even the sacrifices themselves. The ordinances of circumcision, the passover, pentecost, the feast of tabernacles, new moons, and sabbaths ceased. Nor was there any prophet left amongst the people, that could see and foretell an end of these troubles. Jeremiah, speaking of these times, says, *the law is no more, her prophets also find no vision from the Lord.* See Lam. ii. 9. Thy could not tell how long this affliction should endure.

V. 10. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?*

These questions contain some very important inquiries, suited to the present distresses and persecutions, and the state and case, the church of Christ was then in. It is to be observed, that the variety of cases in which the people of God are, make way for prayer, and for new prayers, such as they never offered before. It is so with real saints both in public and private. The questions are very expressive of the importunity of the mind in prayer, and of the speaker's zeal for the Lord's name, glory, cause and interest. This makes way for further and increasing importunity.

V. 11. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.*

Here is, as it were, a double question. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand?* It seemed as though the Lord had wholly forsaken his people. It was thus to the eye of sense. And fearing it might be thus interpreted by the enemy, it draws out the mind of him who here personates the church, to the greater earnestness. This casts light upon it. The church deprived of all outward ordinances, without a teaching prophet and priest, in a foreign land, their own being most awfully wasted and depopulated, knows not how to express her case, and her views of her own condition, but in this most passionate and vehement way and manner. She implores the Lord Jesus Christ to display himself, and his power on her behalf. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.* The request, *draw, or pluck thy right hand, or pluck it out of thy bosom,* is to be understood, of the Lord's appearing on the behalf of his church, and of his executing his wrath upon his enemies, and thereby accomplishing the deliverance of his church and people. This serves to revive the faith of the church. It leads the prophet to reflect on what the Lord in ages past had done and wrought on the behalf and for the benefit of his church, and

how he had also destroyed and consumed his and her enemies.

V. 12. *For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*

Judea and Jerusalem being considered the very centre of the earth; so God's working salvation there, was working salvation in the midst of the earth. The ancients looked on the Mediterranean Sea as the centre of the globe. It was in Judea and Jerusalem that our Lord Jesus Christ was born, lived, died, and completed the salvation of his church and people. It was the seat the church was situated in for many ages and generations. It was the land in which the Lord had wrought wonders for and on the behalf of his saints. The Lord Jesus Christ was the king of Israel, the king of his church. He sat enthroned between the cherubim of glory, in a glorious cloud, as a symbol of his presence. He spake from thence. He said by the ministry of his servant Isaiah, *Thus saith the Lord the king of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God*, chap. xlv. ver. 6. He had wrought salvation in the midst of Israel, over and over again; he had wrought salvation in the midst of the earth, in the very heart of their own kingdom and land which he gave to them to inherit. He who had acted on their behalf, gave them cause to believe and expect that he would do so again. The prophet therefore considers this, and he acts faith on it. *For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.* There is much stress laid here, *For God is my king of old.* He is his church's king; he is this of old; he has been thus related to and interested in his people from everlasting. All the salvations and deliverances which he hath wrought out for them, are so many evidences of this truth. Some wonderful acts of our Lord are recited in the next five verses; and they are all proofs of his eternal power and godhead, and of his interest in and goodwill to his visible church.

V. 13. *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*

The prophet refers to the dividing the waters of the Red Sea, and by breaking the heads of the dragons or whales, the noblemen of Egypt, who pursuing the Israelites, were drowned in the Red Sea. It was a most marvellous act of Christ on the behalf of his church. It was also a most tremendous act of his wrath and indignation upon his enemies. This wonderful deliverance of Israel is often mentioned and



recorded in the book of God, as a motive to encourage the Jewish church to believe in and rely on the Lord.

V. 14. *Thou brakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat for the people inhabiting the wilderness.*

Leviathan is expressive of Pharaoh king of Egypt, who was drowned with his princes. The breaking his heads in pieces, may design the destruction of the king of Egypt, and all his mighty men, who together with him were swallowed up in the mighty waters. After which, they with the rest of the Egyptians might be cast upon the shore, and become food, and be fed upon by the wild beasts of the wilderness. It may also suggest how the Israelites stript their carcasses, and took their spoil, which was as food for them in the wilderness, and out of a part of it the tabernacle was composed.

V. 15. *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood : thou driedst up mighty rivers.*

This refers to the rock at Horeb, which being smitten at God's command, by Moses, sent forth waters to refresh the Israelites; the well at Beer, *whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well, sing ye unto it. The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves.* See Numbers, xxi. 16, 17, 18. Also the drying up the river and waters of Jordan before the ark of the Lord, to make a passage for the Israelites into the land of Canaan. These acts are all wonderful and full of surprising majesty, worthy to be recorded in the word of God, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance, and were well remembered by the prophet, to encourage and strengthen his faith in God. There were fountains opened, and rivers dried up, both the Red Sea and Jordan, as proofs of God's omnipotent power put forth on the behalf of his Jewish church and people.

V. 16. *The day is thine, the night is thine : thou hast prepared the light and the sun.*

Thus the prophet enumerates the wonderful acts of the Lord, and how every thing in and throughout the whole visible system of nature is from and depends on him. The day and night are the ordinance of God. The light and sun from whence it flows, are of Jehovah alone; and as viewed by faith, as memorials of the Lord's goodness, serve to increase holy admiration in the minds of his people.

V. 17. *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth, thou hast made summer and winter.*

I should conceive that all said, concerning day and night, the light and sun, the setting all the borders of the earth, and the seasons of summer and winter, is quoted from the declaration of the Lord to Noah after the flood. He said, *Whilst the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.* Gen. viii. ver. 22. I will sum up these wonders, and shew how we may apply the same to the gospel church of Christ, now, and throughout all future generations. The dividing the Red Sea, the destruction of the king of Egypt and his captains; their being completely subdued; the giving them and their riches as a spoil to the Israelites; so that it was a feast to them, to think over in the wilderness what the Lord had wrought for them, may lead us to consider the conquest and victory of Christ over sin, Satan, his principalities, and all the powers of hell. All which is matter to us of holy triumph and joy, and affords us in the contemplation thereof, subject for holy satiety and peace. So the Lord's feeding his people with manna in the wilderness, his causing the rock and well to give waters in the wilderness, his drying up rivers for them, and thus removing all impediments out of their way, may afford us a blessed view, how Christ will be to us the bread of life, and the water of life, all our journey through. How he will remove every impediment out of the way—that he who prepared the light and the sun, and set all the borders of the earth, and the ordinances of heaven, which are servants to him, is surely worthy of our utmost trust and confidence. The prophet makes use of the mention of past deliverances to excite, quicken, and encourage his hope of present deliverance to be wrought by the Lord at this time on the behalf of his church.

V. 18. *Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.*

This is made use of as an argument, for the Lord to avenge himself on his enemies, and appear on the behalf of his church. The greater the distress, the more importunate is the prayer of faith. The Lord's people in their individual and various circumstances are often thus; so that it is sometimes good to be in very great emergency and distress, because it makes way for addressing the Lord Jesus Christ more immediately and importunately, more freely and more fully than we commonly do. The Lord is here requested to remember the cruelty, the malice, wrath, and blasphemy of the public enemy, and the state and condition of his church, amidst all this.

V. 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*

The church is here called *the Lord's turtle dove*. Her life is in danger and jeopardy, by reason of the enemy. She is in herself weak, mournful and timorous. She may here be thus termed for her faith and loyalty towards the Lord Jesus Christ; now at this very time she was in this great danger and distress from the public enemy, who might most justly be compared to a company of wild beasts, for their cruelty and rage against the church and people of God. This petition is offered up with greater fervour than all that went before; which shews, the more we converse with the Lord, the more fervent we are, and the more importunate to obtain our suit. The prayer is for the deliverance of the church. Her interest in the Lord, and what he was to her, are mentioned.

V. 20. *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.*

God's covenant is the salvation and security of his church. Here it means more especially the covenant with Abraham and his seed, which God himself glories in, and therefore he said to Moses, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.* Exodus, chap. iii. ver. 6 and 15. Which covenant is remembered by the Lord, in the prophet's sense, when the Lord appears on the behalf of his church, and fulfils the promises of it unto her. This is the reason of the prophet's request, *for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.* What therefore will the soul of thy turtle do to be cast amongst them? It is very expressive of the tyranny, rage, and cruelty of the Babylonians against the church of Christ. A specimen of which is given us in the third chapter of Daniel.

V. 21. *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*

Which may be conceived of as a prayer for their return from Babylon, and that they might not be ashamed of their hope and confidence in God; but that oppressed as they were, and would be, and had been, they might praise the Lord for his deliverance of them. Poor and needy as they were, yet let them have cause, by the covenant being remembered—the everlasting covenant, founded on the suretyship engagements of Christ, and sealed with his blood, to praise thy name, for remembering them with everlasting kindness.

V. 22. *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause; remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.*

It is the Lord's cause to interest himself on the behalf of his suffering church and people. His truth, his ordinances, his worship, his saints, he will arise to defend. It is his own cause; his glory is interested in these; he will not overlook the blasphemy, the reproach, the insult of the enemy. It would be well to consider the Lord as all-sufficient to plead his own cause, and to leave it with him so to do. We should be his remembrancers, and then and there we should leave it. He is able to plead his own cause; to clear up every truth; to overcome all his enemies; to deliver his church, and rid her out of the hands of every oppressor, and raise her up beyond all evil. And he will in his own time and way do so.

V. 23. *Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.*

The Lord is entreated to take the whole concern of his church to himself; and at the same time not to overlook the increasing tumult of the enemy against her; and thus the Psalm closes.

## PSALM THE SEVENTY-FIFTH.

In this Psalm, the prophet with the church gives thanks to God, for the revelation of his name and the wonderful salvations wrought by him; which makes way for his declaration that he will celebrate his great and glorious name, for his executing justice and judgment in his kingdom, and out of order and confusion displaying his wisdom and goodness, by bringing things into their proper course. The prophet rebukes the enemies of Christ and his church. He speaks of the power, providences, counsels, and judgments of God; and the Psalm is closed with praise to God. This is the outline of the subject-matter of this scripture before us. The title of it is, *To the Chief Musician, Altschith, A Psalm Song of David.* As each of these words have been before opened, which are in this title, I refer the reader to the same.

It seems David wrote this Psalm when he came to be seated on the throne of Judah. Many expressions in it seem expressive of the distracted and unsettled state of Israel at that time. He may be considered as a personator of his great predecessor, the glorious Messiah, in some parts and expressions of it.

V. 1. *To the Chief Musician, Al-taschith, A Psalm Song of Asaph. Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.*

Here is an acknowledgment of praises offered up to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, the Three in the one incomprehensible Jehovah, for mercies and deliverances which he had wrought on the behalf of his people. A sense of which was so particularly and powerfully impressed on the minds of saints, that he who personates them, redoubles his thanks, saying, in their names and for them, *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks.* It is very expressive of the devotion of the mind, and how deeply it was influenced with a sense of the divine goodness. The church had the Lord's presence with her; the Lord's name in the midst of her. She had the wonderful works which he had wrought for her salvation to record, and give thanks to him for. She had in him his great deliverance of her, his many miracles of mercy and power, which had been displayed on her, and made manifest on her behalf. So that she in her many and individual members might well say, as the mouth of them all, *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.* By the name of God here, I should understand Messiah, who is in scripture styled *the name of the Lord.* It being in him that all of God is recorded; it is in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead; it is him, and by him, there is the utmost manifestation of the Godhead made, so far as can be comprehended by spiritual and intellectual minds; it is in him there is the uttermost communication of love, mercy, salvation, and blessedness made known, which elect creatures can ever enjoy. He is the name of the Lord, in whom, and by whom all the goodness of deity is made known; he is the name of the Lord which is exalted above all blessing and praise; he it is of whom it is said, *Glory ye in his holy name*; he is the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower, into which the righteous run and are safe. Of whom the prophet says, *the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee,* Isai. xxvi. 8. To have this most blessed Christ nigh unto us, in the midst of us, and working wonderful works in us, is matter for repeated thanksgiving. Some bring in the title of this Psalm here; suggesting the Psalmist penned it at a time when he said to God, *Destroy not the people.* Thy words are now near in our mouths and hearts to celebrate thy praise. Thou art now near in our hearts and mouths,

therefore we will call upon thy name, which alone is excellent.

V. 2. *When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly.*

Some observe that the former verse is spoken by many, *Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, &c.* This by one, and he is a ruler. He promises, when he shall receive the congregation, that is, when he shall be established in power and authority, at a fit time and place, he will judge uprightly, and introduce a thorough reformation into the kingdom he should be the ruler of. It seems so extremely suited to David, and the state and people of Israel, when he was first about to be set over them as their king, as leads me wholly to apply it thereunto. He was set up as king over Judah, and reigned seven years in Hebron; see 2 Samuel, chap. ii. All this time there was civil war, and the other tribes set up a king over themselves. This was under the influence of Abner, the uncle of the late king Saul. It was a son of his, whose name was Ishbosheth, was king of the ten tribes, at least the greatest part of them. He continued a few years, and the state was very greatly disturbed, and divided. When Abner and he were removed by death, way was made for David to come to the throne, and reign over all the tribes of Israel. In the prospect of it, and when advanced to it, he promised and fulfilled such a rectitude of kingly administration, as settled the kingdom in tranquillity and harmony. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he received for his inheritance the congregation of elect Gentiles, and in the latter day, when he shall rule and reign more fully and openly, he will fill the earth with justice and righteousness.

V. 3. *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.*

It must naturally be conceived, that civil distractions, and frequent irruptions of foreign enemies, must again and again have thrown the affairs of Israel into confusion; and in a sense dissolved the frame of government. It was by David's enthronement, and his reestablishment of royal authority, that countenance and support were given to all in subordination unto him; so that they as pillars of the community were established. The world ruined by the sin of all, a church was gathered out of it, by our Lord Jesus Christ. He raised it; he upholds it; he made his apostles, and their successors the pillars of it.

V. 4. *I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly, and to the wicked, Lift not up your horn.*

David knew well who were enemies to his person, throne,

and government. He knew from what quarters he might expect disturbers and disturbances in Israel. He was well persuaded that he came to the throne and was seated on it by the will of God. He might also know that himself, his kingdom, and government were typical of Christ. I say and express myself thus on this subject, not as doubting that he was in his person, throne, kingdom, and authority a figure of Messiah; yet I do not conceive it was absolutely necessary for him to have a full and comprehensive knowledge of this, to constitute him prophet and shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ in all these respects. The Lord had endued him with a princely spirit, therefore he was properly fitted for his station and office. He therefore gives the following advice to such as might attempt to disturb him, or any of his great officers of state, or any of his beloved subjects: *Deal not so madly*, as to create any uneasiness in any part of my kingdom. It will only prove your foolishness. He gives forth his royal command to the wicked, saying unto them, *Lift not the horn*. Such are in general the lowest of the people. To these he says to this effect: Do not exercise yourselves, in any part, place, or station, you may be in, against me; seeing I am set up by the Lord, to rule in his name and fear, and according to his own most holy law, over you.

V. 5. *Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.*

Be content in the stations the Lord hath placed you. Do not speak against the most high God for exalting me to be king over you. Do not act like the untamed oxen, shaking off the yoke of obedience. Do not speak arrogantly; for I have not obtained the high and exalted station to which I am raised by any act of mine. It is wholly of the Lord; it is his gift bestowed on me; it is he who hath seated and settled me in it. Surely this must be the case.

V. 6. *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*

There were deserts on both ends of the land of Canaan, south and north. Now David's promotion to be the chief ruler of Israel, came not from any of the nations round about him. No; therefore to oppose him was to set themselves against the will of God, which had been most clearly and evidently made known.

V. 7. *But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

It was by the Lord himself, and not, says David, by any act of mine, that the house of Saul was put down, and I, the youngest son of Jesse, set up. Therefore your folly

is downright wickedness, to oppose me your rightful sovereign. It is in effect to contradict and withstand the counsels of heaven. I am upon the throne, by the supreme will of God and his providence, which is the manifestation of his will. It is to it I ascribe my being set up in kingly majesty and power. Do not therefore set yourselves against me, *God is the judge : he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* He acts in a sovereign way and manner, as seemeth good in his sight.

V. 8. *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture ; and he poureth out of the same : but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*

It must be allowed, David in various instances and circumstances was a figure of Christ. We may therefore view our Lord Jesus Christ in this Psalm now before us. He was the true king of Israel ; he was appointed by the will of the essential Three, to sit on the throne of David as his antitype. He will one day so fully and openly be enthroned, as will give the whole Israel of God the most entire satisfaction and heartfelt joy. When he first entered openly on the government of the world, which was immediately upon the fall, he found it in such a shaking condition, that, had it not been for his mediation, it would have fallen about old Adam's ears. So that these words, *the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved ; I bear up the pillars of it, Selah ;* are very applicable to Christ the Mediator of reconciliation. It is he, as God-man, Mediator, who upholds all things by the word of his power. As this deserves to be noticed by the word *Selah*, and as applicable to the Messiah, so likewise it deserves particular notice, to consider that *God is the judge : that he putteth down one, and setteth up another ;* and distributes his wrath upon his enemies as seemeth good in his sight. This is represented under the figure of a cup. This cup is in the hand of the Lord. The wine in it is red. It is a full cup. It hath a mixture in it. He hands it round to his guests. He poureth out of the same. It comes to the dregs, in which is contained his wrath. This he deals out to his enemies. *All the ungodly of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.* This is made use of by the speaker in this Psalm, as a solemn caution to those foolish, wicked, and ungodly persons whom he had been addressing ; to warn them of their danger ; to give an item of what they might expect, and would actually come upon them for their rejection of, and resisting the kingly government of David, who was therein a type of Christ and his kingdom, and



government over the true Israel of God. I will here recite both these verses, the 7th and 8th, that you may see the connexion of them. *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.* Thus the prerogative royal of God, in his providential acts, of setting up one, and putting down another, and also in the distributions of his wrath and righteous displeasure, is most fully expressed; and that so briefly, and yet so comprehensively, that the prophet finds nothing to add to it.

V. 9. *But I will declare for ever: I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*

This must consist in a recital of all the righteous acts of the Lord towards his people; in his love to them; in his care of them; in his concern for them; in the government which he had provided for them; in the king he had set over them. and more especially, as he was to them a most eminent type; of Christ, the Messiah, the Prince, the Shiloh, the Shepherd, the Seed of Abraham, the Seed of the woman, who was to save, feed, defend, and rule his church and people, and finally, to crush and subdue his, and all their enemies.

V. 10. *All the horns of the wicked also will I break; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.*

This expresses David's resolution, how he will exercise himself in his rule and government. He would break and subdue the horns, or power of the wicked. When he should be fully invested with the government of all Israel, and be properly seated on his throne, he would put down the power, dominion, and pride of the wicked. Let them be either subjects, or neighbouring states, who should be enemies to him and his government, and the people over whom the Lord had placed him. And he would also exalt the power, dominion, and authority of such in his kingdom who should be found men of truth, hating covetousness. All which was most truly noble in its end and design. The term *horns* is expressive of power, authority, force, and kingly dignity. Thus the Psalm closes. *May the Lord bless the reading it. Amen.*

## PSALM THE SEVENTY-SIXTH.

It seems very clear that this Psalm was composed by way of thanksgiving to the Lord, on occasion of some special and great deliverance which he had wrought on the behalf

of his church and people of Israel, in which the immediate hand of God was most clearly to be seen.

It is generally conceived, it relates unto the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Many expressions are quite suited to that event; I mean, such as are expressed in ver. 5 and 6. In this song, the glory of God, in this display of himself on the behalf of his people, in the circumstances of the deliverance here celebrated, is manifested. An item also is given of the effects which it had produced among the nations, and how it ought to affect and influence the hearts of the people of the Lord's choice and love. This is very beautifully set forth. The title is, *To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm Song of Asaph*. As each of the words have been explained, when they occurred in former Psalms, the reader is therefore referred to them.—*To the Chief Musician on Neginoth*. This is explained in opening the title of the fourth Psalm. Why it is expressed to be a Psalm-Song, is also stated, when the title prefixed to the 30th Psalm was explained.—*Of, or Asaph*. This likewise hath been explained on the 50th Psalm, so that I shall say nothing concerning this more.

V. 1. *To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm Song of Asaph. In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel.*

Thus the Psalm begins, with a declaration of the greatest glory, honour, and blessedness of the Jewish people. God was known by them. God was pleased to make known himself unto them. His name was great in Israel. He was in high renown amongst them, for his majesty, his greatness, his love, salvation, mercy, and lovingkindness unto them. Judea was the seat of his church. Israel were the objects and subjects of his infinite complacency. He was known by his wonderful works, and by the deliverances which he had wrought in the midst of them, and on their behalf. His name of it was great, and most highly exalted in Israel, and by the people of Israel. This is the introduction to this sacred Song. In and amongst the true Israel of God, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, is known, as the Lord God of his people. His name, as made known, and fully revealed in the person of Christ, is very precious to them, very great in their spiritual apprehensions, and very high in their esteem. It is the knowledge of what the coequal Three are to them in the person of Christ, which leads them to centre in Jehovah as the Lord their God.

V. 2. *In Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion.*

Salem here is Jerusalem. *Melchizedek* was king of Salem, which by interpretation, according to the apostle in Hebrews, chap. vii. 2, is king of righteousness, and after that also, king of Salem, which is king of peace. In *Salem*, or Jerusalem, were the tabernacle and temple of God. In it were the symbols and memorials of the divine presence. Here Jehovah rested; the Holy of Holies was his dwelling-place. Here he shone forth. On Mount Zion the temple was built: it was the glory of the whole people and land of Israel. He not only shone forth here, as their perfection and their glory; all which is most truly applicable to our Lord Jesus Christ and his church; but he dwells in the hearts of his people; in the midst of his people. He is the life of his people; the righteousness of his people; the purity of his people; the perfection of his people; the glory of his people; their ornament, their defence, their shield, their protector. He is their peace; he is their dwelling-place. The words before us are introductory to what is to follow.

V. 3. *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle. Selah.*

Some very remarkable dispensation of the Lord, such as had been visible and was well known, must be considered as here referred unto. Some public enemies of Zion and Jerusalem had made some depredation and attempt on the church and people of Israel. The Lord had made bare his arm on their behalf. He had wrought deliverance and salvation for them. This gave cause for this song of thanksgiving. The victory is described in this manner: *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle. Selah.* This last word is added to it, to suggest that what is here recorded, deserves peculiar notice, and constant remembrance. The place where this deliverance was wrought was in Salem, in Jerusalem; or, it was brought to pass, and accomplished on the behalf of Salem and Jerusalem. And the appearance of the Lord, and what he had done, in breaking the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the battle, had made the people in Judea know that the Lord was amongst them. His name, on this account, was great in Israel. It was a full proof that in Salem was his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. The truth of this could not be more clear, because, *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle. Selah.* The shield and the sword were the instruments of war then in use. In Hezekiah's time, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up into

Judea, and took all the frontier cities, and besieged the city of Jerusalem. Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, were in the utmost consternation. The Lord was pleased to send forth an angel, who in one night destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians. This is conceived to be what is referred to. Near Jerusalem, whilst this multitude were in full expectation of swallowing up Jerusalem and the king and nobles of Israel, and the inhabitants of the city, they were by the Lord suddenly and unexpectedly cut off. View it thus altogether, and you have the words most beautifully suited to this case. *In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.* Thus have you set forth the harmony of these verses, which make way for a transition from the former subject, to *Salem, Jerusalem, and mount Zion*, to admire her as the perfection of beauty.

V. 4. *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*

All the glory of the church is in Christ. She is most truly and illustriously glorious, as he is the head of her. Yet the glory of the church here referred unto seems to be her outward glory and excellency: as contained in the temple; in the ornaments, vessels, and utensils which belonged to it; in her priests and high-priest; in her ordinances and worship; in the most special presence and manifestations of the Lord's presence, in his temple, and to his worshippers, on some peculiar and special seasons and occasions. And she appeared most glorious and excellent on this most remarkable occasion of deliverance from the fury and wrath of the enemy. All the nations of the world, destitute of the light of divine revelation, are but mountains of prey. They are as ravenous wild beasts: so far as it is at any time in their power, they gladly and voraciously prey upon, and would most gladly swallow up the church. The church is more glorious and excellent than any of these mountains of prey. This the prophet most solemnly declares. She was this in the present case. As she was delivered out of imminent danger, and that by the Lord her God, whilst her most cruel enemy, the host of the Assyrians, were destroyed, suddenly, in an instant, and that by the immediate hand of God; which is very fully expressed in what follows.

V. 5. *The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands.*

There is an admirable eloquence in these words. It is very

poetically expressed. The deliverance wrought was at night: it was suddenly and in a moment. The general of the army had blasphemed the God of heaven. He had despised Jerusalem, the king, and people. He has no doubt but he shall soon seize the city, or if not, he is sure, as he thinks, the inhabitants will surrender themselves and the city up to him. Yet the same night the Lord sent forth an angel, and destroyed the whole power of his army; so that the stout-hearted were spoiled; they slept the sleep of death; and all the men of might, to the number of 185,000, found their hands closed fast by death. They could not properly find it so, because their souls were departed from their bodies. But it may be so expressed, to shew the disappointment it must have been to the general of the army. And it may be considered as an insult and irony on these dead wretches; or it may signify, that on the sound heard, when the blow was given, and the Assyrians dropt by death, the Israelites, their mighty men, when they came to view the Assyrians dead, found their hands empty. They could not resist, for they were all dead corpses. These words, therefore, are a shout of victory and triumph over the enemy. The men of Judah say, to the praise and glory of God, *The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, the sleep of death. And all the men of might have found their hands quite empty and destitute of prey.* All which is in the following words ascribed unto the Lord.

V. 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*

This is expressive of the complete overthrow of the enemy. Their men, their war chariots and horses, their glory in every part of their vast cavalry, was all spoiled. The words seem to be borrowed from the song of Moses, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. It was a most just rebuke of the God of Jacob, thus to destroy the Assyrian army, who were without the walls of Jerusalem, whose general, and, it may be, all those who were with him, had united together in blaspheming the God of heaven. But the Lord is jealous for his glory: he appears on the behalf of his people, when their case is the most desperate. He subdues his enemies, and executes his wrath and judgments, when they, in their own apprehensions, are most secure. This makes way for the prophet, and the church by the prophet, as her personator, to express herself as follows.

V. 7. *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?*

The greatness, majesty, the dominion and power of God,

are, in their proper consideration, all sufficient to fill the minds of saints and sinners with awful, solemn, reverential fear. When the Lord is pleased and disposed to exercise his wrath, who may, who can stand in his sight? All worlds, all beings, all things before him, are as nothing; they are less than nothing. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. When he expressed his anger against Pharaoh and his army, and brought the waters of the Red Sea upon them, there was no possibility of their resisting them. So also when he sent an angel, and destroyed all the first-born in the land of Egypt, none could prevent the stroke. It was expressive of his anger and indignation against them, as the enemies of his church. So was it expressive of his anger when he destroyed the hellish and blaspheming army of the Assyrians in one night. As the saints of God, the Israelites, the people of the God of Jacob, take a view of these tremendous acts of Godhead, they cannot but express themselves with deep solemnity on this subject, just as Moses and the people of Israel did on a similar occasion, when they broke forth, saying, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* Exodus xv. 11. Here it is the same in other words: *Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?* The Psalmist pursues the subject.

V. 8. *Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.*

The judgment executed on the Assyrians was from heaven. The Lord sent an angel, who destroyed the enemy. It might be when he smote the enemy, a voice, or sound like thunder, might be heard by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If so, they could not but tremble; they could not but be still; saying, *Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.* Such as heard of it among the kings and nations of the earth, had great cause to fear and be still, lest the same judgments might come upon them.

V. 9. *When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.*

Here were judgment and salvation displayed in this one and the same act. And this deserves notice, therefore the word *Selah* is here added. The enemies were destroyed by the judgment of the Lord. The saints, here styled the meek of the earth, were saved from the enemy, the Lord destroying them in one night. This made way for what is next expressed.

V. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

A most glorious display of omnipotency. Out of the blustering wrath of Rabshakeh, and the rage of the Assyrian army, Jehovah gat himself praise, as he arose and executed his vengeance on them. And by what he did, he also restrained the remainder of their wrath, by depriving them of all power to express the same. This makes way for giving the following advice and counsel.

V. 11. *Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.*

The people of God are round about him. It became them to worship him on this occasion, by recording his mighty acts, and celebrating his glorious praise, for the deliverance he had wrought for them. They are exhorted to bring presents or offerings, to testify before him their thanksgivings. So all who were surrounding nations are called upon to acknowledge the Lord; even him whose name is from everlasting; who ought to be feared, to the utter and entire renunciation of all heathen deities. *Vow, and pay unto the Lord: let all that are round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.* As all this most necessarily applies to our Lord Jesus Christ, who wrought this deliverance for his church and people here recorded; so we cannot but join in the same solemn acclamations of praises and thanksgivings with the church, in their devout acknowledgments to him; being fully persuaded he will, in his own time, cut off all his enemies, and prove his eternal power and Godhead over all kings and kingdoms of the earth.

V. 12. *He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

This was fully realized in the late dispensation. He, as this was recorded, was terrible to the kings of the earth. They were filled with alarming fear. Thus the Psalm ends. May the Lord bless the reading of it! Amen.

## PSALM THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH.

The church was now in a suffering state. It may be it refers to the captivity in Babylon. In it there is a complaint of sufferings. We have the struggle at large expressed between unbelief and faith. The prophet prevails over his distrust, by contemplating and reconsidering the ancient mercies of the Lord, most particularly that of re-

demption from Egypt. He acknowledges the ways of God are incomprehensible by us, so that we cannot comprehend them; and recites the Lord's goodness to the flock of his people, in leading them by the hand of Moses and Aaron, those great ministers which God had in time past set over them.

The title of this Psalm is, *To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun, a Psalm of Asaph*; which is the same with the title of the 39th Psalm, to which the reader is referred.

As many expressions in the scripture before us seem particularly expressive of the state of mind which saints under their captivity in Babylon may be supposed to have felt and experienced; so the referring to what the Lord had done in ages past, when he brought his church out of Egypt, is very suited to the reviving of faith in the church here personated, and to encourage them to look for their deliverance from the state they were now in. And as the Lord had raised up Moses and Aaron to go before the flock of Israel, when they were to pass through the deserts of Arabia, so he rose up two principal persons, an high-priest, and a prince of the tribe of Judah, to go before, and to encourage them when they were to come, and were returned from Babylon to Jerusalem.

V. 1. *To the Chief Musician, to Jeduthun, a Psalm of Asaph. I cried unto God with my voice: even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.*

It is very good to record the depths of sorrow and misery we have been in; how we have acted under them; how our minds have been drawn out towards the Lord Jesus Christ; what our prayers and supplications to him have been under such and such personal and pressing seasons. The words before us are very urgent, and are offered up with the most vehement importunity. The expressions, *I cried unto God with my voice: even unto God with my voice*, prove this. Nothing short of audience with God, nothing but the ear and attention of God, will satisfy the suppliant. The word *God*, which is plural, includes the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the Holy Ones, the coequal Three in the infinite Essence. We approach the Father, in the Son, through the inspiration and influence of the eternal Spirit. The speaker adds, *and he gave ear unto me*. This shews how fervent and effectual prayer prevails. If the Lord grant his people audience and an hearing, this is great grace. It is then a good time to proceed in prayer, because hereby a full proof is given that our request is acceptable to the divine Majesty, and that he will grant us the request of our lips.

V. 2. *In the time of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore*



*ran in the night, and ceased not : my soul refused to be comforted.*

Here we have the case of the church opened. This, together with her own particular experience under it, is set before us, and fully opened in several following verses. The state the visible church of Christ was at this time in, was matter of concern, because of the interest which God and Christ had in the same. It was now a night of captivity with the professing people of God. This gave much grief of heart to the writer of this Psalm. He having prayed, opens the whole of his case; saying, *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.* This was right. He could not do better. *My sore ran in the night, and ceased not.* By night, I understand the state of the church, in consequence of its being carried away into Babylon. This state, being recollected by the prophet, is here the subject of great distress. The more he ruminates on it, the more his mind is oppressed with grief. This is expressed thus : *My sore ran in the night, and ceased not.* Nor did the prophecy, that in seventy years the Lord would turn their captivity, and restore them to the land of Judea, and restore to them the ordinances of worship, yield unto him content. No; nothing encouraging would he admit. Not even what the Lord had said, *For I know the thoughts which I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end,* could in the least abate the perplexity of the prophet's mind. So it is, and truth is truth, whether we acknowledge it or not. There have been, there still are, seasons, cases, circumstances, and frames, when saints love to give way to themselves. They love to have their minds swallowed up and perplexed, in being legally and unbelievably absorbed with overmuch sorrow. It was the case before us. Hence the speaker says, *My soul refused to be comforted.* Yet there was no reason thus to sink, because the Lord had foretold the deliverance of his people. It was most fully revealed in the prophecy of Jeremiah; yet nothing but the present state of things occupies the prophet's mind. We may consider all this as consonant with the views of real saints, when in Babylon, and without the use of all public ordinances.

V. 3. *I remembered God, and was troubled : I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.*

But what sort of remembrance of God could this be? He says, *I remembered God, and was troubled.* One would most certainly conceive, the remembrance of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in their mutual, in

their one love, in Christ to the church, which is everlasting, should have yielded real consolation.—That the remembrance of Christ's headship, of his relation to his church, of his interest in her, and of his being her salvation, would have been strong supports to his faith and hope. The prophet was doubtless well acquainted with the truth of all this. But he is not here speaking of this great and precious subject; nor is he speaking of any other, but of the present state and circumstances of the Lord's visible church. He views its present case. The people are led captive. They are captives in an idolatrous land. They are deprived of all ordinances, except that of prayer. They never were in such a case before; no, not even in Egypt. Their present state is more calamitous than it was then. The speaker had viewed it to be so. The former was a chastisement for their crimes, so was this; yet it was attended with more severe rebukes than the former. The city was burnt, the temple destroyed, the ordinances of the Most High annihilated, the people driven out of their own land. This at present is the subject on which the mind is deeply engaged. The prophet therefore says, *I remembered God, and was troubled*. One part of the cogitation of his mind on the state the church was in, led him to conclude it had never been so deeply immersed in griefs and sorrows before. That the marks of God's wrath were never more deeply imprinted in any of his dispensations towards his visible church than in the present. When he, therefore, remembered this, he was troubled; as he entered into it, his *spirit was overwhelmed*. To this the word *Selah* is added, to express how that what went before, he would have impressed on the mind.

V. 4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*

This is an address to God, who had so laid the case of the church on the speaker's mind, that in the day and night seasons, whether waking or sleeping, nothing else was uppermost in his mind. Nay, in the very outgoings of his mind towards the Lord, this at present was so prevailing, that not even personal communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, was so fully desired, as the lamenting the present deplorable state of the church. He was so troubled on account of the visible state, in his view, of Christ's church, and had made so deep an impression on his mind, that he was incapable of speaking out, even before the Lord himself, what seemed to arise in his own thoughts. Thus you have his own experience on these subjects opened unto you. It must not be denied, but it is very good, right, and acceptable in the sight

of God, to view and review the state of Christ's visible church, now in this our own day. Yet, I conceive, a real spiritual mind may be too greatly affected with it; therefore it becomes us to leave the whole with the Lord. If it be asked, Have not saints to be concerned as truly now, for the cause of God and truth, as ever? the answer is, Yes. But as there is a fixed term for church oppression and temptation, so it is good to bear our part in the same, not forgetting our personal relation and interest in Christ, with our own personal communion with him, it being to us individually of the greatest consequence. I would wish it to be noticed, that what is before us does not relate to any particular saint's case or experience, but is peculiar to the time, season, state, and case of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. I must now ask, what all before expressed produced? The church cried unto God. She did this with the utmost importunity. She did it with her voice. She prayed vocally. He gave ear unto her. She, in the day of her trouble, sought the Lord. It was the case with her, that her sore ran in the night, and ceased not. She refused to be comforted. She remembered God, and was troubled. I was troubled. I complained. My spirit was overwhelmed. The speaker kept his mind on the subject before him. That at night, yea, at midnight, his eyes, his mind, were so exercised on considering the state of the church, that he could not sleep. When the morning came, and he entered on the work of the day, he was so troubled with what he had been reflecting on, that he could not speak. This produced in him the following effects, recorded in the following verses.

V. 5. *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.*

It led the prophet to look backward; to consider what the Lord had been to his people in the days of old; in the years of ancient times. It is good to look back, and reflect on the various appearances of Christ to his beloved: at the fall; to Noah, Abram, Moses, and the prophets. It is good to consider the eternity of his love, the immutability of his salvation, and the various and great deliverances he hath wrought for, and on the behalf of his church and people. It is a real ordinance at times; it was so to the church, as personated by the prophet, to appoint a set time to consider the days of old, *the years of ancient times*; to contemplate and ponder over the dealings and appearances of our Lord Jesus Christ towards his church, because it serves to increase our faith, to confirm our hope on, and increase our expectation from

him. It did all this for the prophet, as you may see by what follows.

V. 6. *I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.*

The song mentioned must be the Lord's song, sung again and again by saints in and throughout past generations, as matters called for and required the same. There had been reasons for singing it; for the marvellous preservation of Noah and his family in the ark; for their salvation from the deluge of waters; for the re-peopling the world from them; for the calling Abraham, and constituting him to be the progenitor of the Messiah. The Lord's Song had been sung for preserving his church in the land of Egypt; for its deliverance from Egypt; for its passage through the Red Sea; for the drying up the waters of Jordan; for their entrance and establishment in the land of Canaan; for the many marvellous salvations and deliverances which had been wrought in that land for them. The subject of all this was that which constituted the Lord's song. This the church called to her remembrance in the night of her distress. It was very suitable for her so to do, as also a communing with her own heart, or speaking to herself and case by way of soliloquy, and to make diligent search, so as some apprehensions of the design of God's present dispensations might be rightly known. It led him to make these questions, and propose these interrogations.

V. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?*

It is impossible he should; yet it is better for the mind thus to express itself, than to be poring too much on itself, or on the providential dealings of God with his people. It being a real truth, that whilst Providence is never contrary to the word, yet we may look at it without the word, which when we do, we are sure to misinterpret the same. The Lord had cast off Zion at this time, in a certain sense. This could not be denied. But the question is, *Will the Lord cast off for ever?* No; it cannot be. Yet sense prevailing beyond faith, here is a combat between flesh and spirit. One says, Yes; the other says, No; which makes way for a second question: *And will he be favourable no more?* Sense says, there is no appearance that he will be favourable; yet faith replies, there is nothing impossible with God. Yet sense, unbelief, legality, and reason, prevail so far, as that the prophet reiterates the following questions.

V. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?*

God's mercy in Christ to his church, is from everlasting to everlasting. The promise of God in Christ, to his people, can no more change or fail than the will of God can; yet as it pleases him to try the faith of his beloved, so it sometimes discovers how small their faith and hope in his mercy, word, and promise are. This must be considered as the true state of the case here. Yet the questions put, shew a good degree of faith is in the mind, which will in the issue get above all doubtings, even to a full assurance and confidence in God, yet not before more questions are put.

V. 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.*

Here is a tremendous conflict between faith and unbelief. These questions contained the cogitations of the prophet's mind. It was the fruit of his calling to remembrance his song in the night. Heretofore it had been most blessed employment for him to praise God, when he had been in the greatest distress; to sing his high praises for what he was to his church; for what he had done for his people. Now the case was, that the more he communed with his own heart, and his spirit made diligent search into the dispensations of the Lord God with his people, the more he was puzzled at the subject. And it led him to ask these questions, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.* Take notice of this. Whilst the questions put argue the mind to have been very greatly overwhelmed and distressed, yet these make way for the victory of faith over all the discouragements which could be possibly suggested.

V. 10. *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.*

Here the temptation begins to be broken, and the saint escapes most effectually out of it. There is no greater evil than carnal reason and unbelief. It is not good to look at things as they may appear to the eye of sense; it becomes saints to view every thing, especially all the acts and dealings of God with them and others which belong to Christ, through the perspective of faith. The saint, in the passage before us, confesses his sin. He says, *This is my infirmity.* Sin and infirmity are one and the same. The musings of his mind were all wrong. The questions he had put, argued his

distrust of God. He had gone on with the subject, as though he was more concerned for the church than Christ himself appeared to be. He was so running on, as though he was more concerned for the Lord's honour, faithfulness, and glory, than Jehovah himself. Therefore he adds, *And I said, This is my infirmity.* I confess it. I lament it. I will therefore drop the whole subject. I will proceed no further with it. I will exchange it for a new one, which will be vastly more pleasing, and most assuredly more profitable. *I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.* It would be well if all saints, in all cases, places, circumstances, and frames, would cast off all and every subject which hath the least tendency to create uneasiness in their minds. You have a scriptural precedent for it here: *I said, this is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.* Nothing lifts off the mind from guilt, sin, self, and misery, like remembering Christ; his wonderful love; his glorious acts; his complete salvation; the years in which he hath wrought wonders for his people, and made bare his right hand on their behalf, and for their defence. The words the prophet here begins his new subject with, are a preface to all that follows, to the end of the Psalm.

V. 11. *I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*

Which here, in a very particular manner, must refer to the works of salvation, and deliverances of the Lord, which he had wrought out and performed for his people in all past ages. He had fed them with manna in the wilderness forty years. He caused the Rock to follow whilst they remained in the wilderness. He removed not the cloud from them, which was a continued memorial of his being with them as their leader and guide. Notwithstanding all their sins and rebellions, he was gracious and merciful. This remembered by the prophet, it inspires his mind, and invigorates his soul; so that he says, *Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.* The expression, *wonders of old*, suggests to the Lord's people's mind, that Christ is a wonderful Saviour, and hath in all ages wrought wonders for his church and people.

V. 12. *I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.*

It is very observable what a change is here made in the speaker, in consequence of his expressing the language of faith. It stills his mind; it sanctifies his frames and feelings; it leads him to express the triumph of faith. All which consists in rehearsing the great acts which the Lord

Jesus Christ had wrought for his Israel in times of old. As an introduction to which, he says, he will meditate of the same. This is a most improving ordinance for the spiritual mind, to think over distinctly and particularly on the person of Christ; on the love of Christ, on his interest in his beloved church and people; on his salvation for them; in the many deliverances it hath pleased him to work on their behalf. *I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.* No one can be better employed than in thinking and speaking of Christ: so far as the mind thinks properly on him, the mouth will be opened to speak rightly concerning him.

V. 13. *Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?*

The sanctuary was a testimony of Christ. In it his name was recorded. The utensils of it were all so many sacred emblems and figures of him. From them, as they were spiritually understood, the Holy Spirit reflected the knowledge of Messiah on the believing people of God. Christ, God's way of salvation, was here, visibly, in a figure, enthroned between the cherubim. His greatness was declaratively great, as he shone forth between the cherubim. The lustre and splendour of his shine, the high priest who alone saw it, could not bear up under the full blaze of it. So that it might well be said, *Who is so great a God as our God?* There is no comparison to be made between Christ's Godhead and essential independent blessedness, and all that is possessed by all created intellectual beings, whether angels or men.

V. 14. *Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.*

Jehovah the Saviour hath done wonders. He is a wonder-working God. He hath done wonders on the behalf of Israel. He declared his strength, and gave full evidence of it, before, among, and for the deliverance of his people, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. An act so great, that it is often mentioned as a motive for believing on him; and also as a pledge to the faith of his people, that they might expect all future deliverances from the same arm of his power, which had hitherto wrought for them, and been stretched out on their behalf. Their very enemies had seen it, and were confounded.

V. 15. *Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.*

This the prophet confesseth to the honour of Christ. It was the arm of the Lord by which the people of his holiness had been redeemed out of the hands of their various ene-

mies. Moses said to the people, when they were newly come out of the land of Egypt, *Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out, Exodus xiii. 3.* The sons of Jacob and Joseph, i. e. the whole body of the people, were thus redeemed and delivered, which is thus expressed by Moses in his song on that occasion, recorded in the 15th chapter of Exodus, 12, 13. *Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them, (i. e. the enemy.) Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.* This redemption was wrought by the power of Christ. It is here celebrated as a past act; it was also a perfect one; it was the Lord's own people for whom this was wrought; it was for the sons of Jacob and Joseph. To all which the word *Selah* is fixed, either to signify that here the voice ought to be raised, to testify the thankfulness with which all this ought to be expressed in the worship of God; or, as a nota-bene, or, mark this well; as it deserves to be had in continual remembrance by the Lord's worshipping people.

V. 16. *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid, the depths also were troubled.*

Here the prophet refers to those wonders, to the display of godlike majesty, redemption, and strength, which the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, had displayed in the years which were past, in the days of old. He was the God doing wonders, when he redeemed the sons of Jacob and Joseph, and by his mighty arm brought them out from under the hands of the oppressors. When Israel, redeemed and brought forth, were overtaken by the Egyptians, the Lord God wrought wonders, and gave evidence that his kingdom ruleth over all; that all created nature is under his control; that every element is subject unto him. The Red Sea was divided; the waters of it were congealed. They acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ, and became obedient at his all-powerful command. So that the prophet, in allusion to this surprising event, expresses himself on the subject in this most sublime poetical manner, and with divine rapture says, *The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid, the depths also were troubled.* It was so in effect. Hence it is asked, in another Psalm, *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?* The expressions are grand and noble. They were most truly and solemnly divine. Further proofs are given of the godlike majesty of the Lord



Jesus, when the waters in their way acknowledged him, by their obedience to his all-powerful command.

V. 17. *The clouds poured out waters, the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.*

It seems from hence, when the Lord by a strong east wind caused the waters of the Red Sea to be divided, he at the same time troubled the host of the Egyptians, by great commotions in the heavens. There was a violent tempest of wind, rain, thunder, and lightnings. Such I conceive as was most awfully tremendous. The clouds poured down rain abundantly; it may be in such large quantity, as to liken what we call water-spouts. The thunders burst the clouds with such awful sounds, as were most terrific, such as could be scarcely borne. The lightnings were so quick, so vivid, so glistening, and forked, as were never seen before. It is expressly said by Moses, *And it came to pass, that in the morning watch, the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians. And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.* Exodus xv. 24, 25. Josephus says, it was as these verses intimate. If so, it shews forth the majesty Christ displayed towards them, in these messengers of his wrath, and also his royal favour on the behalf of his beloved Israel.

V. 18. *The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.*

This is vastly expressive of the grandeur and majesty of God, displayed on this occasion. Thunder is the voice of God. This was heard. Lightnings, which are the fire of God, were streaming every way. The heaven was as though it was all liquid flame. The world was as it were lightened with it. The earth trembled and shook, as though it could not sustain under it. As the Lord, in the waters, in the elements of fire and air, had thus fought against the enemies of his church, and thus crushed them; then what he had done, was full proof of what he could do, and would do for his people, so far as the case might call for and require it. Therefore he most certainly would restore his people from Babylon, and work as great deliverance, and glorious wonders in their behalf, as he had done in the years that were past, and as in days of old, for their predecessors. So that the prophet's faith is hereby encouraged; and he addresses God, saying,

V. 19. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*

The Lord's way for the complete deliverance of his Israel from the Egyptians, was in the sea. They were drowned in the same. His paths of salvation, for the salvation of Israel from the rage of their enemies, was in the mighty waters; and his footsteps in providential salvation, are with himself, and known by himself. They cannot be comprehended by us. Saints cannot fully know and comprehend them. Jesus Christ is God. He is a wonder-working God; he doth wonders; he is in the sanctuary; he is a sanctuary to his people; he is a great God; he hath shewed his strength; he hath made bare his arm; he hath redeemed his people. The waters saw, and acknowledged his eternal power and godhead. They were afraid at his presence. The depths also were troubled. The pillars of heaven trembled. They were astonished at his rebuke; they declared his wrath in thunderings, lightnings, and rains, and by shaking the very earth. He had his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters. Surely then he is allsufficient for every state, circumstance, and situation, his church and people can be in. He did for his Old Testament church above all this, which is expressed in the next words.

V. 20. *Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

These were the guides of the Lord's flock. They received their joint commission from him. He was with them; he spake unto them in the cloudy pillar. And when the Lord brought his church out of Babylon, he raised up for them *Joshua the son of Josedech* the high-priest, and *Zerubbabel the prince*, and they were as guides to the people. May what has been delivered be blessed to the spiritual mind! Amen.

## PSALM THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH.

The title of this Psalm, which is *Maschil of Asaph*, implies it is a Psalm to give instruction, which it most certainly does. It is introduced with a very solemn and most important preface. The second verse of it is applied by the evangelist to our Lord Jesus Christ, Matth. chap. xiii. ver. 35. The account of God's dealings with his people, to be celebrated in this Psalm, begins at verse 5. The subject-matter of this Psalm containeth a declaration of the Lord's dealings with his people, and of their conduct towards him.

In Egypt; in the wilderness; and after their settlement in Canaan, to the days of David. We may, as in a glass, view our own faces, in surveying the mercies the Jews and Israelites had received from the Lord, and the returns which they made, together with ingratitude to him. It contains a sacred history and record of the Lord's mercies and their various sins. They were never any thing but sin, let their case and circumstances be what they might. Be they in Egypt, or in the wilderness, or in the promised land, they were always the same people. So are we. Never perfectly well pleased with the whole good pleasure of God's will concerning us. Nor is the Lord ever ceasing to exercise his mercy and goodness towards us; so far from it, that he draws inferences from what we are, to exercise on us his most surprising grace and goodness.

V. 1. *Maschil of Asaph. Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.*

The prophet speaks, as one having authority to convey instruction to the outward visible church of Christ, in this our world. He calls for a large and attentive audience; his intention being to set forth a series of examples, the goodness of God, and the exceeding sinfulness and ingratitude of man. He designs it for the benefit of succeeding ages, even to the end of time. The apostle referring to the very same people, and transactions recorded in this Psalm, saith, *Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples or types, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* 1 Cor. chap. x. ver. 11. It becomes us, therefore, to consider ourselves as concerned in what is here set before us. It is our duty and interest, to give ear to the law, or doctrine, contained in the following epitome of the history of the Israelites; we have an inspired prophet here speaking to us. We may therefore, and it well becomes us to incline our ears to the words of his mouth. The word *law* here, is made use of for doctrine and instruction. It does not mean the moral law, nor the ceremonial law, nor the law of the spirit of life in Christ, the everlasting gospel, which in various places in the Old Testament, is expressed by this term. Here it is solely to be confined to instruction. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the great prophet over the house of God, may be considered as the speaker here; that is, the writer speaks in his great and most adorable name to his church and people. May we hear his voice in the same, Amen. So be it, O Lord.

V. 2. *I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.*

What is contained in this Psalm, is in itself a plain narrative of facts. It contains nothing parabolical, unless those facts, ensamples, types, or representations of old, may be called parabolical of other facts relative to the church of Christ in succeeding time and ages. These words are thus applied to our Lord Jesus Christ: *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables: and without a parable spake he not unto them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.* Matthew xiii. ver. 34, 35. One says, "Here the narration and applying of ancient histories are called parables, because all these things came unto our fathers as types, and were written to admonish us." *I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old.* As from a spring or fountain, the speaker would utter hidden things, or sharp obscure speeches of antiquity, or which are of antiquity, that is, ancient things since the foundation of the world.

V. 3. *Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.*

The acts about to be recorded, were heard and known. They had been handed down from father to son. They were well known. Yet with respect to the instructions and admonitions comprehended in them, and to be drawn from them, as applicable to parallel times and circumstances, they had the nature of a parable. It required wisdom and understanding, so as properly to apply them.

V. 4. *We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.*

The prophet expresseth his concern, that what had been transmitted from the father to the son, and had reached down to his time, concerning the wonderful acts and works of Jehovah, which he, and many in the same age with him, had been informed of, and praised the Three in the incomprehensible Godhead for, should be transmitted down from one generation to another; even to generations which would arise in the latter days; to the beloved of God, whether Jew or Gentile. He aims by what he says, and is engaged in, that the works of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, the wonderful salvations of the Lord, wrought out in all past generations, on the behalf of his church and people, should not be lost. He would have Christ, the saviour of Israel, extolled. He would that his praises should be perpetuated in and throughout every age and generation of time. His strength celebrated; his wondrous works performed on the

behalf of his Israel remembered. How faithful he had been in fulfilling his promise unto them; how good he had been unto them; how he had been with them, and most graciously exercised himself unto them, notwithstanding all their sins and rebellions against him. This he would should be transmitted to the very end of time. Thus he ends his introduction.

V. 5. *For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children.*

God when he brought the people to Sinai, gave them the law, which he appointed as a testimony, and established with them by the hand of Moses. This part of our Psalm begins with it. Under the terms of a law and testimony, established in Israel, are comprehended the precepts and ceremonies, with the several transactions to which they refer, together with the sacred festivals, and what they were instituted to commemorate; which was the ultimate or future salvation, by the incarnation, obedience and most precious bloodshedding of the Messiah. The Passover respected the redemption from Egypt, and also redemption by Christ. The law of ordinances, including the gospel in it, was to such as were taught thus to consider it, a fountain of wisdom, and a source of inexpressible delight. It was to be their study day and night. They were to teach their children to do likewise. They were to look to the types, and promises, as they would be realized in the person, work, and offices of Christ, and be ratified, fulfilled, and accomplished in, and by him. The gospel, in which the whole of Christ is contained, and fully revealed, we should be very desirous to convey down to the latest posterity. It was the Lord's command, that the fathers should make known to their children the great things, the truths, mysteries, and doctrines, contained in the whole of his law or doctrine which he had delivered unto them. By which means the succeeding generation, and the children which should be born to succeed it, and the generation which should arise and declare them to their children, should shew forth, in their successive ages, generation, and period of their existence, the praises of the Lord, his strength, and his wonderful works which he had wrought for Israel.

V. 6. *That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children.*

As one generation succeeds another, so one generation lives for another. It is most truly blessed to live for the

benefit of such as are to succeed us. This is what is here in the words before us quoted. The acts of the Lord, the wonderful works of the Lord, the strength of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, are to be recorded : his name is to be celebrated : what he is to his people ; what he hath done for them ; the mercies bestowed on them ; his lovingkindness unto them, are not to remain and die with the present age and generation, but are to be continued down to the end of time. Yea, the Lord will be magnified for the same for ever. This is the prophet's end, aim, and design, in what he is about to set forth.

V. 7. *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*

One great end, why God gave Israel a law, and commanded fathers should teach it their children, and their children's children, was, that the saints amongst them should renounce and reject all false saviours, and cleave to the Lord alone. That they should set their hope in the true God and Saviour. That they should remember his works, and not forget the same. That they should love him, and keep his commandments ; or, in other words, that they believing on him, looking to him, receiving him into their hearts by faith, and walking in him, as they had received him, might walk before him unto all well-pleasing.

V. 8. *And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation ; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.*

For many of such as might be styled the fathers of Israel, proved faithless and rebellious in the wilderness, when God had brought them out of Egypt. So says the apostle. *With many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them ; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for examples : and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.* 1 Cor. x. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. To prevent from falling into the same sins, and from following the same examples, the prophet expresseth his design in what he delivers. It was that they might not

be as their fathers, who are said to be a stubborn and rebellious generation. The quotation from the apostle is full proof of this. It was a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God. No; they were perverse; they were froward and stubborn.

V. 9. *The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.*

By Ephraim here, some understand the ten tribes of Israel, of which Ephraim was chief. Who though they were valiant warriors, yet they for their sins fell before their enemies. Some understand it of that slaughter of Ephraim's sons, mentioned, 1 Chronicles, vii. 21, 22, 23, which was while their father lived in Egypt. One says, "As the context treats concerning the behaviours of the Israelites, upon their coming out of Egypt, and as the cowardice of the tribe of Ephraim in particular, is no where mentioned, it is therefore most probable, that one tribe is here put for all the rest." So that under the figure of men, when prepared for battle, turning their backs at the sight of an enemy, is pointed out the disposition of the Israelites. They were ready to fall away from God, to forsake him, and relapse into sin upon the first temptation. The sins of Israel are particularly mentioned, and the special acts of God towards them, are recorded in the following seven verses.

V. 10. *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law.*

The Lord God took them into a covenant relation at mount Sinai. He there took them for his people, and they there professed they were the Lord's. He gave them a body of laws for their commonwealth, and suited to their national and church state. They said respecting all these, "all which the Lord hath spoken we will do." A mutual stipulation and re-stipulation took place between God, and the same was ratified by sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood; see Exodus, chap. xxiv. Yet they soon forgot all this; that is the far greater part of the people. There were always saints in Israel; but it is the body or bulk of that people is the subject of this Psalm. They kept not the covenant of God. No; they broke it at Horeb, by making and worshipping the calf. They refused to walk in God's law. This is here expressed in these terms, to express the proneness of these people to transgress the law of God; to transgress the same. Here begins the prophet's account of their sin. It began with their not keeping the covenant which God had made with them, which was not the covenant of grace; yet it was a figure of the same. It was a covenant respecting their

temporal and political policy ; yet they refused to walk in the Lord's law ; to pay any respect unto it. This is recorded as their sin, and to their shame. This produced these effects which are spoken of in the next words.

V. 11. *And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.*

What our heart is, we are. These persons being under the influence of their own freewill, they rejected the law and revealed will of the Most High. They refused to pay any respect to it, which led on to a forgetfulness of his works and wonders. They were obliterated from their minds. Those works of God, even those very astonishing acts, which he had wrought in Egypt, and in Zoan its capital city, on their behalf, they were all erased from their memories. It was to them as though they had never been : so evil disposed were their minds, and so forgetful were they of the same, as though they and their predecessors were no way interested in them. The prophet enumerates the Lord's wonderful works and wonders, which he had wrought on their behalf, in the next following verses, and begins where the first display of them began.

V. 12. *Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.*

In Egypt and Zoan the Lord wrought marvellous things. He proved to a demonstration that all the elements of nature were under his control, and all the powers of nature were at his command—fire, light and air, the earth and waters, the fish and beasts, men, and every disease : the hand of the Lord was so eminently exerted and exercised, that it was fully evident the Lord God omnipotent could not be resisted—that when once stretched out, none could call it back. Creatures might resist, but they could not overcome the will and power of God. The enemies of Israel had full proof of this.

V. 13. *He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through, and he made the waters to stand as an heap.*

From the wonders *Jah the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ*, wrought in Egypt and Zoan, on the behalf of his people Israel, he proceeds to express what took place at the departure of these at their going out of Egypt. The almighty arm of the Lord caused a division of the Red Sea, so that a passage was made for their escape from Pharaoh's rage and host. It was a figure of baptism, and of the most complete deliverance of the church of Christ, by his blood ; in which all their sins are swallowed up ; and by it heaven is opened, and we have boldness and liberty to enter into the Holiest by



the blood of Jesus, he having subdued all our enemies. Thus the Psalmist, having given an account of the behaviour of this people towards the Lord in Egypt, and of his dealings with them, which were all full of grace and truth, he proceeds to recite what the Lord did for them in the wilderness, before he admitted them into the land of Canaan. The great miracles wrought for them, together with their base and sinful rebellions in the deserts of Arabia, are the next subject the prophet enters on. Yet before he closes this subject, he declares how unmindful they were of the past deliverances the Lord God had wrought for them. It was Jesus-Jehovah who led them through the Red Sea. He it was who caused them to pass through it. He it was who made the waters to stand on an heap. He it was who became their guardian and protector. He was therefore most justly worthy of their utmost faith and confidence. Here ends the first part of this Psalm, as I conceive.

V. 14. *In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.*

A preternatural column of fire and cloud attended the camp. In it the Lord was. It rested with them, and moved on before them. It directed and conducted them in and throughout all their journeys. In the night it was a bright and shining light; in the day-time it was a shade, to preserve them from the burning heat of those sultry deserts, which they passed through. All which may be most comfortably applied to our Lord's presence with his church, by his word, ordinances, and spirit. It is he who enlightens her steps, who guides her in the darkness of temptation, persecution and death. It is Jesus who sweetens all her sorrows, and is with his people under them. He was their leader and conductor; he is ours also. This cloud and fire were their glory and security. They were safe under this shadow and symbol of his presence. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ was hereby in the midst of them. He surrounded them. He was as a wall of fire round about them. He was over them. He covered them. He was their glory in the midst.

V. 15. *He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths.*

When the Israelites were removed from the shore of the Red Sea, after they had glutted themselves by stripping the dead bodies of the Egyptians, and taken the spoil to themselves, they went into the wilderness of Shur, and they went three days journey and found no water. When they came to Marah, the waters were bitter. This was the occasion of their murmuring against Moses. At which time the Lord

shewed him a tree, which turned the water into sweetness. A type of Christ, whose sufferings sweeten the most sorrowful distresses of the mind. After this time, the Lord gave them the manna from heaven. And whilst they remained in the wilderness he opened two rocks for them to assuage their thirst; one at Rephidim, in Horeb—this was in the same year in which they came out of Egypt: the other was in the wilderness of Zin in Kadesh, and this was in the last year in which they were in their journey towards Canaan. These were both wonderful acts, that out of rocks of flint water should flow forth. The water flowed forth so plentifully, as though it had been from the great depths. The apostle gives us a comment on the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and also concerning the rock at Horeb; and sets forth the spiritual design contained in all these in the following words: *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.* 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

V. 16. *He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.*

They must therefore have had an abundant supply of water, both for themselves and cattle, which as they walked on hot burning sands, must have been absolutely necessary for them, and shewed the immediate providence and goodwill of God towards them. For, as one expresseth himself, "The air was fire, and the vermin was fire, the flying serpents were of the same kindred with the firmament; their sting was a flame; their venom was a fever." They were as salamanders walking in fire. Then how great was the grace of their conductor shewed forth, in opening the rocks for them, and giving them such a copious supply of water! It shewed forth and was fully expressive of the power and godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is here in the verse before us, wholly ascribed to him; as also the wonders done in Egypt, in the field of Zoan, and the division of the waters of the Red Sea, and causing them to stand as an heap, as though they were consolidated and frozen. All these acts were wrought by Jehovah their Saviour. He it was who led the day time with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire; he it was who clave the rocks; he it was who gave them waters in abundance; he it was who brought streams out of the rock; he it was who caused waters to flow forth,

and to follow them like rivers. And to his praise and glory is all this recorded. But the subject is about to be most awfully changed, by giving an account of their base ingratitude.

V. 17. *And they sinned-yet more against him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness.*

The rebellions of the Israelites, as recorded in the word, are beyond what could be credited were they not recorded in the word of truth. They had the Lord God in the midst of them. His miracles were continually before their eyes. They were fed with miraculous bread; they were supplied with miraculous water; yet the more it was the will of the Lord to deal thus bountifully with them, they sinned yet more, which consisted in their provoking the Most High in the wilderness. They were constantly murmuring; they were breaking out continually into acts of rebellion against the divine Majesty; they were full of mistrust and contempt of the Lord's goodness towards them. Some account is given of these acts of theirs. Jesus Christ the Most High, was he whom they sinned against in the wilderness.

V. 18. *And they tempted God in their heart in asking meat for their lust.*

Reference is here made to what took place the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt. At Taberah; and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, they provoked the Lord to wrath. At Taberah they complained; why or wherefore is not said. It is certain they had no cause for complaint. They sinned in it. The Lord was displeased at it; he corrected them for it. The fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp; see Numbers xi. 1. At Massah, the same with Meribah, they tempted the Lord, saying, *Is the Lord among us, or not?* And at Kibroth-hattaavah they complained of the manna; longed for flesh, preferred to be in Egypt, and under all the bondage of the same, to being under the care and conduct of Jesus Christ. They are fed with flesh for a whole month. *And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. So that the place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, the grave of lusts; because there they buried the people that lusted:* see Numbers xi. 33, 34.

V. 19. *Yea, they spake against God, they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*

The sea had been opened for them. The bitter waters had been sweetened; the rock at Horeb had been smitten;

waters had flowed from it; manna had been given; yet soon after all this, these people loathed manna. They demand flesh; they repent of their forsaking Egypt; they declare they fed there more to their satisfaction: all which must proceed from their own infidelity. We shall starve in this place for want of flesh; we had better return to Egypt again. Can God furnish a table of flesh for us here in the wilderness? It is not to be thought of. Let us therefore make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. What a most awful picture is this of the unbelief, ingratitude and rebellion of their hearts! Surely I see in it my own.

V. 20. *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*

It is acknowledged the Lord God had done wonders for them. They themselves, as though unmindful of all other events, acknowledge the smiting the rock, and the waters and streams gushing out from them, to be altogether marvellous; yet as if his power and goodness were quite exhausted, they, full of mistrust and unbelief, ask these questions: *Can he give bread also?* by which is meant all sorts and kind of food. *Can he provide flesh for his people?* Nothing but this will content them.

V. 21. *Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled in Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel.*

The Lord's just indignation is most awfully displayed on this people, for their sins of ingratitude, unbelief, and murmurings against him. The wrath of God comparable to fire breaks forth. Some of those who were at the uttermost parts of the camp, were consumed by lightnings. The anger of the Lord came up against Israel, and was very visibly manifested, by his smiting the people with a very great plague. See Numb. chap. ii. The reason for which is given in the very next words.

V. 22. *Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.*

This was the very essence of their sin: it lay at the foundation as the cause of all their murmurings. They believed not in God; they trusted not in his salvation; they had no proper confidence in him; yet he had brought them out of bondage. He had fed and refreshed them. He was in their midst; he was seen over them; he was their ornament and glory; yet their unbelief draws a veil over all.

V. 23. *Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.*