

The allusion is to the manna, which was prepared in the clouds. It came down from them. It was miraculous food. It was a type of Christ, the bread of life. The doors of heaven were opened to let it down. It fell with the dew. It was a wonderful evidence of the Lord's remembrance of them, and mindfulness of their returning wants.

V. 24. *And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.*

Yet they were full of discontents and ingratitude. The manna was small and round; in colour like wax, clear and white. It was hard, therefore it was ground in a mill; of it cakes were made, whose taste was like the best fresh oil, and like wafers made with honey. When the dew fell on the host by night, the manna fell with it. When the dew was ascended, the manna appeared like the hoar frost on the earth. Then the people gathered it; for when the heat of the sun came, it was melted. It was a meat which they knew not, nor their fathers. When they saw it, they said, It is manna, (i. e. a ready meat,) or, what is this? for they wist not what it was. And Moses said, *This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat*, Numbers ii. 7, 8, 9. Exodus xvi. 14, 15, 31. Deut. viii. 3.

V. 25. *Man did eat angels food: he sent them meat to the full.*

Every one of the Israelites fed on the manna, which is here called the food of the mighty ones, or the bread of the mighties, or, of the angels of God. It might be called angels' food, either because it was by their ministration under God, sent and prepared; or, because it came from heaven, the habitation of angels; or because it was excellent, so as the angels, if they needed any food, might eat it; or rather, because it being symbolical of Christ, they saw him as represented in it. And their incorporeal minds must be fed and feasted with the knowledge and communion they had of the person and glories of Christ, God-man, who is their head and all. Some read it, *the bread of the mighty ones*; and by the mighty ones, understand the Three in the one Incomprehensible Jehovah. And their love in Christ to the elect, and their gift of Christ, to be the antitype of the manna. So that believers receiving Christ, and feeding on Christ, are to feed with the mighty ones on Christ, as the true bread of everlasting life. It must be observed, what is related in this Psalm belongs to the body of the Israelites, not to the true saints amongst them. I consider myself as not sermonizing; and were it so, I should apply many parts and passages in this Psalm, not to saints, but to such as were

under the ordinances of divine institution, who were destitute of a true knowledge and communion with the Lord Jesus the Saviour. Next follows an account of what the Lord did when the Israelites were so rebellious in their minds, and so insatiable in their desires after flesh.

V. 26. *He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven : and by his power he brought in the south wind.*

The Israelites, discontented with manna, asked in a rebellious and tumultuous way for flesh. At the same time they distrusted the power of God to give it them in the wilderness : the Lord sent forth a wind suited to this occasion, which brought a cloud of quails, which furnished the whole camp of Israel with most delicious flesh for the space of an entire month.

V. 27. *He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.*

This is expressive of the great abundance of this provision sent. It was as though these birds were rained down upon them. They were like the dust, innumerable. These feathered fowls were in number like as the sand of the sea.

V. 28. *And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.*

So that they needed no great trouble to gather up the same ; for they fell, as we say, into their very mouths. So they had manna ; they had water ; they had flesh ; and they fell to feed most greedily thereon.

V. 29. *So they did eat, and were well filled : for he gave them their own desire.*

They fed most greedily on this fresh provision ; they eat to satiety ; they were quite filled. It was rich repast to them ; nothing could exceed it. Thus they were gratified ; what they desired they now had, but it was not with the Lord's blessing on it.

V. 30. *They were not estranged from their lust : but while their meat was yet in their mouths.*

They were not kept from what their lust craved ; but it came to them, and brought with it on them the wrath of God. You have a full account of the same in the 11th chapter of Numbers. I referred to it before ; I now refer to it again, as it gives a most striking comment on several passages in this Psalm ; and especially on these verses, 26, 27, 28, 29, and this before us, and the following.

V. 31. *The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.*

It seems, by these expressions, that some of the most

valiant of Israel, such as were the flower of the nation, were cut off by the Lord, for this their sin, in murmuring at the Lord's having brought them out of Egypt, for their loathing manna, and lusting for flesh. This seems to be the second time the people displeased the Lord, after they departed from mount Horeb. The first was at Taberah. This is referred to in verse 21 of this Psalm. Their next and second time of murmuring seems to be when they lusted for flesh, and spake against God, saying Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock indeed, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread, that is, flesh, and all sorts of provisions also? Can he provide flesh for his people? Which, as it was uttered by them, was altogether the language of unbelief, and most highly resented by God; which hath been expressed in the words before us. This, I conceive, concludes the second part of this Psalm.

V. 32. *For all this they sinned still: and believed not for his wondrous works.*

The next sins they seem to have fallen into, were their doubt of God's word concerning the real goodness of the land of Canaan. They would not take God's word for it. No. He bade them go up and possess it. They will have men sent first to search it out, and bring them word concerning the goodness or badness of the same. This is done; and whilst a cluster of grapes, borne by two men on a staff, is full evidence of the goodness of the land, yet the spies bring up a bad report on the good land. The people murmur thereat. They act worse than heretofore; they are for returning back immediately to Egypt. When Joshua and Caleb, who had been with the number of the twelve who had been sent to spy out the land, came forward to assure the body of the people the report was false, the people cried out, *Stone them with stones.* Upon this *the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.* *And the Lord said unto Mosès, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they,* Num. xiv. 10, 11, 12. On this Moses intercedes on the behalf of the Israelites. Yet the Lord declares concerning the whole body of them thus: *As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward,*

which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said, should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness, ver. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. This is here referred unto when the prophet here says, *For all this they sinned still.* That so many of them had been consumed, some by the fire which burnt among them; others by the pestilence which had consumed a very great number of them; and the spies which had brought up a bad report concerning the land of promise, died by the plague before the Lord; yet the survivors sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. They are spoken of here as a set of unbelievers, and the Lord deals with them accordingly.

V. 33. *Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.*

The whole generation of those who came out of Egypt, except Caleb and Joshua, fell in the wilderness. They were wasted and consumed by a forty-years journey, and by various plagues and calamities. Yea, the whole nation had been destroyed, but for the intercession of Moses.

V. 34. *When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.*

This was the case, as appears in the history of Korah's rebellion; and in the punishment inflicted by the fiery flying serpents; and in the case of Israel and Moab. Read the 16th, 20th, 21st, and 25th chapters of the book of Numbers, and you will find it was even so.

V. 35. *And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.*

Yet all this was so partial, that it was soon over. I should like to conceive thus of it. Some of God's elect, at such times, were deeply humbled before the Lord, for their own sinfulness and personal transgressions, and also for the nation's crimes. And so it was a sort of national repentance so long as it lasted, and a reform also. Yet as the bulk of the people remained in their sins and carnal state, so soon as an opportunity served, they most awfully proved they were the same unbelieving persons they had been.

V. 36. *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.*

They acted, that is, the bulk and greatest number of the people did, as deceivers. They spake good words; they confessed their sins; they joined in worship with real saints

who came before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wept and made supplication there. Yet it was all flattery: it was so in the sight and view of God; they said one thing, and did another. So long as God's rod was severely felt, they were penitents; as soon as it was removed, they were rebellious. It could not but be so, for the reason given in the following words.

V. 37. *For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.*

No. Their hearts were taken off God. They preferred their own will to his. They would not keep his covenant, neither would they walk in his law. Not they. It was impossible it should be otherwise, seeing at no one time their hearts were right with him. Christ was not in them, their Rock, their spiritual Saviour. They did not know him intuitively and spiritually. His eyes, which are as flames of fire, knew all this. He being omniscient and omnipresent, the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins, knew all this. Yet he had a church in Israel, though all Israel were not the subjects of his grace; and he shews compassion to the nation, whilst his church is amongst them, and that in a most wonderful manner, and to a wonderful degree.

V. 38. *But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

The holy, blessed, and Essential Three, are gracious and merciful. Christ, the Mediator, is the subject of all the mercy of Godhead. He is the manifester of it. He is the ordinance in whom it all shines forth. He displayed it most divinely, and also manifestatively on his church, in the wilderness. He extended it to some of those who were but legalists, unbelievers, and murmurers; who were continually sinning against him. Indeed, had he not been full of compassion, had he not forgiven their iniquity, or, in other words, had he not, as Mediator, kept them upon the foot of the strength of his mediation—had he stirred up all his wrath, the whole body of the Israelites must have been exterminated in the wilderness. But then the promises made to Abraham must have failed; therefore the people were in a sense forgiven, and not wholly consumed. Judgment was executed from time to time upon the persons of offenders; but still a remnant was left. The nation subsisted, and could not but subsist until the coming of Christ. And the nation of the Jews are to the present moment marvellously preserved, and will one day, according to prophecy, be turned effectually to the Lord.

V. 39. *For he remembered that they were but flesh ; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*

Our Lord Jesus, as the Mediator of conservation, who bears the world and all things up, he remembered these sinful persons, these murmurers and complainers, what they were; of what materials they were made; of what they were in themselves; how they were in a fallen state; how weak and frail they were; how liable they were to be seduced into sin. He remembered they were a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again; therefore he exercised his compassions on them. Man's life is a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. Here ends another section of this Psalm.

V. 40. *How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert !*

The Lord says, ten times this people had tempted him, and disobeyed his voice, Numb. xiv. 22. Which are by some reckoned thus: 1. At the *Red Sea*, for fear of the Egyptians, Exod. xiv. 11, 12. 2. At *Marah*, where they wanted drink, Exodus xv. 23, 24. 3. In the wilderness of *Sin*, where they wanted meat, Exodus xvi. 2. 4. In keeping *manna* till the morrow, which God had forbidden, Exodus xvi. 20. 5. In going out for manna on the Sabbath-day, Exodus xvi. 27, 28. 6. At *Rephidim*, where they murmured for lack of water, Exodus xvii. 1, 2, 3. 7. At *Horeb*, where they made the golden calf, Exodus xxxii. 8. At *Taberah*, where they complained and murmured, it is not said why or for what. There most certainly was no cause for the same. 9. At *Kibroth-hattaavah*, where they lusted for flesh, Numbers xi. 4. 10. In *Paran*, where they refused the land of Canaan, being discouraged at the report brought by the spies which they had sent. And after this they sinned seven times: 1. In going to fight when the Lord commanded them not, Numbers xiv. 44, 45. 2. In the rebellion of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, Numbers xvi. 1, &c. 3. In mourning for the death of *Korah* and his company, Numb. xvi. 41, &c. 4. At *Meribah*, in murmuring for lack of water, Numb. xx. 2, 3, &c. 5. For grief of their way, murmuring, and loathing manna, Numb. xxi. 4, 5. 6. At *Shittim*, committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 7. In the same place, joining themselves to *Baal-peor*, and eating the sacrifices of the dead, Numb. xxv. 1, 2, 3, &c. This may serve as an answer to the question, and also serve as an enumeration of their crimes.

V. 41. *Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.*

They again and again turned back from God; they again and again tempted God. They limited the Holy One of Israel, as though he was not all-sufficient; as if he could not fulfil his word, and make good his promise unto them. All which was the fruit of their own unbelief, and not remembering and bearing in mind what he had already done for them. Forgetfulness of God's mercies is the fountain from whence all their and our ingratitude proceeds.

V. 42. *They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the hand of the enemy.*

To give a proper insight into the base ingratitude and unbelief of the Israelites in the wilderness, the prophet goes back to the subject mentioned at the beginning of this Psalm; and more especially to verses 11, 12, where he introduces an account of the miracles wrought in Egypt, before their departure from thence. This subject he here re-assumes, and is very particular in his recital of the same. He carries on this part of the subject to the close of the 53d verse. It is charged on the Israelites, that they had oft provoked God in the wilderness: that they had grieved him in the desert; yea, that they had turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel, a title peculiar to the glorious Messiah. That they remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the hand of the enemy. The prophet therefore goes on to make a very correct mention of these great acts and deliverances of the Lord towards them, and wrought on their behalf.

V. 43. *How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.*

These are nearly the same words made use of by him when he introduced the subject of their deliverance at the Red Sea, verses 11, 12. He there said they were forgetful of God, and forgot his works and his wonders that he had shewed them. Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. Here he says, they thought not of his hand, they remembered not how it was stretched out on their behalf to deliver them from the Egyptians: how he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan.

V. 44. *And turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.*

This was the first plague in Egypt, and a most grievous one it was: it lasted a whole week. In the heavens, on the earth, in the waters, and on the creatures, our Lord Jesus, who is Jehovah manifested his power and supremacy, and independency.

V. 45. *He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them, and frogs which destroyed them.*

He sent a mixture, (so it is in the margin, in Exodus viii. 21.) whether of beasts or insects, they were very noisome and destructive. So were also the frogs. These plagues are not enumerated here in the order they stand in Moses's account of them. At our Lord's command, insects and animals left their wonted habitations, to destroy vegetables, or torment men.

V. 46. *He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.*

By this plague all herbs and fruits were consumed. Locusts fly in the air, in great multitudes, and wheresoever they fall, they devour every green thing. The caterpillar is a worm which devoureth grass and fruits.

V. 47. *He destroyed their vines with hailstones, and their sycamore trees with frost.*

The hail was grievous, being mixed with fire: it killed men, beasts, herbs, and trees.

V. 48. *He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.*

This was the effect of the mighty thunderings, and lightnings, and hail: the cattle exposed in the fields were killed. The flocks of sheep exposed to the lightnings were consumed also. The lightnings here are compared to fiery coals, or thunderbolts, which strike dead in a moment. They are the arrows of the Almighty, or burning coals which went forth at his feet, as another prophet expresses it. Hab. iii. 5.

V. 49. *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*

It may be, Moses and Aaron may be here intended, whom the Lord sent to denounce these plagues before they came, and by their hand brought them on Egypt; or it may intend some hideous forms of apparitions, sent by the Lord's permission to work on the sensory, and affright the Egyptians, and thus increase their misery.

V. 50. *He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence.*

Thus the Lord armed all the elements, and made use of them in the display of his judgments. The pestilence destroyed the cattle of the Egyptians. This verse refers to the plague, or murrain, of which all their beasts and cattle died, so that it must have been a very severe stroke. It is expressly said, *all the cattle of Egypt died; but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one*, Exodus ix. 6.

V. 51. *And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of all their strength; or, the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham.*

The Egyptians were the posterity of Ham, the son of Noah. The death of all the firstborn in the land of Egypt must be most tremendous. It was at midnight; it was that very night the Israelites were keeping the Passover; that very night God destroyed all the firstborn of man and beast amongst the Egyptians. Upon their gods also he executed judgments, and saved Israel, and their firstborn, by the blood of the Paschal Lamb. Thus the Lord accomplished the redemption of his people. Thus the Psalmist, having fully related the punishments inflicted on the Egyptians, ends this subject, and proceeds to speak of those mercies the Israelites were made the partakers of. He mentions what the Lord did, by taking these under his own care, guiding them through the wilderness, casting out the Canaanites before them, and planting them in the land of Canaan. This I conceive to be a distinct part of this Psalm, which begins with the next verse, and ends with the 55th verse.

V. 52. *But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.*

The Lord Christ overthrew their enemies, and took them under his own protection. He fed them; he conducted them; he guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

V. 53. *And he led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.*

The Israelites took their journey from Rameses to Succoth; from thence to Etham; from thence to Pihahiroth; from thence to Migdol. Then they passed through the midst of the sea, and came into the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah. From thence they came to Elim; from thence to the wilderness of Sin; from thence to Dopkah; from thence to Alush; from thence to Rephidim; and from thence to Sinai. They came hither the beginning of the third month, called Sivan: it answers to a part of May and June. Here the Lord gave them laws, statutes, and judgments; here they sinned in making a golden calf. Whilst they were here, the tabernacle was made and erected. Out of it the Lord spake to Moses, and gave commandment concerning sacrifices. He commanded the numbering the twelve tribes. He gave orders how they should encamp about the tabernacle, and for their journeying with it towards the land of Canaan. And in this place they abode, until the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after their coming out of Egypt. The Lord led them on safely; they

feared not their enemies, the Egyptians being overwhelmed in the Red Sea. Nor had they any cause to fear; yet they had not travelled but about the space of three days, when they began to murmur and complain; and from that time begins all recorded on that subject throughout the book of Numbers. Yet notwithstanding all their rebellions in the wilderness, he preserved and guided their posterity, and gave them in his own time the possession of the land of Canaan.

V. 54. *And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.*

Thus an account is given by the prophet of the goodness, mercy, and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Rock, the high God, their Redeemer. Of him, who was the Holy One of Israel, towards his flock. He had, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses, given an account of what the Lord had been, and done, and of what he had wrought for them, when he brought them out of Egypt, and was leading them on to mount Horeb. He, in the 17th verse, begins with an account of their sinfulness and base ingratitude, notwithstanding all this. He gives a very particular account of their unbelief and wickedness during their time of being in the wilderness. How the Lord visited them for their various transgressions, murmurings, and infidelity, is also included. Their behaviour in their various visitations is also recorded. This subject extends from the 17th down to the close of the 37th verse. Then the compassion of the Lord, and his forbearance towards them are recited. After which he changes his subject, and shews how they had forgotten the great acts of God towards them. He recites the wonders God had done in Egypt; the plagues he had brought on their enemies; how he had brought his people out from under the oppressions of their enemies. From thence he shews how the Lord had borne with their manners in the wilderness; and in his own time had actually possessed them of the land of Canaan.

V. 55. *He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.*

The Lord Jesus Christ brought Israel to the promised land. He expelled the heathen; he settled his people; he fixed his residence on mount Zion. This was all by his own arm; for though Joshua was in the Lord's hand the instrument, yet the victories he obtained were all owing to the divine presence, and power of Christ with him. It was Joshua brought the Israelites into the possession of the Gentiles; but it was the Lord who went before him, who drove

them out. The seven Canaanitish nations subdued, were divided by lot, by line and measure, and each of the tribes had that part which by this means fell to his portion ; so that it was all of God. For the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. And now a new subject, concerning what, and how these people acted, when instated in the land of Canaan ; and it is as sinful as it was in Egypt, and in the wilderness forty years.

V. 56. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies.

So soon as Joshua was dead, they presently shewed their propensity to idolatry. The whole book of Judges gives awful proofs of it. Notwithstanding all past mercies, they still sinned ; though now in Canaan they are still the same in their hearts and affections they had been in the wilderness. They were as the successors of their fathers who fell in the wilderness through their unbelief, most exact copies of them ; yet they, with all their privileges, blessings, and benefits, tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies ; no, so far from so doing, that they acted most exactly like the account given concerning them in the next words.

V. 57. But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers : they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

Their zeal and love to God, and his testimonies, were wholly relaxed ; they were enervated by sensuality and indolence ; they were like their fathers, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. Out of six hundred thousand men that came out of Egypt, not any of them came into Canaan, save Caleb and Joshua. These, their successors, were like a warping bow, or bow of deceit, that shooteth awry, and so deceiveth.

V. 58. For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

Nothing could be more obnoxious to the divine Majesty. This being to set aside the Three in Jehovah ; to set up another Christ ; to deny the true Jesus ; to break in immediately on God's covenant ; to deny his authority ; to break his covenant ; to despise his ordinances ; to provoke him to anger. Their predecessors fell into idolatry twice in the times of Moses ; first in the instance of the calf, secondly in their worshipping Baal-peor. Under Joshua's reign, they never once fell ; but he being dead, they are almost always falling into this sin. They have their high places ; they have consecrated places on mountains. On them they offer sacrifice, and most frequently to the gods of the heathen

which were round about them. This was their besetting sin, and they most awfully delighted in it, and were as a body of people most frequently falling by it. Yet the tabernacle was at Shiloh; the altar of God was there; true worship was there kept up and maintained; the priests of the Lord were there; all which made this sin in them the more exceeding sinful. It could not but be resented by the Lord.

V. 59. *When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.*

This was manifested by his not appearing on their behalf; by his leaving them again and again in the hands of their enemies; by his loathing them, and leaving them, so as not to work for them, but permitting them to be the scorn of their enemies. An outward and most solemn proof was given of the truth of this, which is taken notice of in the next words.

V. 60. *So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men.*

It was set up there in the time of Joshua. It continued there to the time of Eli. He was the high-priest. His sons were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord. Such was their wickedness, that some could not like to go up to Shiloh on their account. They had acted so detestably, that men abhorred the offering of the Lord. To correct all Israel for their sin, which consisted of divers particulars, the Lord forsook the tabernacle and tent which he had placed among men, and deprived them of it for a season, by removing it from them.

V. 61. *And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.*

The tabernacle is here styled *God's strength and his glory*. It was as such a symbol of the person of Christ, in whom is everlasting strength; in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead; in whom all the glory of God shineth forth in a manifestative way, to the utmost degree, on his church and people. So that the removal of this sacred ordinance, carried with it the most clear and convincing evidence, that God was withdrawn from the people: for the sins of the priests and people, the Lord permitted the Philistines to come up against the Israelites. In the first battle four thousand of Israel are slain. The ark of God is brought from Shiloh into the field of battle, in which thirty thousand Israelites are slain, and the ark of God is taken, and carried into the enemy's country. This is what is here alluded to. It was

the Lord's act; it is ascribed unto him; it was to shew his displeasure with the Israelites for their sin.

V. 62. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

This expressed the immense slaughter of the Israelites in the battle which hath been before taken notice of.

V. 63. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given in marriage.

These were the sad effects of the battle. It was the fire of God's wrath, kindled against them in consequence of their sin, which was the occasion of their present distress. Or, it may be expressive of the enemy, that they were a strong people like fire. Now no praises were left; nor were there any praised in hymns and songs, as was usual at espousals and marriages. No; the young men were fallen in battle; the young maidens could not therefore be given in marriage, they having no suitors.

V. 64. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

All these calamities came upon the Israelites for their sins, which they committed in the land of Canaan, and a long season they were instated in it. God forsook his tabernacle; God abhorred Israel; he delivered his strength into captivity; he permitted the ark of the covenant, with its mercy-seat, and cherubim of glory, to be seized, carried up, and touched by sacrilegious hands. He permits some thousands of the people to fall by the sword of the enemy. The young men are slain; the young virgins are in a pitiful state; the priests, Hophni and Phinehas, are slain by the sword, and their widows lamented not at their funeral; for the wife of Phinehas died in travail. These priests were grievous sinners. The high-priest also died at hearing the doleful news, especially that of the captivity of the ark.

V. 65. Then the Lord awaked, as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

Whilst the Philistines were by God's permission chastening his people for their sins, he seemed unconcerned, as one asleep; but this being done, and the Israelites being by this means awakened to a sight and sense of their sins, the Lord stirs up himself to punish the Philistines for their crimes committed against Israel, and most especially for their detention of the ark.

V. 66. And he smote his enemies in the hinder part: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

God smote them with emeralds, or piles, in the secret

parts, or hinder parts. And they were hereby put to a perpetual reproach, as they were forced to make images and similitudes of the emerods, and secret parts, of gold, and send them with the ark home to Israel, as an oblation for their sin. 1 Sam. chap. vi. 4, 5. 11. 15. 17.

V. 67. *Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim.*

When the ark was returned out of the land of the Philistines, it went no more to Shiloh, which was in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph; but it was brought first to Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vi. 21. This was a city in the tribe of Judah. From thence, after it had a short stay, it was removed to the house of Obed Edom. It was not in his house long, but was removed to mount Zion; 1 Chron. chap. xiv. and xv. The ark had been many years at Shiloh; but being removed from thence, it was never more to return thither. It was brought back to Bethshemesh; then it was carried to Kirjath-jearim; then to the house of Obed Edom; then to the city of David, that is Zion; and when the temple was built, it was carried by the priests into the Holy of Holies.

V. 68. *But he chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion, which he loved.*

The tribe of Judah was the kingly tribe. From it our Lord came. Mount Zion was the chosen and highly favoured mount, on which in after time Solomon erected a temple, as a magnificent and permanent habitation for the God of Jacob, which during the continuation of the Old Testament dispensation, was a memorial of that eternal temple, the body of Christ, in which dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead personally. The divine presence removed at this time to the tribe of Judah, because out of that tribe, after the rejection of Saul, came the great representative of the Messiah, David the son of Jesse, and after that Solomon his son, who was a most glorious type of Christ, and was the builder of the temple, which was a testimony of the incarnation of the Son of God, and a real pledge thereof.

V. 69. *And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.*

On mount Zion, in the tribe of Judah, the Lord God built his holy sanctuary. It is here attributed to him. He who refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim to be any longer favoured with the same at Shiloh; but chose the tribe of Judah, out of whom was to come the chief ruler, even our Lord Jesus Christ; he who chose the mount Zion to be the seat of his worship, and

loved his church, and fixed on this spot as the consecrated one, where he would be worshipped with burnt-offerings and sacrifices; he built his sanctuary on it. He built his sanctuary like high palaces. It was noble, glorious, grand, and beautiful; it was stable and firm; the model of it was from the Lord. It was like the earth which God hath established for ever. All this is here attributed to the divine Majesty, and that most justly, for though Solomon was the builder of it; this was by the Lord's appointment and command. None of his thoughts were engaged in the construction of it. No; the plan was given him. *Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things, &c.* All this, said David, the Lord made me to understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern. 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12. 19. So that the building the sanctuary is most justly ascribed to God in the Psalm before us.

V. 70. *He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds.*

It was the Lord's act. He called David from a very low, to a very exalted state. David whilst a poor shepherd's boy, when he was keeping his father's sheep, is sent for from the fold, and anointed by Samuel at God's command, to feed, rule, and govern the Lord's people of Israel; all which is full evidence of the sovereignty of the divine will.

V. 71. *From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*

It is the Lord who alone can fit men for any station in life. It is he only who can fit for exalted stations. David was to feed the people. His office was like the good shepherd's; he was to guide and govern the flock committed to his care, according to the law of the Lord. Jehovah was the law-giver. David was to see the divine statutes were put into execution. He was to feed Jacob and Israel, who were the Lord's inheritance. He did so; therefore it follows in the next words,

V. 72. *So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.*

As he was raised up of the Lord, and fitted by him for his office, so, with the utmost prudence and discretion, he admi-

nistered justice and judgment unto all the people. He went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. He was a type of Christ, who is called David, and also the Son of David, and he is the shepherd of his flock, their Lord and king.

As from the 56th verse down to the close of the 64th, we have the sins of the people, when instated in the land of Judea, and the chastisements of God for them; so the deliverances he wrought for them, and how he went on, notwithstanding all, to bless them, are also recorded. His sovereign pleasure was made known, by casting off Shiloh. It was no more to be the seat of worship. By choosing mount Zion, here it was to be continued for some ages, even to the coming of Christ. The choice and appointment of David to the government was out of love to the people; so was the erection of the temple; and thus, by degrees, the kingdom of Israel, and God's church and worship, were established, and also provided for. As it will be profitable to survey every part of the subject contained in the Psalm, I leave it with the reader so to do, if he please. If what is written may cast any light upon the subject matter of it, I have my reward. May the Lord bless the same, if he please. And the glory and praise shall be given to the essential and undivided Three in the one Incomprehensible Jehovah, who liveth for ever and ever; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

PSALM THE SEVENTY-NINTH.

A Psalm of Asaph. We have had this same title, and opened it, therefore nothing will be said here concerning it.

The subject matter of it is as follows: It represents the church of God in a very tremendous state of persecution and affliction. The enemy has great power, and made sacrilegious devastation and cruel slaughter on the visible church of Christ. She calleth upon the Lord in prayer for deliverance. A confession of sin is made, and most ardent entreaties for the forgiveness of those sins which had brought those calamities, are expressed. The church mentions the reproach cast on her by the enemies; she prayeth for the removal of the same; and concludes with declaring, in the name of all the members of the church, praise will be offered to the Lord continually, on his working deliverance for his people. It is conceived it refers to the distresses which were brought upon the saints at Judea and Jerusalem by the Babylonians

and Syro-Grecians. Some refer it to the times of the Macabees; but when it was written cannot be said.

V. 1. *A Psalm of Asaph.* O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

The whole Psalm is a prayer, offered up to the Three in covenant, in a most solemn season of distress. In it are expressed some very sore calamities. They are mentioned. This was very proper, seeing the prayer is founded on them. The land of Judea was God's inheritance. The temple was the seat of God's worship. His name was called on it, therefore it was holy. Jerusalem was the beloved city. The heathen, the implacable enemies of the Jews, had in an hostile manner entered into this land, God's inheritance. They had defiled the temple; they had laid Jerusalem in ruins. It suits with what took place when the Chaldeans came up against Judea; when they besieged Jerusalem in the reign of Zedekiah; when they burnt it and the temple. All which were very great afflictions to the people of God at that season. It may be also applied to some great seasons of distress the Lord's people amongst the Jews had the experience of, under the times which went over their heads, when the kings of Syria and Egypt at various seasons oppressed them. As also it may be, it refers to Antiochus, who was a deadly and malicious enemy to the Jews. It is said of him, that he was scarcely seated on the Syro-Grecian throne, when the Jews severely felt his madness and fury. Because Onias, their high-priest, refused to comply with some heathen abominations, he turned him out, and sold the office to Jason, his more complaisant brother, for 350 talents of silver. Disgusted with Jason, he quickly turned him out, and sold it to Menelaus, another brother, for 650 talents. When Antiochus (he is generally styled Antiochus Epiphanes) was in Egypt, about A. M. 3834, the Jews, falsely informed of his death, made public demonstrations of their joy; and Jason attempted to recover the high priesthood. Provoked hereby, and detesting their peculiar manner of worship, Antiochus, in his return homeward, forced his way into Jerusalem, murdered 40,000 of the inhabitants, and sold as many more for slaves. He carried off 1,800 talents of the sacred money, and a great part of the furniture of the temple; and made two of his most inhuman favourites governors of the country. About two years after, mad with rage that the Romans had frustrated his designs upon Egypt, he ordered his troops, in their return through Judea, to pillage the cities, murder such as were able for war, and sell the women

and children for slaves. Upon the sabbath, when the Jews superstitiously declined to fight, his troops entered Jerusalem, killed multitudes in cold blood, and carried off 10,000 prisoners. They erected a fort hard by the temple, whence they might sally forth, and murder such as dared to worship thereat. Not long after, Antiochus dedicated the temple itself to Jupiter Olympus, a chief idol of the Greeks, and erected his statue upon the altar of burnt-offering. For 2,300 mornings and evenings, or 1,150 days, the daily sacrifice was entirely stopped, and the temple rendered a scene of idolatry, lewdness, and murder. Such Jews as refused to worship idols, or eat swine's flesh, were exposed to all the horrors of persecution, torture, and death. Eleazar, and a widow with her seven sons, were the most distinguished martyrs. Others, hazarding every thing dear, instructed their neighbours, and warned them to avoid every sinful compliance. Matthias a priest, and his sons, Judas, Jonathan, Simon, &c. commonly called Maccabees, took arms, and with astonishing bravery and conduct, defended their religion and liberties. After many lesser advantages, Judas, who succeeded his father in the command, gave Nicanor, the Syro-Grecian general, a terrible defeat, A. M. 3839. He recovered the temple, repaired and beautified it, or rather he purified it, and restored the worship of God; and restored and repaired Jerusalem, which had been reduced to almost a ruinous heap." I have quoted this from Brown's Introduction to his Self-Interpreting Bible, as I think it may cast some light on this present Psalm.

When, and whilst these enemies faged, it might well be said by the church in that age, *O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance: thy holy temple have they defiled: they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.* These were very severe dispensations.

V. 2. *The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto beasts of the earth.*

It may easily be conceived, there was an horrible carnage attended the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Heaps of slaughtered bodies lying unburied, must be a doleful sight. These, as exposed to birds and beasts of prey, must be inexpressibly shocking to humanity. Yet such, according to the prophet's account, had been the case. Yet they were servants and saints of the Lord, who had thus been treated; which shews the absolute sovereignty of God, in his dispensations of Providence towards his beloved. We

may conceive it must be a most solemn season to survivors. They had none but the Lord to repair unto; they saw with their eyes the tremendous catastrophe; they could not but lament it, and fall, in consequence of it, upon their knees before the Lord.

V. 3. *Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem: and there was none to bury them.*

I think, the Lamentations of Jeremiah may give some light into the miseries the people of God must have been the partakers of, at and after the siege of Jerusalem. Yet what is before us, seems more to respect a most tremendous persecution of the church of the Jews in Jerusalem. I therefore conceive what befel these people after their return from Babylon, and what they suffered under the rage and madness of Ptolemy, one of the kings of Egypt, who being at Jerusalem, offered sacrifices of thanksgivings to Jehovah; but being highly enraged at the terrors of God, or because the importunity of the Jews had hindered him from entering into the holy of holies, he caused forty or sixty thousand of the Jews to be inhumanly massacred in Egypt. Or, the prophet may refer to what miseries were brought on the Jews by Antiochus, who in cold blood ravaged Jerusalem, and murdered 40,000 of the Jews, and made as many prisoners. For the dead to remain in the open air, unburied, is very dishonourable: I know of no times spoken of in all the Bible, which could come up to, or compare with these.

V. 4. *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.*

Here is misery upon misery, one calamity upon the back of another. It was grievous for the heathen to come into God's inheritance; it was more so for them to defile God's holy temple. It must have been grievous for Jerusalem to lay in one general mass of ruins; to lay temple and city in heaps of ashes and dust. Whose heart could behold this, but must mourn and lament? It must have been a most doleful sight to behold the dead bodies of saints cast out by the enemy with scorn and contempt, as dung upon the open field; thrown forth, as so much carrion, for the fowls of the air and beasts of the field to feed and feast upon. Add to all this, the insult, scorn, reproach, and contempt of the enemy; what a state of sorrow must the church of Christ have been in! She was the scorn and derision of infidels. Yet let them mock on; let them blaspheme her God; it will not take off her heart from him, nor hinder her from calling on him. No; it will only afford her matter for prayer; it will only make her the more importunate.

V. 5. *How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?*

The church, as almost exhausted in the flames of persecution, expresses herself as so full of importunity, that by the prophet she puts these questions; *How long, Lord*, am I to remain in this tremendous state? *How long, Lord*, is the persecution to continue? Am I to have no deliverance? *Wilt thou be angry for ever?* Am I to remain under these present tokens of thy displeasure? The extent and continuation of my troubles seem to threaten a total extermination of thy people Israel out of the land. Surely this cannot be. Thou canst not break thy promise. Thou canst not deny thyself. Thou canst not destroy thy church. She must bring forth the Messiah. I therefore, as the suppliant of thy present afflicted people, ask thee, O Lord, this further question, *Shall thy wrath burn like fire?* Shall there not be a stop put to it? Lord, behold our griefs. Look down upon this church, who is now in the fiery furnace of affliction. Help and save us, O our God. We are almost parched, and quite exhausted. Save, Lord, or we perish.

V. 6. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.*

One observes, that though these words are uttered prayer-wise, yet are rather to be considered as a prediction of what would afterwards come to pass. It cannot be but in the issue of things God will visit the enemies of his church, and finally crush and subdue them. Popery, Mahometanism, Paganism, and every Ism must be brought under the feet of the all-conquering Jesus. He must reign till all his enemies become his footstool. The relation the church stands in to God, causes him to appear on the behalf of his people, and to execute vengeance on her oppressors who know not his name. I conceive, when we read this and other Psalms like unto it, we are to consider the church in it, as consisting of God's elect, and of such also as are only outward-court worshippers. Hence, many expressions and confessions in them are not to be confined and interpreted as belonging strictly and precisely to such as are saints indeed, but respect such as are members of the church of Christ by an outward visible profession, and confession of the truth. I wish this to be noticed.

V. 7. *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.*

These tremendous enemies before spoken of, who had entered the inheritance of God; who had defiled his holy temple, and laid Jerusalem on heaps; even those who

had given the dead bodies of saints to the fowls of heaven, who had given the flesh of God's saints to the beasts of the earth; these enemies of Israel, who had shed their blood like water on every side of Jerusalem, and left the dead bodies unburied, and exposed to birds and beasts of prey, and so brought the saints of God to become a reproach to their neighbours, a scorn and derision to such as looked on them, and saw their distress. The true church is so deeply distressed, that she carries her case to the Lord. She puts three questions to him. *How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry for ever? Shall thy wrath burn like fire?* Surely thou wilt not consume the nation and people of the Jews altogether. No. This cannot be, because the promise of the Messiah's coming and open incarnation belongs to them; therefore, O Lord, pour out thy wrath upon the enemies of thy church; on such as call not on thy name; as know not, nor have any concern in thy Christ. O God, restrain their rage. Do thou abate their malice. Do thou confound their devices, *For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.* This seems to be the proper connexion of the words. The profaneness of the enemy is expressed by their not calling on the Lord; and their fury, in aiming utterly to waste and devour the country of Judea, which the Lord had given his people Israel. They are here styled Jacob, to express their present very low and feeble state. This makes way for confession of sin, and most importunate supplication.

V. 8. *O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.*

The prophet here speaks in the name of the whole church. It was sin was the cause of all the miseries the people now groaned under, therefore he makes an acknowledgment of the same. This is frequently the case in the holy scriptures. Jeremiah says, *Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities,* Lam. v. 7. So Ezra. He said in prayer, on a day of public humiliation, O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is gone up unto the heavens, chap. ix. 6. So Daniel, O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people, are become a reproach to all that are about us, chap. ix. 16. The grievous afflictions of the church, from her sore and malicious enemies, put her on the exercise of faith and repentance. It

begins with a confession of sins, not only of present, but of past. At the same time, the mercies of God in Christ Jesus are most strongly pleaded. They are most earnestly requested. The state of the church is expressed, as an argument before the Lord for an answer to the request: *O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.* The iniquities of former times, and persons, done by us or our fathers, are joined together thus, in Leviticus xxvi. 40. *If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed, and that they also have walked contrary to me, &c.* Here it deserves to be noticed, all this faith and confession of sin, and suing for mercy, are founded on the all-prevailing efficacy of the sacrifice and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not here expressed, yet it is and must be understood, and may be confirmed from the prayer of the prophet Daniel, who says, *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake,* chap. ix. 17. The expressions, *for the Lord's sake*, is, *for the Messiah's sake*. The Psalmist prays that former iniquities might not be remembered. He well knew nothing could be obliterated out of the infinite mind of God; that all the sins of the elect were covenanted for, to be laid on Christ; that God's bowels of mercy in Christ were tender and full of compassion. So that we are to understand by these expressions, nothing more or less than a manifestation of his pardoning mercy, by his looking on the low estate of his outward visible church, and withdraw and restrain the fury of the enemy, because she was brought very low. This fully appears to be the meaning by what follows.

V. 9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

Here is the very essence of this prayer. God is the God of salvation. He only can be the help of his church. His glory is engaged to defend and deliver her in her distresses, and out of them. Whatsoever he does, his glory is his ultimate end in the same. What he does for his church, he does it for his holy name's sake. The prophet prays in the full view of all this, *Help us, O God of our salvation.* It was salvation the church stood in need of. It was a salvation from her present enemies, and sorrowful persecution and circumstances. God, Father, Son, and Spirit, the incomprehensible Three in the infinite Godhead, was the God of salvation. The knowledge of this increased the importunity of the

church. She knew her interest in the divine persons, and their covenant of grace, from whence salvation proceeds. Upon this foundation the petition is founded. The prophet therefore says, *Help us, O God of our salvation.* Thou art the God of our salvation. Thou hast provided an all-sufficient propitiatory sacrifice for us, in the covenant acts and transactions passed in counsel and decree before all time. Look on us, and remember us, interested therein. Work present salvation for us, and on our behalf. Do this for the glory of thy name; thereby it will be evident that thou art the Lord our God. Deliver us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, by Messiah's sacrifice, for thy name's sake. The covenant of grace contains a sufficiency, to embolden us to ask all this of thee, and to plead the same with thee.

V. 10. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.*

It cannot but be well pleasing to God, to save and deliver his church; because, whilst she is in trouble, his name is blasphemed by the enemy, who speaks as if God wanted either will or power to remove the calamities under which his saints groan. The prayer here before us, offered up by the church to God, is not to gratify any vindictive spirit in the minds of saints. No; it is quite otherwise. But it is a request to the God of salvation, to manifest his own glorious name and perfections; that he would break the teeth of the oppressor, and work a public and glorious salvation for his chosen, such as they might admire and magnify him for. Let the vengeance be open and manifest. Some read the words thus: *Let him (i. e. God) be revealed among the people, that we may see the vengeance of thy servants' blood that is shed.* Let God be known by his vengeance on his enemies; or, let the vengeance of thy servant's blood that is shed, be known among the heathen that are in our sight. This would most effectually put a stop to their reproaching insult and blasphemous question with which they address us, and which they address others concerning us, *where is their God?*

V. 11. *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die.*

There were some at the present time who had escaped being slain, yet they were in the hand of the enemy. They groaned in captivity; they lay bound in chains and fetters; they were under the sentence of death, which was to be in-

flicted on them at the will of their cruel and insulting conquerors. For these, the petition in this prayer is offered. The God of the church, the God of salvation, is here most importunately requested to attend unto the cry, the sighing, the groaning, the mournful prayer which they poured out before him ; to reserve, or cause them to remain, and to keep them alive from destruction ; being by the enemy, in whose hands they were, appointed to die. The prophet prays they might be delivered from death. It would require the exertion of omnipotent power to rescue them. If delivered, it must be according to the greatness of God's power. It is a very pathetic passage. *Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee ; according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die.* By looking back to what is written and quoted, in going over the first verse of this Psalm, it is presumed much light may be cast on this present verse, as the number of Jewish prisoners made by their enemies will be the clearest comment which can be given.

V. 12. *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosoms their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.*

This is the last request in this prayer. The prophet prays here the Lord would render sevenfold, that is, fully and abundantly into the bosom of the enemy, such reproach as was suited to their sin and sinfulness, for reproaching the Lord's people and saints, saying, *Where is their God?* and which was reproaching God himself. Now, O God of salvation, says the prophet, as they have reproached thee with weakness, so do thou make manifest to others their weakness. As they have endeavoured to make thee, O Lord our God, contemptible, do thou, O God of our salvation, make them so, and let the world, to whom they belong, most heartily despise them. All which are expressions of holy zeal and jealousy for the name, glory, and honour of God.

V. 13. *So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever : we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.*

Thus the prayer concludes with gratitude and praise. It contains in it faith and confidence in the Lord. It is confessed the church were the people of God : *we thy people.* Here is no hesitation. We are thy sheep. We have thee for our shepherd. Thou hast led us into thy pastures. We feed in them. Even amid our sorest persecutions thou hast given us meat to eat, which the world knows not of. *We will, therefore, as thy people, and sheep of thy pasture,*

give thee thanks for ever : we will shew forth thy praise to all generations. And this shall be our acknowledgment of thy goodness to us, in hearing and answering our requests. And thus the Psalm ends.

PSALM THE EIGHTIETH.

The title is, *To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, a Psalm of Asaph.* The first part of this title was explained, when we were on the 45th Psalm, and the 60th Psalm ; and the latter part has been spoken to, when on the 50th Psalm.

The subject-matter of this Psalm is as follows: It contains a prayer offered up by the church to the Lord Jesus Christ, under the title and character of the Shepherd of Israel. In it an account is given of her present state, of her present miseries, and grievous afflictions. She gives an account of her former exaltation, and of her present depression. This is done under the symbol and figure of a vine ; after which, she is more importunate in her requests. She expresseth her faith in Christ the Mediator, and prays for his coming. This is the outline of it. *Shoshannim* is an instrument of music of six striggs, or lilies. *Eduth* is testimony, or ornament. This Psalm is an excellent testimonial of the faith of God's church, when under affliction.

V. 1. *To the Chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, a Psalm of Asaph. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*

The address is to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Shepherd thereof. His church is his peculiar care. He is the bishop and pastor thereof. He is the leader and guide of his chosen. He leadeth Joseph like a flock ; that is, the posterity of Joseph, and with them the other tribes. Joseph is here named as principal, the birthright being taken from Reuben, and given to him ; see 1 Chron. v. 1, 2. It is for the same reason you have these words in the 77th Psalm : *Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah,* ver. 15 ; where the great Shepherd dwelt is next expressed. It was in the holiest of all, upon his throne, high and lifted up, between the cherubims of glory ; he is called upon to shine forth. Shine bright ; shew thy glory ; express thy favour unto us. The Holy of Holies was a figure of heaven : in it was the ark of the covenant, a type of the person of Christ, who is the heaven of heavens. In

it was the two tables of testimony, written with the finger of God, pointing out Christ as the Lord our Righteousness. Over it was the mercy-seat—a memorial of Christ, the true propitiation; above it, the cherubims of glory—representatives of the Three in Jehovah, in their covenant acts and offices. Between the cherubim of glory was a cloud, in which the Lord dwelt. On the day of atonement, when the high-priest entered into this heaven upon earth, to perform the services of sprinkling the blood and burning the incense, the Lord Christ shone forth, just as he did to Ezekiel. He says, speaking of the cherubims, *And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.* As the person here spoken of was the Man in God, or the God-Man, so this most holy and glorious One shone forth, on the day of atonement, in the Holy of Holies, between the cherubim of glory. This I ground it on, Jehovah *said unto Moses*, who was to deliver the same to Aaron, *I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat*, Lev. xvi. 1. The church before us addresseth Christ; she demands audience; she requests his shine. *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.* Her request is for Christ's open, free, glorious, and manifestative presence.

V. 2. *Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.*

When the time for the people's removal from mount Sinai came, the Lord gave them the signal by the removal of the cloud which had rested on the tabernacle from its first consecration by the Lord. This was removed up above it into the visible heavens. The tribes of Israel marched in order, according to the Lord's command. Judah, whose ensign was a lion, a memorial of Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, went first, and with him the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. The tabernacle being taken down, and the holy things covered, the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari went next, bearing the tabernacle. Next followed the camp of Reuben, with the tribes of Simeon and Gad. Next the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary, that is, the holy things: as the ark, with its mercy-seat and cherubims; the candlestick; table, with the shew-bread on it; the altars. All these were covered, and carried on the

shoulders of the priests. The Gershonites and Merarites, who went before, and were between the tribes of Judah and those under him, and the tribe of Ephraim and those under him, set up the tabernacle, when the Lord gave the signal for the stop of the whole camp; so that they were at such times employed immediately to set up the tabernacle, that as soon as the Kohathites arrived with the holy things, they might be put into their proper places. Now we must consider the Levites and priests, bearing on their shoulders the ark, candlestick, table, altar, the burnt-offering, and also the incense altar; with the laver, and other holy things, in the midst of all the camps as they journeyed. After this came the camp of Ephraim, with the tribes of Benjamin and Manasseh under him. After which came the camp of Dan, under which was comprehended the tribes of Asher and Naphtali. Thus the greatest camp went foremost; the sanctuary had the middle, which was the safest and most honourable place; and the next of all the camps in greatness, went last of all. Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, were joined together on the west side of the tabernacle, and when it was removed, they went next after it. See Numb. ii. 17, 18, 20, 22; and chap. x. 21, 22, 23, 24. We may see from hence the propriety of the prayer. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come, and save us. Do thou, O Lord, go forth in thy strength and salvation, for thy church, as thou didst formerly in the wilderness. Shine forth on us, and reflect thy glory, as it may be thou didst before those three tribes, which immediately followed the ark and cherubim, the immediate symbols of thy divine presence, and come and save us: which is very expressive of the state of the church, that it needed help and salvation.

V. 3. Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

We have these words occurring three times in the course of this Psalm. It comes in as a kind of chorus. As the glory of God, and the knowledge of the glory of God, shine forth in the person of Christ, I conceive the prayer may be considered as expressing the desire of the church for his Advent. By what follows in the three next verses, the distressed state of the church seems freely and fully opened. *Some conceive it to refer to her captivity in Babylon.* If viewed so, then there is a most wonderful propriety in the expressions, as also there is under the account of her former exaltation, and her present depression. *And also in the beautiful figure of a vine, to which she compares herself. She has prayed for audience. She has presented herself before the*

Lord. She has addressed him as the Shepherd of Israel. She confesseth what he hath done, and is still doing. Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock. She mentions where he is. He dwelleth between the cherubims. She prays he will shine forth, and go forth in his strength and salvation for her, as he formerly did before the tribes of Israel; and particularly as he did before the tribes of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, when they followed the ark and cherubim, the symbols of his presence. This she makes use of to entreat him to turn her again from a low captivated state; to restore her again to her former freedom and prosperity, spiritual and temporal. Which restoration she expecteth, only from the grace and mercy of her Lord and Saviour. If he will be pleased to shine forth, it will be salvation to her. She is concerned for all who are one with her, as the Lord's people. She therefore prays in the plural number, saying, Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. Let the church be in what state she may, if her Lord will but shine on her, all will be well, because therein are life, light, and salvation.

V. 4. *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people.*

Jesus is Jehovah. He is the Lord God of hosts. She before entitled him *Shepherd of Israel*. She called on him with devout energy, *O thou Shepherd of Israel*. She had confessed his Godhead, and cried out, *Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved*. Yet she is now more importunate, and becomes still more familiar with him, whose person she adored, whose majesty she admired, whose presence and favour she most highly esteemed, whose salvation she most immediately needed a fresh display of. She therefore puts the following question to his divine Majesty: *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?* I have before observed, we are to consider the church of God, in its militant state, as composed of such as are not all of them born again of God. Hence it may come to pass, that the Lord may visit individual persons and subjects in churches under a profession of his name; yea, churches themselves, for their profane mixtures; whilst it is an everlasting truth, at the same time, he does not visit his elect in this way and manner, but as they are joined with and belong to such. We read, indeed, such words as these: *Your sins have separated, or your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*, Isaiah lix. 2. And thus you may read in the sacred word, *Thou hast covered thyself with a*

cloud, that our prayer should not pass through, Lam. iii. 44. Yet this cannot belong to the saints and faithful in Christ, it can only belong to the outward and visible professors of Christ and his gospel, who are what they are, merely and only by open and external profession. There were seasons of old, there are such at present, when the church, in her distresses, calls on the Lord. Yet he seems to reject their suit; he carries it as though he was angry. It was so in the case of the church before us; and she drew this conclusion from it. She is well persuaded prayer must prevail, but when it shall she must leave with the Lord. Yet she, having audience with him, and his ear being open and attentive to her cry, she makes free to put this question: *O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?* which proves the strength of her faith. She will, be as it may, persevere until the Lord rain down mercies, and work deliverances for his people.

V. 5. Thou feedest them with the bread of tears: and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

This is a very striking picture of the Old Testament church in her present state of distress, when the Psalmist thus prayed for her. Her bread was then dipped in tears; her cup was filled to the brim with them. It was now her sorrowful meat and drink. It was from the Lord. It was the fruit of his present dealings and dispensations towards her. She had now a great measure of afflictions dealt out to her from the Lord. It is in the words before us ascribed to him; yet this is without complaint.

V. 6. Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

When the Jews were in Babylon, their land and persons were as a prey. This they were in the time also of the Maccabees. They were as a prey which all the neighbouring nations contended about. They exulted over her; they scoffed at that condition the national sins of her people, priests, princes, and kings, had brought her into. Their neighbours, i. e. the nations joining their borders, contended and spake against them, and strove who should vanquish them, and possess most of their land.

V. 7. Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

This verse is the same with the fourth, only that there it was only *God*; here it is added *God of hosts*; and in verse 19th, where it is repeated the third time, there it is, *Lord God of hosts*. Which is very expressive of the increasing earnestness and faith of the prophet, in this his prayer on the

behalf of the church. God's turning his people, in their hearts and affections, to him; his turning them from a state of captivity, as he had done when he brought their predecessors out of Egypt; his shining on them in Christ the Saviour, this would be salvation unto them. As he was the foundation of all the promises, and his person and salvation that which was contained in it; so this was a grand support to the mind of the real mystic members of Christ, and lays a ground for their expectation of a restoration from their present state, and of enjoying the blessings prayed for.

V. 8. *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.*

The prophet here mentions before the Lord the favour he had shewed his people Israel. He compares the church, with the commonwealth of Israel, to a vine. It may be the prophet Isaiah speaks after him, and borrows his expression and his symbolical figure, when he says, *The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant*, chap. v. 7. The vine is a plant weak and lowly: it needs support; when it is, it is even then wild and luxuriant, unless restrained by the pruning-knife. It is capable of producing the most valuable fruit; but if barren, it is the most unprofitable of any tree, and fit only for the flames. In all these respects it is a lively emblem of the church, and is made use of as such by Isaiah, chap. v. 7; by Ezekiel, chap. xv. xvii. and xix; and by our Lord himself, Matt. xxi. 33. The church or people of Israel were removed by God himself out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. There Jehovah-Jesus planted his church; he extirpated nations, and placed his Israel in their room.

V. 9. *Thou preparedst room for it, [or before it], and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.*

The vine striketh its roots deep into the soil prepared for it; then it diffuseth its numerous branches all around, by the sides of which it was planted. Thus the seven nations in Canaan were removed before the Israelites, who were planted in the land of Canaan. They took deep root in it; they filled it; the church of God was with them, and all the instituted ordinances of worship. They had prophets, priests, and kings of the Lord's own raising up; they were fruitful, flourishing, and abounding with all good. All which carried evidences of the Lord's good will unto them.

V. 10. *The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars; [or, the goodly cedars were covered with the boughs thereof.]*

The church of Christ, comparable to a vine, had so diffused its vigour, and so increased in Israel, that she over-

shadowed the whole kingdom with her branches, and replenished the Jewish people with her fruit; so that her great men were good men; her teachers and rulers were like cedars planted by the Lord, for their graces and gifts which had been bestowed upon them. It had been thus in Israel. It had been thus with the outward and visible church of God in the land of Israel. It had been thus with the saints of the most high God in Israel. He had been pleased thus graciously to deal out his spiritual and his temporal bounties unto them. But it was not so when this prayer was offered.

V. 11. *She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.*

This refers to the extent of Palestine, which, as inhabited by the tribes of Israel, reached from the Mediterranean sea westward, to the river Euphrates eastward. This was promised, *From the river Euphrates to the uttermost sea shall your coast be*, Deut. xi. 24. It was fulfilled in the days of Solomon; see 1 Kings iv. 21. Psalm lxxii. 8.

As the exaltation of the church of Israel, of their commonwealth, and flourishing state as a nation under the Lord's goodness towards them, have been described by the prophet under the figure and symbol of a vine; so he proceeds under the same figure to set forth and lament her depression, in her present state and case. She was now like a vineyard, or vine, without a fence; she lay on all sides open to the incursions and ravages of her neighbouring adversaries.

V. 12. *Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?*

This is the question he proposes to the Lord. How is it, thy church, thy people, in a providential way, are stripped of all that is valuable, and trodden under foot? She appears as if deprived of thy protection. Her walls, bulwarks, and strong, and to appearance impregnable, fortifications are all destroyed.

V. 13. *The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.*

Under these figurative terms we may well understand fiery and unrelenting foes; her evil neighbours; her heathen persecutors, or one more vile and cruel than the rest; such an one as Antiochus, who at different times issued from his abode like a wild boar out of the forest, resolved to spoil and plunder, and if possible to eradicate and extirpate the Jewish church and people for ever. So thought, and thus acted those brutish enemies of the Jews, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Syro-Grecians, and others, towards them, in their various turns.

V. 14. *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine.*

The earnestness and vehemency of mind here expressed is worthy to be noticed. The more the extremity of the case is considered, the more deeply is the heart of the prophet engaged on her behalf. He requests the Lord's return to his church. He uses a title expressive of his faith in God for deliverance. He is *God of hosts*, or armies. He begs he would look down from heaven, and behold the case of his church. He entreats him that he would behold and visit his vine.

V. 15. *And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.*

Thus he interests the Lord in the concerns of his church and people. When it pleaseth the Lord to look in an immediate manifestative way upon his church, it is full evidence he has heard, and is answering prayer on their behalf. It is well in all our prayers for, and on the behalf of the church, to consider the Lord's own interest in, and concern for his beloved. This is just like the prophet Isaiah's prayer: *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained?* chap. lxiii. ver. 15. His was a public prayer for the whole Jewish distress, when the people were under visible marks of God's displeasure. Such also is this before us. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou made so strong for thyself. He had planted the vineyard of the Jewish church. It was his own act. It was by his right hand. It was a Godlike act. He gave proofs of his Godhead thereby. It was his own act to erect the commonwealth of Israel. To erect that nation into a kingdom. To appoint David, and his family, in particular, to sit on the throne. All this the God of hosts had done for himself, to accomplish his eternal purpose of raising up Christ, who was one day to sit on the throne. He was to spring from the root of Jesse. Thus one prophet expresses himself before the Lord, and entreats him to look down on his church, on the vineyard of his own right-hand planting; and on the Branch, or Son of the vine, made strong for himself; who would in his incarnate state fulfil all his will. He again expresses the sad state of the vineyard:

V. 16. *It is burnt with fire, it is cut down, [or dug up:] they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*

This is here expressed to draw forth the divine compas-

sion of the Lord towards his afflicted church. Her outward state was truly deplorable. She has been described as being captivated; her hedges broken down; all on the high roads plucking her. That is, they insulted her. The public enemy, like a boar of the wood, wasting her; he like a furious wild beast of the wood devouring her. See verses 12, 13. Surely her case must have been most truly deplorable. He therefore prays most vehemently, saying, *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.* This is the sad state, O God of hosts, of thy church at this time. O look down from heaven. Behold thy church in her distress. O restore us from the servile state of bondage to our enemies which we are in. Look on the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted. Look on Christ, the head of the church. Look on him as the Mediator, who is to come, and will be made sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him. Thy professing people the Jews perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. Lord, in the midst of wrath remember mercy.

V. 17. *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.*

Let thy stroke be removed from thy suffering church, or we must sink for ever under it. Let it fall upon *the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself.* There is no other way whereby thy justice can be satisfied. It is he only who will be able to stand up under it, and fully bear it. He is the man of thy right hand. He is *the Son of man*, ordained by thee to take away sin, by making his soul an offering for it. He is the Son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself. It was by the coming of Christ, and his great salvation, the Old Testament church expected perfect redemption from all her miseries, and enemies; as it is by his second coming real saints expect to enjoy everlasting freedom from all the effects of the fall. The titles here given the Messiah, such as *the man of God's right hand, the Son of man made strong* by God himself, deserve attention. Messiah was to be man, or he could not be a suitable Saviour. He must be flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, or he could not have been our near kinsman. He was the Man in God; or, he was God and man in one person. The Son of God took the whole person of God-Man from everlasting; and was set

up as the Son of man before all worlds, and was made strong by divine predestination to accomplish all the vast purposes of Jehovah's will. When Christ is styled *the Son of man*, it respects his Messiahship. He was the glorious one, on whom God willed to lay the iniquities of all his people, and to execute all his curse and wrath due to their sins. He, as the Man in God, was all-sufficient to bear up, when made sin and a curse. Hence the prophet says, *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself*. He is styled the *Fellow of the Lord of hosts*, even when the curse due to sin was about to fall on him. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts*, Zech. xiii. 7. In the cherubic emblem, set up at the east of the Garden of Eden, the mystery of redemption was expressed. The rolling fire revolved in upon itself; to shew that the wrath of God, comparable to fire, was to fall on the Man of God's right hand, *that Son of man which he made strong for himself*. I refer to these words, *So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east end of the Garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life*. And I conceive the prophets, both he who wrote this psalm before us, and *Zechariah*, had their views to this passage, when they wrote what I have quoted from them. Christ is God's Benjamin. The Son of his right hand. The Son of his love. The church is his body, which by regeneration is translated into his kingdom.

V. 18. *So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.*

It is the salvation of Christ which keeps us fast to God. Our perseverance in the Lord's faith and fear is founded on it, and is the fruit thereof. Let Messiah appear in the flesh, let thine hand be on him as our surety. Let our debts be exacted on him; this will unite our hearts, O God, unto thee. Do thou quicken our faith up into the true and proper belief of this, and we will call upon thy name, and cleave unto thee with full purpose of heart. This will afford us all the relief we want. This will revive us, and quicken us, and lift off all burthens from our minds. We will yield all obedience, and praise, and adoration to Him, *in whom thy soul delighteth*, in Him thy soul is well pleased. We will acknowledge thy name to be in Him. And that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

V. 19. *Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

Thus the Psalm ends, with a request the Lord would turn

the captivity by deliverance from it. By sending *Messiah* in the fulness of time, who would redeem his church from all her sins, and out of the hands of all her enemies. In whom God's care or favour would most gloriously shine forth. In whom, and by whom, his whole church would be *saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation*. May the Lord bless the subject delivered. Amen.

PSALM THE EIGHTY-FIRST.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph.

The former part of this title is the same with the eighth psalm, and has been there explained. So has the latter part of it again and again.

This psalm is spoken by God himself. It contains an exhortation to observe God's holy ordinances, and the feasts which the Lord had appointed.

God himself expostulates with his people, as enstamping divine authority on his holy institutions. He also recites his mercies to his people, and mentions their ingratitude and behaviour towards him. And under the form of a most affectionate exclamation renews his promise to the people, requiring their most sincere obedience to his laws.

V. 1. *To the chief musician upon Gittith. A psalm of Asaph. Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.*

The people of Israel are here excited to keep their feast days with joy and gladness of heart. These were the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread. The feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. The feasts of the New Moons. The feasts of the Weekly Sabbaths. The feast of Tabernacles. The feast of the Seventh Year. Of the forty-ninth year of the Jubilee. The feast of the blowing of Trumpets. They were all ordained and commanded by the Lord. They were all shadows of good things to come. Christ was the subject, sum, and substance of them. These feasts were to be proclaimed. Two silver trumpets were commanded by the Lord to be made. And how, and when, and by whom they were to be used is fully expressed, for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. See Numbers, chap. x.—at the 10th verse, it is added, *Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that*

they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God. Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. They are called upon to exalt their voices, to express hereby their joy in God. To sing aloud to the praise of him who had redeemed them from the bondage their forefathers were in in Egypt. To praise Christ, their strength, who had given them the law, who had brought them into a church state, who had appointed ordinances, and feasts to be observed by them, in the remembrance of him, and of the wonders which he had wrought, and would yet work on the behalf of his people in the fulness of time. The apostle says holy days, new moons, and Sabbath days of old, were only a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

V. 2. *Take a Psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.*

These were the instruments of music, made use of in the worship of God. The Psalm was of divine inspiration. It was chosen according to the solemnity, as suited to the subject recorded, and of which the festival was a memorial. A part of the worship, which consisted in singing the Lord's Song, was performed with vocal and instrumental music. It was designed hereby, that their souls might be most delightfully refreshed with spiritual apprehensions of the person, majesty, glory, and excellency of Christ their Saviour, who was also their Lord and King.

V. 3. *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.*

The trumpet, or cornet, was blown to proclaim the solemnity. Every new moon was a feast day. But the first new moon, in the seventh month, was the greatest of them all. Special worship was appointed by the Lord for each of them, but this more especially. It is therefore called the feast of the blowing of trumpets. And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is the day of the blowing of the trumpets unto you. Peculiar sacrifices were prescribed for it, beside the sacrifice offered on every new moon. See Numbers, chap. xxix. 1—6. It is considered and affirmed that this 81st Psalm begun the worship on that occasion. It was the first day of the seventh month. In it was observed the Fast of Expiation. The day of atonement was on the tenth day of it. The feast of Tabernacles was on the fifteenth of it, and lasted eight days. It had two names. *Tisri*, or *Ethanim*. It answers to part of our September and October. This Psalm, here before us, I

again repeat it, belongs to the feast of *blowing the trumpets*. So that this was the first day of their civil, as the first day of Abib, or Nisan, was of the established year. As this solemn exhortation had been given, and the people had been excited thus to rejoice in God, and the way in which they were to express their joy declared; so the reason why they should attend to all this is given.

V. 4. *For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.*

You have the first institution of it on record in these words: *And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.* See Levit. chap. xxiii. 23, 24, 25. This statute, rite, or ordinance, was then given by the Lord. The people of Israel were commanded to observe it.

V. 5. *This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.*

Joseph is put for his whole tribe, and the other tribes of Israel are included in him. Joseph is named as principal, on account of his having the birthright transferred by his father unto him. See 1 Chron. v. 1, 2. When we consider the solemn acts which were in the ordinance of the Lord's appointments to be recorded in this month, and this the first, we cannot but see a great propriety in the connexion of the same. When we consider there never was any true and holy joy in one individual of Adam's fallen posterity, but what was the fruit and effect of knowing Christ, and believing on him, we then must look on the festival before us as a solemn preparation for those which were to follow. Under these apprehensions of the subject, there is a wonderful expression and suitability in the excitations made use of in the words before us. Wherewith the people are called up, to observe this solemn feast, I will recite them altogether because of their beauty and connexion. *Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. Take a Psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony.* On these, and on all their solemn occasions, they seeing Christ in these figures, could not but express their joy in him.

They could not but shout and triumph in him. They could not but shout for the memorials of him, and the testimonies given them concerning him in and by all the statutes, ordinances, and commands given them respecting their observations of them. It is said by an excellent man, Dr. Horn, "concerning the words, *I heard a language that I understood not*, it is difficult to account for the change of person; but the sense seems to be, that the children of Israel received the law, when they had been in bondage under a people of strange and barbarous language, or dialect." I should rather prefer the consideration of it, as spoken by the Lord himself. Nor can I see any difficulty of conceiving the whole as spoken by him by way of exhortation and instruction, and the rest by way of expostulation with them, concerning his acts and mercies towards them. It hath been applied to Joseph, when he went out of prison, and was ruler over all the land of Egypt. I view it as God speaking in the person of his people, which is very expressive of the union between Christ and his church. We read of the Lord speaking thus by Moses to Pharaoh, *Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, &c.* Exodus xi. 4. Now I conceive it was expressive of Israel's going forth also. He as the deliverer, and they as the persons delivered. And that, to shew and express the union between God and his people, he expresses himself thus. However this may, or may not seem clear, what follows is most evidently spoken by the Lord alone.

V. 6. *I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.*

The Israelites were most grievously afflicted in Egypt. They were vexed and oppressed in making bricks; in building cities; in being scattered over all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. Jesus-Jehovah was their deliverer. He brought them from under the burdens of the Egyptians. He redeemed them by his outstretched arm, and with great judgments. And he here makes mention of it, and informs them what he delivered them from. *I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.* It is said, *The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.* Exodus i. 14. So that it is probable they were employed in making vessels of clay, as the verse before us seems to imply.

V. 7. *Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.*

When Israel came out of Egypt, and Pharaoh pursued after them, they were in great trouble, and cried unto the Lord. He heard them in *the secret place of thunder*, out of that black cloud, wherewith he the angel Jehovah guided and protected Israel, whilst at the same time with thunder, rain, and tempest he dismayed the Egyptians. We read expressly these words, *And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.* Exod. xiv. 19, and 20. We read also verses 24, 25, of the same chapter. *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 drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.* It is conceived, at this time God manifested his wrath against the Egyptians thus. The clouds streamed down waters upon them. The skies gave out a sound. The arrows of God, or hail-stones, went abroad. The voice of his thunder was in the air. His lightnings, very fierce and vivid, were tremendous. It was as though the world were lightened with them. The earth trembled and quaked. At which time the Lord preserved Israel; heard their cry at the Red Sea. *I answered thee*, says God, *in the secret place of thunder*; out of the very same cloud in which I displayed the exceeding greatness of my wrath against thine enemies. *I proved thee at the waters of Meribah*, i. e. of Strife. It was so named, because Israel there strove with Moses, and were almost ready to stone him. At the rock at Rephidim, the place here referred to, the Lord proved the people. He made trial of them, to discover what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no. To this the Lord set his seal. The word *Selah* signifies, *Mark this well*. Israel cried unto the Lord, and he answered them out of the cloudy pillar, in the secret place of thunder; even when he was about to express out of it his most severe indignation and wrath upon his and their enemies.

V. 8. *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me.*

God here addresseth himself to his people Israel. He will take witnesses of what he says to them. He will protest, or take to witness the heavens and the earth. He will

deeply charge the mind with what he here delivers. *O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me, it will be for thy good.* Thou wilt find and enjoy the beneficial effects thereof. It is only a reiteration of what before I have delivered unto thee. My repetition of it may serve to prove to thee, that I am unchangeable in my nature and will; in my law and ordinances. I brought thee to Horeb; I there spake to thee out of the midst of devouring fire; I there brought thee into covenant relation, and became thy God, and thou becamest my people. Since which thou hast broken thy covenant with me, the substance of which I will now speak out to thee.

V. 9. *There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.*

I claim thine obedience to me as thy God and Saviour. I will be acknowledged by thee as thy God, thy Saviour, thy Redeemer, thy Holy One, thy All. None shall share with me in this. The wonders I have wrought for thee, the blessings I have bestowed on thee; I claim the sole glory of all the good thou art possessed of, be it spiritual or temporal, and the continuation of it to myself alone; as the gift and fruit of my free, sovereign, and royal munificence; as altogether the free acts of my grace. I acknowledge with delight my love of thee, my care for thee, my interest in thee.

V. 10. *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

This is my relation in thee. It is well pleasing to my vast and infinite mind to express myself to thee thus. I brought thee out of the land of Egypt, that I might prove myself to be unto thee all contained, and implied herein. I will be unto thee all contained in this revelation of myself; and declaration of my relationship unto thee. I will, in all my persons and perfections, be the Lord thy God. I will be thy Saviour, thy healer, thy guide, thy comforter, thy strength, thy shield, thy fulness, thy portion, thine inheritance, thine everlasting all. I give thee full liberty at all times, every moment, in thy evening season, case, place, and circumstance, to prove, and get to thyself, and have incontestible evidence of the truth of this. Open thy mouth wide, ask; what shall I give thee; speak out thy whole heart, and be as free in asking as thou wilt, and I will give it thee, so far as it will make for my glory and thy real benefit. I will fill thy mind with spiritual good; with real, spiritual, and everlasting good.

V. 11. *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.*

God had reminded the people of Israel of what he had done for them, of what he had been unto them, of what he still was to them. He had brought them out of the land of Egypt; he had delivered them from the burdens they had laboured under; their hands were by him delivered from the pots; he had heard them when they were in trouble; he had delivered them, when they called upon him at the Red Sea; he had answered them in the secret place of thunder; he had proved them at the waters of Strife, and found them to be at all times disposed to murmurings and unbelief. He most graciously expostulates with them. He says, *Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me, there shall be no strange god in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* Then follows an awful charge, brought against his professing church in Israel. *But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.* This they shewed presently after the giving of the law, by making to themselves gods of gold, and by their frequent murmurings and rebellions in the wilderness. And throughout the whole of that dispensation they were under, to the coming of Christ, they were in heart and affection just the same. And when Messiah was come, the bulk of the professing, as well as profane Jews, would neither own him, nor by any means hearken to his voice. They would have none of him, nor any thing to do with him.

V. 12. *So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels.*

A greater evil could not befall them, a greater curse could not come upon them this side hell. They, left thus to themselves, were in their posterity, who were then unborn, the betrayers of the Messiah. Yet as they cast off God, and rejected his law, and would not hearken to his voice, it was most just in the divine procedure towards them to give them up to their own hearts' lust, and to suffer them to walk, stumble, and fall by their own counsel, as the fruit of their own perverseness, unbelief, and obstinacy. God suits the punishment to the sin he punishes for.

V. 13. *O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!*

The Lord having spoken of his goodness unto them, and their base ingratitude to him, under the form of a most

affectionate exclamation, breaks forth towards them with an, *O that my people had hearkened unto me!* All sin consists in turning a deaf ear to God. All the sins of all sorts of professors of Christ and his gospel, may be traced up to this as the fountain of the same. *O that Israel had walked in my ways!* It is equal to a solemn warning of the state and case of such. It must here be noticed, as hath been before, that it is not real saints who are here spoken of, but Israel after the flesh. It is setting forth, that all external ordinances leave persons were such ordinances found them. They cannot renew them in the spirit of their minds. They cannot convey the Spirit of the living God, and his grace and blessings to the mind. This was fully realized in the great body of the Jewish nation, though they were all of them under the outward ordinances of the most high God.

V. 14. *I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.*

It was because they, as a body of people, were not obedient to God's law, that they were left so often in the hands of their enemies: all which befel them in the wilderness was in consequence of their sins; all which befel them after the death of Joshua, and is by divine inspiration recorded in the book of Judges, was because of their sins; what befel them by their being carried captive into Assyria and Babylon, and afterwards from various other enemies and quarters, it was all because they would not hearken to the voice of the Lord in his law, and by his prophets. The Lord had not given them into the hand of their enemies, had not this been their case. Had they hearkened to his law, he would have turned his hand against their adversaries. The Lord would have speedily avenged them of their enemies, and subdued their adversaries.

V. 15. *The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.*

Jehovah-Jesus, the God of Israel, would have put forth his almighty power, and caused those who hated him, and his Israel, to have yielded, and to have submitted themselves unto him. Whilst at the same time he would have established his church and people in Israel in a prosperous, flourishing state: which should have been permanent, settled, and lasting. This was agreeable with God's covenant and promise unto them.

V. 16. *He should have fed them also with the finest of*

the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

So speaketh the Lord unto his people Israel. They would have been perfectly safe under his care. In his favour they would have found all the blessings of this life, and of that which is to come. They would have been fed with the finest of the wheat. That is, they should have enjoyed the essence of all good; they would have had Christ, the spiritual rock, who would have refreshed them with the water of life. His gracious words, which are like honey, would have been sweet to their souls, and been health to their bones, had they abode in his laws: but they would not. Thus God testifies against them. May it be given us clearly to understand the Psalm. Amen.

PSALM EIGHTY-SECOND.

A Psalm of Asaph.

It contains an address to judges and magistrates, from God himself, in which they are reminded of his presence, that they represent him, and are accountable unto him; they are therefore called upon for a proper discharge of their office, seeing they are accountable for the same. A passage of it is quoted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and made use of by him, to prove that he who was the Messiah must be truly and essentially God. The 6th verse is quoted by Christ in the 10th chapter of John, verse 35, of which notice will be taken when we come to the verse. The Jewish Sanhedrim are reproved for their ignorance and corruption. They are solemnly warned and threatened. A prayer is offered for the manifestation and advent of Christ, and the establishment of his kingdom.

V. 1. *A Psalm of Asaph. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty [or princes:] he judgeth among the gods.*

The Jewish government was a theocracy. It was all under God: all in it was by his appointment. Who should reign, the laws by which they were to govern, every thing in the ecclesiastical and political œconomy were all by the Lord's appointment. The judges which the Lord appointed over his people are styled gods. See Exodus xxii. 8, 9, 28. *Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. They were God's vicegerents, or representatives. Moses says, Judges and officers shalt thou make in all thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes:*

and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Deut. xviii. 18. The great senate of the nation was at Jerusalem, and always met there. God by his omniscience and omnipresence was in the midst of them: he presided over them: his eye was on them. God, the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, standeth in the congregation of the mighty, to observe and take notice of all their thoughts, words, and actions: to observe their proceedings in their judicatory acts. He was the supreme Judge. It became them therefore to consider what Moses had said to their predecessors. *Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's.* Deut. i. 16, 17. To put dignity on such persons, properly called and qualified for such an office, they are called gods, or the congregation of the mighty. To put them as well in remembrance of him, before whom they exercised their office, and to whom they were accountable for their discharge of the same, they are reminded that the Three in Jehovah judgeth among the gods. He is invisibly present in their assemblies, and superintends their proceedings. He is a witness of every one of their proceedings, and will one day manifest the whole, when he sitteth in judgment.

V. 2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?

These words contain a reproof to these gods and judges. It brings a charge of judgment on them for their unrighteous judgment. They did not attend sufficiently to the divine rule: they were partial in the sentence which they pronounced on the causes which were brought before them: they had respect to persons, which the Lord had expressly forbidden, both concerning rich and poor. Why may not all this be applied to the case when our Lord was in his incarnate state? I see not. And as so appropriated, be looked on as given out by the Psalmist as a prophecy of the Jewish magistracy, and their most awful corruption in the times when Messiah was actually incarnate, and lived amongst them? Good advice is given them, which if followed would have been very beneficial to others, and themselves also.

V. 3. Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

It was for the poor and needy, it was to defend the fatherless, it was to redress the wrongs done the afflicted and oppressed, this very office was instituted by the Lord. He had most clearly expressed himself on this subject in his most holy word: yet this was most awfully neglected, or there could have been no need of reproof. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Amos, give very solemn reproofs from the Lord to the people of Judah and Israel on these subjects in their sermons, many of which are wholly employed on them. It was even so in our Lord's time; many of his most severe and solemn reproofs and rebukes are proofs hereof. It may be also considered, as descriptive of the great corruption of the great council of the nation of the Jews, and of their unjust procedure against our Lord Jesus Christ, whom they with wicked hands crucified and killed. Which most fully proved their guilt of judging unjustly, of their accepting the persons of the wicked, of their not exerting themselves to defend the poor and fatherless, of their not doing justice to the afflicted. Peter brings in this charge most pointedly and decidedly against them. Of delivering up, and denying Christ to be their Messiah. This they did in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. *Ye, (says he,) denied the holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead.* Acts iii. 13, 14, 15. The Psalm may therefore be considered as a solemn warning to them, and a real testimony against them.

V. 4. *Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Thus their duty, as it respected the administration of their office, is here most fully recited unto them. And they are exhorted to attend unto the same, and exert themselves in the practice thereof. Which is most impressively set home on their minds, from the consideration of the Lord's presence with them; of his taking notice of them. He being omniscient and omnipresent, ought to influence their minds to act in the execution of his laws, as became them as his officers and deputies, to whom they must one day give an account. But neither God's command in his word, nor his threatening, can or doth influence the heart, unless the Lord is pleased to sway the will by his omnipotent grace; without which neither divine or human ordinances, prescribed by the Lord, can renew and sanctify the will to yield implicit obedience to them in the name of the Lord: hence these persons stand most solemnly reprov'd for their

negligence, and want of understanding of God's mind and will, concerning their office, and their want of will to practise the same before the Lord.

V. 5. *They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.*

This is a most awful charge. The judges were willingly and wilfully ignorant of their duty; they were not wise to do good; they had no true and proper understanding of the law; they would not walk in it; they continued willingly and wilfully ignorant; they went on perversely in perverting justice; they walked on still in darkness; they lived in sin. Thus all law and order were violated; all estates were disturbed; all the foundations of government were out of course. Sin hath so corrupted all sorts and conditions of men, that even such as are real saints do not fill up their various stations and conditions of life, agreeably to the relations in which they stand and are placed by the all-wise providence of God. Neither kings, magistrates, masters, servants, parents, children, husbands, wives, ministers, churches, rulers, and governors; no, not even such as most justly are entitled saints, fill up any and every one of their respective relations to each other, and offices, but with abundance of failure. This, were it taken properly into view, would be sufficient to humble each under the mighty hand of God, and fill us with such acknowledgements as would keep us from glorifying ourselves, or glorying in ourselves. I do not mean, but that in our own view, and in the view of others, it may appear we have filled up such places, relations, and offices with credit and honour; but I positively and precisely mean, when we come to the standard of God's most holy word, we must find we have sinned and failed in our discharge of duty in all.

V. 6. *I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.*

Magistrates are by the Lord's ordinance exalted above other men. They are God's vicegerents, and therefore here called by the name of whom they act. They should be for wisdom as the angels of God, to know all things that are upon the earth. This high-strained compliment the wise woman of Tekoah paid David. 2 Sam. xiv. 20. *I have said, Ye are gods: and all of you are children of the most High.* These words are spoken in the name of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ quotes them in the tenth chapter of John's Gospel, and makes use of them thus. He there, in his discourse with the Jews, had said, *My sheep know me, my sheep*

hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck man them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. On this the Jews took up stones to stone him as a blasphemer. Jesus answered them, *Many good works have I hewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* To this our Lord replied, *Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?* The words referred to are those before us. *If (says Jesus,) He, (i. e. God,) called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?* Our Lord gives them to understand from this passage before us, that the great magistrates amongst them, and such as were figurative of Messiah, were styled gods. Therefore he whom they figured and shadowed forth must be God, truly and essentially: or there could be no suitableness between type and antitype. God said of magistrates, *I said, Ye are gods.* Therefore he whom they represented must be most truly so. Consequently Messiah must be so; or the scripture must be broken, as our Lord argues, which could not be. *If ye call them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?* This is the inference our Lord deduces from this quotation. Though magistrates, as set up by God, were gods by delegation, considered in their official character and ministration, and all in this sense the children of the most High, yet they were in their natures and persons but mortal men, of which they are reminded in the next verse.

V. 7. *But ye shall die like men, [or as Adam,] and fall like one of the princes.*

They are here reminded they are altogether like all other mortal men; they must die a natural death, even as Adam the root of generation did. They must eventually be cast down from their high states and dignities, and be numbered with the dead, and return to their dust, even as heathen princes did. They are here taught, that death would humble them, and bring them low: they would be stript of all their authority, and laid in the grave, from whence the last trumpet would call

them forth, to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, there to take their trial, and receive their everlasting sentence. It will be of use for all who are in authority, to read, and receive instruction from this Psalm, down to the end of time.

V. 8. *Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

The prophet, under a view of the disorder and confusion the Jewish nation was involved in, prays for the coming of the Messiah. He is the heir of the world; he is the lord of it; he is the only one who has sovereignty and dominion over it; he only can judge the earth; he only can deliver his people from all the tyranny of every enemy and oppressor; he only can inherit all nations; he only can establish his church in the world, and rule with a sceptre of righteousness in the hearts of men. He is Lord of all. O Jesus, rule and reign for ever and ever, Amen.

PSALM THE EIGHTY-THIRD.

A Song Psalm of Asaph.

The meaning of this having been already given, I shall add nothing to it.

In this scripture the Prophet addresses God, complaining of the insolence, subtilty, and rage of the enemies of the church and people of Israel. It is requested the Lord would put forth, and manifest his power as he had formerly done; when he discomfited Jabin, Sisera, and the Midianites. That the enemies of Israel might be made sensible of God's almighty power, and be brought to an acknowledgement of him, or be destroyed, and thereby become a warning to others. The end to be answered, so far as the Psalmist is concerned, that Christ as Jehovah might be known and acknowledged as the most High over all the earth. Suitable to this outline is the subject of the prayer before us.

V. 1. *A Song Psalm of Asaph. Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.*

When the Lord's people and church are under oppression, they pray and call upon his name, according to their views and sense of the same. When he permits their enemies to rage and gain the advantage over them, it seems as though the Lord did not attend to the voice of their cry. Something like this is implied in the words before us. Hence here is a very great earnestness expressed. *Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still,*

O God. It was to sense, and respecting visible appearance, as though God paid no respect to the case of his people, nor to the prayer offered up by them to his divine Majesty. It was as though the wrath of his enemies were to prevail, to the utter extermination of his church; as though he held his peace, and did by no means attend to the cry of his beloved; as though he was still, and not a whit concerned at the rage of the enemy, and the suffering case and state of his outward visible and militant church. Christ is the object to whom the Prophet looks, and to whom he here prays, and calls upon.

V. 2. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lift up the head.

What particular case the church was in at this time, is not easy to say. It is by the expressions before us, the nations who were confederated against the people of Israel terrified them, by roaring against them like the roaring of the sea. They made a tumultuous noise; they lifted up their heads; they were as so many monsters ready to swallow them up. The prophet calls them God's enemies. So they must be, as they were his people's. And he makes use of what he hath expressed, as a motive and argument with the Lord to appear on the behalf of his church, and to avenge himself of her enemies.

V. 3. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and [taken counsel, or consulted] against thy hidden ones.

Saints are God's hidden ones. Their life is hid with Christ in God. They are sometimes hid from the strife of tongues; yet here his peculiar nation, separated from the world, and taken under his care and protection, are exposed to a most tremendous storm. Their enemies were full of subtlety, and most desperate malice. It was contrived in a most crafty manner, to exterminate the people of God if possible.

V. 4. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

Surely this was a most cruel design. The prophet expresses it before the Lord. It is a very important part of the prayer. To cut off the whole nation; to exterminate it from being a nation; to root out, and blot out the name of Israel; to leave no room for the remembrance of the same any more. It must be most awfully distressing. No marvel the Intercessor for the church, in this his prayer on her behalf, is so deeply affected, and so vastly importunate with God on her behalf.

V. 5. For they have consulted together with one consent : they are confederate against thee.

These words are vastly expressive of the craft, eagerness, and joint consent of the enemy to destroy the church and people of God, if it were possible. What the church and people of God in all ages have been exposed to, and suffered from outward enemies, persecutors, and persecutions, from various enemies without her, and within her own pale, is inconceivable and inexpressible; it is only known to the Lord. He has exercised himself variously towards his church. Sometimes by working immediate deliverance on her behalf; and at other times, by admitting her to be for a long season exposed to the rage and malice of her foes; whose names are mentioned in the three following verses. From whence some have conceived the subject of this Psalm belongs to the times of David; when there was a great combination of public enemies to overthrow him; viz. the Moabites, Syrians, Philistines, Ammonites, Amalekites, &c. mentioned in 2 Sam. chap. viii. and in chap x. Or, that it belongs to the invasion of Judea, in the times of Jehoshaphat, by the Ammonites, Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir. Of which you may read the account 2 Chron. chap. xx. as also of the wonderful defeat of them by the Lord alone. It is very clear, let the history referred to in each case, and deliverances wrought on both of these occasions be considered, it casts light on this Psalm, and on the words before us, and also on those which follow.

V. 6. The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes.

The Edomites descended from Esau, who was an old original enemy to Jacob. The Ishmaelites, from Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, and a foe to Isaac, who was heir of the promises. The Moabites sprang from Moab, one of the incestuous children of Lot. The Hagarenes, were other of the descendants of Hagar, beside the Ishmaelites. These all hated Israel with bitter hatred. Here are four of these enemies enumerated, and five more in the next verse.

V. 7. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre.

Who the Gebalites were, is uncertain. Ainsworth says, the Gabalites, or Gibleans, dwelt in the province, or city Gebal (or Gabala) in Phenicia, near Sidon, from whence Solomon had masons, or stone-hewers, 1 Kings v. 18.; Ezek. xxvii. 9. The Ammonites came from Ammon, the son of Lot, and incestuous brother of Moab. The Amale-

kites were the progeny of Amalek, the grandson of Esau, Gen. xxvi. 16. The Philistians were of Palestina. The Tyrians were of Tyre. Here are five more enemies distinctly named. *Selah.*

V. 8. *Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.*

By Assur, is meant the great power of Assyria, which was called in by the children of Lot, the Moabites and Ammonites, to assist in the great work of exterminating the people of Israel from the face of the earth. Thus here are ten nations, who were joined together in solemn league and covenant against the people of God. What case must the saints in Judea have now been in, as it respected their feelings and apprehensions! Let this be viewed, it need not be wondered at, that their prayer began so abruptly, and their importunity and argument for the same run on as it does. Nor that they should open their case, and proceed so particularly to the full recital of it. Which having done, the Lord is requested to put forth his power, and display it on their behalf, in the destruction of his enemies, and theirs also.

V. 9. *Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison.*

The Midianites, were the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, who being idolaters, drew Israel into the same in the wilderness, for which Moses avenged the Israelites of them, by the slaughter of all their males, and their five kings, and obtained great spoil; see Num. xxxi. 1, 7, 8, 16, 32. After this, they recovering, and oppressing Israel in their own land, were vanquished by Gideon and three hundred undisciplined men, when these foes were in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude. See Judges vi. 7; vii. 7, 12, 22, &c. To this the prophet here refers. As to Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, who is next mentioned, he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel. Yet by Deborah, a prophetess, and Barak, a captain of the tribe of Naphtali, the Lord destroyed Sisera, who with all his host and chariots was completely overcome; there was not a man left. Sisera, flying, was killed by Jael, the wife of Heber. *Do unto them, says the Psalmist, as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison.* It was a river at the foot of Mount Carmel. Here Sisera and the kings of Canaan fought; here they were vanquished, and the river swept them away. Thus the past deliverances which the Lord had wrought, are here mentioned, with full acknowledgment of his hand in them, and

praying he would work present deliverance for his Church in conformity to what he had before done, in these instances recited.

V. 10. *Which perished at Endor; they became as dung for the earth.*

Endor was a city near Kison, near unto Taanach and Megiddo, where the Canaanites perished; so completely, that it was as if their carcasses lay unburied, rotting above ground. A further request is put up against the combined army of the confederates, who were in league to destroy God's Israel; which is expressed in the next words:

V. 11. *Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb; yea, all their princes like Zebah, and as Zalmunna.*

Oreb and Zeeb were two of the princes of Midian, and they were slain by Gideon. *They took the two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeel, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of Jordan, Judges vii. 25.* Zebah and Zalmunna were the two kings of Midian. These Gideon took and slew them, and took away their ornaments that were on their camels' necks. To pray thus therefore, was to pray that the present enemies might be most completely overcome, and completely subdued. They had spoken contemptuously of the servants of God, and his worship. What they had said is here recorded:

V. 12. *Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.*

Let us utterly deface all remembrance of God and his worship, both temple, and every trace of outward acknowledgement of him from amongst them, and out of their land. We will with one heart and soul delight in accomplishing all this. It deserves a thought here. What must David, what must Jehoshaphat have felt in their minds, when such confederations, plots, tumults, and combinations were formed against them, and they had full evidence hereof? What must the people over whom they ruled have felt, when such wars and commotions broke forth openly and visibly? Yea, what must the church of Christ, and people of the most high God have felt, who lived in such times as these? Surely we are not adequate to form any tolerable ideas of these; because we have not been thus exercised. The Lord be praised that we have not.

V. 13. *O my God, make them like a wheel; [or like thistle-down.] as the stubble before the wind.*

Let this be the fate of those who shall invade the inhe-

ritance of thee, O my God, who shall say, *Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.* Let them be like stubble, or chaff, whirled about, and dissipated by the wind.

V. 14. *As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;*

So let it please thee to execute thy wrath on these thine enemies. Let the suddenness, horror, and universality of their destruction, be like fire consuming dry trees in a forest; or like some combustible matter on the mountains, which setteth them on fire.

V. 15. *So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.*

Let thine indignation thus come fully on them, suddenly, and irresistibly on them, so as they may not be able to escape.

V. 16. *Fill their faces with shame: that they may seek thy name, O Lord.*

Let dishonour and contempt universally fall upon them, that they may acknowledge there is no wisdom, nor might, nor counsel, can prevail against thee. May a true view of this lead them to seek thy name, O Lord. If they continue under thy tremendous severity, and are to be cut off, and finally destroyed, may others who see all this be admonished by thy judgments on them, to repent, return, and give glory, O God, to thee.

V. 17. *Let them be confounded and troubled for ever: yea, let them be put to shame, and perish.*

Thus, from the ninth verse to this is one continued request; the destruction of the crafty enemy hath been the subject of this prayer. That by the manifestation of God's power, in a very visible display of it, on the rage, malice, subtilty, and insolency of the enemies of the church, who were closely united against her, these might be made sensible of Israel's God, as far beyond them, and all-sufficient to blast all their vast designs against his people; so as they might be either led to acknowledge him, or else, by their destruction, become a solemn warning of his wrath to others.

V. 18. *That men may know, that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth.*

Jehovah is the incommunicable name of God. It is expressive of his essence, being, and existence. It is thus deciphered in the New Testament, *He which was, and is, and is to come*, Rev. i. 5. It implies God hath his being, existence, life, blessedness, eternity, and immortality, from himself alone. In the Greek, this word cannot be rightly

pronounced; the word *Lord* is used for it. The words before us, which conclude the Psalm, are a prayer that God, the God of Israel, the Lord God of Israel, who only hath Jehovah for his name, might be known, by the retribution of his wrath on his enemies, to be self-existing, or the self-existing essence, the most high over all the earth. It is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, see Jer. xxiii. 6. Thus the Psalm ends. May the Lord bless the reading of it. Amen.

PSALM THE EIGHTY-FOURTH.

To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, a Psalm for the sons of Korah.

We have eleven psalms directed to the sons of Korah, of which four are entitled, *A Psalm to the sons of Korah*; viz. Psalm 47, 49, 84, 85. Two are thus entitled, *A Song Psalm to the sons of Korah*; viz. Psalm 48, 88. One thus, *To the sons of Korah, a Psalm Song*, viz. 87. One thus, *To the sons of Korah on Alamoth*, viz. 46. The word *Gittith* has been taken notice of in the title on the 8th Psalm.

In this psalm before us, the earnest longing of a new-born and spiritual mind is very livelily expressed. After the house and worship of God, in the public congregation of saints, a beautiful account is given of the blessedness of such as are always attending the public worship and courts of the house of our God. A fervent prayer is offered up for a participation of the blessedness of communion with the Lord; a request that Jehovah of hosts would look on his worshipping saints in the face of his Christ. An acknowledgment is made of what Father, Son, and Spirit, are to the true worshippers in the assemblies of the saints; and the hymn is closed with a most spiritual acknowledgment, that blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah.

V. 1. *To the Chief Musician upon Gittith, a Psalm for the sons of Korah. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!*

When a real saint hath been deprived of waiting on the Lord, and is most truly drawn in heart and affection to hunger and thirst after God, to enjoy his most gracious presence in attending on holy ordinances, he hath the best comment which can be given on this Psalm. A child of God looks on the various assemblies of the saints as so many tabernacles of the Lord of hosts, which he is pleased to fill with his word, grace, spirit, and blessing; and this makes them amiable and most truly desirable. The words contain a devout rapture.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! We read of Balaam, when from the top of Peor he saw Israel abiding in their tents, and the tabernacle of the Lord, with its court, in the midst, as the centre of the people, and the cloud of glory which was over it, that the Spirit of God came upon him, and he cried out, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. See Numb. xxiv. 5.

V. 2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

This is very expressive of the frame and feeling of a soul, drawn by the cords of divine love, to seek fellowship with the Holy Trinity in the ordinances of public worship. None can fully express the fervent breathings, the ardent desires of the Lord's people at times, and in some peculiar seasons, to approach the Lord,—to come before him, to enter into his courts. This is here expressed as suited to the Old Testament dispensation. It was only into the courts of the temple the worshippers came. The priests went into the temple alone; the people stood without, and worshipped in the courts. As the glory, splendour, and majesty of Christ, break forth on the mind, and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, the soul cannot but long to be in his presence-chamber; and it is sometimes such to real saints, to be admitted to keep his gospel institutions in remembrance of him; to have free admittance and access unto him; to find he is near unto them, and that he is pleased most freely and fully to hold communion with them, and to communicate a fresh sense, taste, and enjoyment of his love to their minds. Such as have thus tasted that the Lord is gracious, are often quickened by the remembrance of the same, to say individually, when going to join in the observance of his worship, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* Christ is the living God. It is he who makes us alive to him and his ordinances; it is he who gives our souls to long, and even faint, with holy and vehement desires after spiritual and soul-satisfying communion with him; it is he who causeth our heart and our flesh to cry out for him.

V. 3. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

The sparrow is a bird which haunts men's houses. The swallow is a free bird, or a bird of liberty. It seemeth to have this above others; it flies boldly, and nestles about houses; hence it is conceived to be brought in here. Some

think the turtle-dove is here alluded to, because her young were lawful to be offered on God's altar. The speaker here seems to lament it, to be deprived of access to God's tabernacle or temple, a privilege enjoyed even by birds, who were allowed to build their nests in the neighbourhood of the sanctuary. There was but one altar for the people to worship at, yet it is altars; it may be, to comprehend the worship performed first in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple. It is in Christ, under the protection of his blood and righteousness, a real worshipper of him hath sanctuary, protection, and defence. In Christ, a real believer findeth freedom from all care and sorrow. In him, and communion with him, a real believer hath the enjoyment of a quiet mind and gladness of spirit, like a bird who has built a mansion for the reception and education of her young. *Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.* Thus he expresses the exercise of his mind, and the desires of his heart, for the house and ordinances of the Most High. To enjoy fellowship with Christ, who offered himself as the whole-burnt sacrifice for his church, this is most truly desirable; therefore a confession of faith is drawn forth: it is, *My King and my God.* The Psalmist before had entitled him, *Lord of hosts*, then *the living God*; now he improves upon it, *My King and my God.* It is good to observe this, as when we really worship him, there is an increasing in holy adoration and admiration of him.

V. 4. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*

The ministers of God's house, the ministers who were continually waiting on the Lord to perform his worship, the saints who regularly attended the worship, are by the Psalmist esteemed blessed. Their employment was most divine: to be looking on Christ; to be renewing fresh acts of faith, and hope, and love on him; to have free and full communion with him; to be praising him continually, this was looked upon by the writer of the Psalm before us to be blessed work. To which he adds, the blessedness of others, whose heart was towards the Lord. He sets the note *Selah* to what he said, to shew that he would have this very particularly noticed.

V. 5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.*

All the tribes of Israel were to appear before the Lord at Jerusalem thrice in the year. Such, therefore, as were either

preparing for the journey, or meditating on the same, or were actually on the way, going to the holy city, and looking to Christ, and contemplating the spiritual views and enjoyments they expected in real communion with him in his holy institutions, are pronounced by the prophet blessed. He knew their frames, feelings, spiritual desires and breathings, by his own. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them; who dwell continually in thy house, and are always worshipping thee. Thou, O Christ, whose name is the Lord of hosts, the living God, who art my king and my God, art their strength. They are therefore blessed indeed; as truly so, and equally with such as dwell in thy house; as they dwell in heart and affection in thee, and thou dwellest in heart and affection in them.*

V. 6. *Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.*

As those who dwell in the temple, and those who are coming from all parts of the land of Judea, to keep the Lord's passover and other festivals at Jerusalem, are pronounced blessed by the Psalmist; so he describes the way in which they went, the valley through which they passed, and how they were supplied with water in it. Ainsworth says, it was a valley near Jerusalem, which is here called Baca, which signifies to weep. It was a dry valley, yet these persons were supplied with water by digging wells in it, in which may be had reference to that well digged by the princes and captains of Israel, mentioned Numb. xxi. 16, 18. It is in this valley of Baca, or mulberry-trees, which grow in dry places, the Israelites passing through it made a well, which the rain from heaven filled, by which means these passengers were very suitably supplied. Christ is the well of salvation. He is the fountain of living waters. It is he which raineth the blessing of grace abundantly upon his people. It is he who bestows grace and comfort on those who seek his face. He is their teacher and guide.

V. 7. *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

Thus refreshed in the valley of Baca with the well, which by the rain filled all the pools, the travellers went on their journey refreshed and invigorated. They went on from strength to strength, from one stage of their journey to another, until they presented themselves before God in Zion. True believers in Christ Jesus find this world to them to be the valley of weeping. In their passage through it, they are refreshed with streams of divine consolation. These flow down from the great fountain Christ. By this means they

proceed from one step of their journey to another, until they come to the vision of Christ in glory. As there is a most beautiful gradation in these verses, the 5th, 6th, and 7th, I would recite them, that the full glory of them may appear. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.* As the company of various tribes passed this valley, found water for their refreshment, proceeded forward from strength to strength, from one stage to another, one company after the other, and all met in Zion before God; so all God's people, in every age, and throughout all generations, will be conducted safe through a time state, and each arrive at the city of the living God, the house eternal in the heavens.

V. 8. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.*

This contains a most energetic address of the prophet, on his own behalf, and likewise on the behalf of all God's worshipping people. He had before expressed his fervent breathings after God and his ordinances; he had expressed what the blessed of such as dwell in God's house must be; he had looked on those whose hearts were towards the Lord, and who came from every part of Judea to worship the Lord in his holy mountain in Jerusalem. He had pronounced them blessed. He had spoken of their journey, steps, and progress, and of their arrival at the place and seat of divine worship. Then he prays for them, including himself also. *O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer.* The title is vast, *Lord God of hosts.* The demand is a great expression of faith, *Hear my prayer.* This is followed with very great importunity. It is for audience; it is for attention; it is for the ear of the Lord God of hosts, *Give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.* It is to real believers a real blessing, when their minds are duly impressed with a true and proper sense of what is contained in those titles, attributes, names, and expressions with which they address the Lord. Jehovah the Three in covenant, is the captain of his people; he is their Lord; his name is called upon them; he will not leave them, nor forsake them; he will be known to them as the God of Jacob; he will lend his ear to their prayer. So that the word *Selah* were may be considered as Amen. It must be so, it will be so, it cannot but be so.

V. 9. *Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

This is the very prayer itself. The former was only in-

troductory to it. It contains a request, which comprises all blessings and blessedness in it. God's beholding us in Christ is the uttermost expression of blessedness. He hath beheld his church from everlasting in the Son of his love, and accepted them in him the beloved. What is here requested is, that he would behold his church, manifestatively and influentially in Christ; or rather, that he would look on Christ, the shield of his church, in whom his soul delighteth, with whom he is well pleased. Christ is the object and protection to whom his people look; it is in him alone they trust for defence and safety; it is in Christ the church is everlastingly acceptable before God. *Look upon the face of thine anointed.* Messiah is Jehovah's anointed. It is from him we receive the anointing which teacheth all things, and leadeth into all truth. This is an universal prayer for all the church, and it is most truly evangelical and sublime. Prayer cannot request more; God cannot grant beyond what is included in it; we can never be more blessed than when this request is granted.

V. 10. *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

One moment's spiritual communion with God exceeds all the pleasures of time and sense: it puts down all earthly joys, it everlastingly exceeds all the pleasures of sin. To be on the lowest form in the lowest room of the church of Christ, to be but a door-keeper in it, is preferable to all the dignities, offices, and employments the whole world can speak of; much more is it everlastingly preferable than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness. The reason is given for all this in the next words:

V. 11. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is a sun: all our light, brightness, and glory, are in him; he is our shield; he protects us against all our enemies; he is our Lord God; he gives us grace; it is by him we are quickened, and go on from strength to strength. His grace is sufficient for us; he will crown his grace with glory; he will give grace and glory; he will withhold nothing that is good and profitable for his people. *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly;* and they are such as live by faith on the Son of God, and walk in him, by the same faith by which they have received him. Christ is the sun of righteousness, in whose beams are health and healing. All blessings and comforts flow and proceed from

him. No marvel, therefore, the devout soul should prefer one day in God's courts better than a thousand otherwise employed. It must be the case by all that know our Lord Jesus Christ, and have fellowship with him.

V. 12. *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.*

To trust in Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah of hosts, is truly blessed. It is the highest act of worship we can perform out of heaven. Whilst we remain here below we are strangers and pilgrims. We trust in him to carry us on safe, and that he will make us more than conquerors over all our present enemies and difficulties. We trust in Christ for heaven also, and glory everlasting. Thus the Psalm closes with a declaration of blessedness. It is expressed with great energy, *O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* May the Lord command his blessing on what hath been delivered. Amen.

PSALM THE EIGHTY-FIFTH.

To the Chief Musician, a Psalm for the sons of Korah.

This Psalm is generally considered as commemorative of the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, after the expiration of the seventy weeks or years of captivity; under which, as a type of the redemption of Israel from spiritual captivity, the redemption by Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, is expressed. A prayer is put up on the behalf of the church, that the Lord would turn his people from their captivity, and cause his anger towards them to cease; that he would revive them, and shew his mercy yet more fully unto them. The incarnation of Messiah, with the full shine of mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace, shining forth in their full blaze and lustre in him, are most divinely expressed, with the blessed effects of his incarnation. And thus the Psalm closes. The title of this Psalm has been before explained.

V. 1. *To the Chief Musician, a Psalm for the sons of Korah. Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.*

The prophet, as a personator of the church, acknowledges before the Lord what he had done for his land and for his people. He addresseth the divine Majesty with the incommunicable name Jehovah, hereby confessing it to be his act. None but himself could possibly have delivered them out of the land of the Chaldeans, as none but he could have brought their predecessors out of the land of Egypt. Both these acts

were most truly stupendous and divine, and are mentioned and recorded in the sacred page as such. The land of Canaan was the Lord's, he was the proprietor thereof; the Israelites held their tenure of it from him, in consequence of their obedience to the laws which he gave them, on the breach of which they forfeited it. They were sent into captivity for their sins and transgressions; they were restored from it by the sovereign mercy of God, on the account of the Messiah who was to come out of the tribe of Judah; and they must therefore be restored to Judea, that the promises concerning his incarnation and birth might in due time be accomplished. *Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.* It was wholly to be ascribed to the Lord. Had he not most favourably accepted his church in Christ, and loved them in him with an everlasting love, he had never delivered them from Babylon. The children of Israel, the sons of Jacob, had been sorely visited for their national sins: their temple burnt; divine ordinances ceased; Jerusalem destroyed; the people led captives. The term of years which the Lord had spoken of was completed. God puts it into the heart of Cyrus to proclaim liberty to them; they return, and rebuild the temple, and Jerusalem, and the cities of Judea, and dwell in them; so that they might well sing to Jehovah, and utter forth his glorious praise for the same. Under all which, Christ, and his redemption of his church by his most precious blood, may be considered as shadowed out thereby.

V. 2. *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.*

As this refers to the subject of deliverance from Babylon, so it implies that the Lord had forgiven them in a manifestative way, so as to remove his rod from them. That he had respect to his holy covenant with Jacob, with Isaac, and Abraham, and had remembered the land, agreeable with his covenant promise recorded in Leviticus xxvi. 42—44; and had covered their sin, so as not to visit again for the same. And this being but a shadow of the free, full, and complete forgiveness of all sin, and the covering or abolishing of all iniquities by the blood and sacrifice of Messiah, the word *Selah* is here set, saying, *Mark this well.* I will more fully attend to this, in its most sublime and spiritual sense, when I come to the fourth verse.

V. 3. *Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger; [or, thou hast turned thine anger from waxing hot. Margin.]*

I am a great friend to a literal explanation of this, and

every other passage of scripture, where it requires it. I conceive these words refer to the Lord's display of his mercy in restoring his people from their captivity; by which it was evident he had taken away or removed all his wrathful indignation, which he had expressed and exercised towards them, as a people and nation called by his name; in those desolating judgments and that vindictive wrath which he had exercised on them. It was apparent he had turned himself from the fierceness of his anger, seeing he had restored them to their own land. This could not but be matter of great praise, seeing it was a pledge of what the Lord would do in Christ for his whole church. Jehovah would lay all their sins on Christ; he would cover all their sins by the propitiatory blood and atonement of his Son. His wrath would be so displayed against their sins, and the fierceness of his anger against their iniquities would be so expressed in the sufferings of their surety, that all contained in these expressions would be most fully realized. The Old Testament saints must be considered as deeply impressed with the subject in its typical and spiritual import.

V. 4. *Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease.*

The three former verses express what the Lord had done for his church and people. He had been favourable to his land; he had brought back the captivity of his people; he had forgiven their iniquity; he had covered their sin; he had removed from them the tokens of his wrath; he had put a stop to the fierceness of his anger. This, and the three following verses, are the prayer offered up by the church for the continuation and completion of these blessings which had been mentioned in the former verses. And here I would take a spiritual view of the subject. Jesus Christ, the redeemer of his church and people, having obtained eternal redemption; he having been made sin and a curse, the Father having freely forgiven them all trespasses; he being at perfect peace with them, there being nothing but love in his heart to them, as he beholds them in Christ Jesus; they may put all the foregoing words into so many subjects for faith to act upon, and thus receive into their own minds, and enjoy in their own hearts, the benefits contained in the free, full, and complete deliverance they have in Christ, who hath covered all their sins by his propitiatory atonement. Upon the footing of which they may pray, *Turn us, O God of our salvation.* What do we want to be turned from? Sin and self. We want to be turned entirely out of ourselves, and off ourselves; and God is our Saviour and our salvation. He